

# Introduction

## New York City and the Emergence of a New Hemispheric Identity

### A Crossroads of the Americas

People referred to in the United States as Hispanics or Latinos—however they are identified by language, race, ethnicity or national origin—have been part and parcel of New York since the dawn of the city’s history. Since those early days, too, their presence has been testament to the diversity that even today confounds attempts to find an all-encompassing definition, a blanket term that would embrace with consistency their multiple and often critically divergent historical, cultural, and sociological traits. Spanish and Portuguese explorers and sailors, a free-African interpreter, Sephardic Jews fleeing religious intolerance, black slaves and Indian servants, all linked primarily by the fact of having been at some point subjects of the Spanish Empire, were active in the Hudson Bay area during the first three centuries of European colonization. At the turn of the nineteenth century, New York became a prime destination for South American revolutionaries and politicians seeking funding and support, first for their struggle for independence from Spain and later for the development of commercial and diplomatic relations between the United States and the new republics. In particular, the city became a safe haven for Cuban exiles fighting the remnants of Spain’s colonial rule in the hemisphere and the economic expatriates who followed suit—likely, the first Hispanic immigrant wave to the U.S.—looking for jobs in the tobacco factories and other trade and industry opportunities offered by the nascent global city. Spanish-language workers and investors were originally driven to New York by its significance as financial and manufacturing center for the plantation economy of the U.S. South and the Caribbean, the *Mare Nostrum* of the Manifest Destiny era. As the city’s and the nation’s economic and political climate changed, so did the immigration thrusts; from the heyday of the

slave trade and unabashed expansionism to the Cuban Revolution and beyond, every critical stage of the conflicting relationship between the U.S. and Latin America can be linked with New York. Cubans and Spaniards—the largest group during the first decades of the twentieth century—were eventually surpassed by Puerto Ricans, who in 1917 were granted citizenship to add manpower to the country’s effort in WWI and after the Great Migration that followed WWII became synonymous with a Hispanic New York. Dominicans began arriving in large numbers in the 1960s, although they have been around much longer. Throughout that period, migrants from virtually every Latin American country also made their contribution to the city’s Latino community, nourishing, through their personal or business networking, the bonds between the city and their homelands. As in the rest of the U.S., this multifaceted heritage is by no means a new phenomenon; the novelty lies, rather, in the growing awareness of the role people of Hispanic descent have played in the nation’s life over the past five centuries and into the present.

During the 1990s, however, a radical shift in New York’s demographic profile took place. The huge immigration wave that since the early 1980s has been arriving in the U.S. from Latin America turned New York into the city with the largest and most diverse Hispanic population in the whole country.<sup>1</sup> This metamorphosis not only mirrored what was happening in the rest of the nation—it also transformed New York into a microcosm of the Americas, literally turning it, because of the sheer number of nationalities gathered, into the most comprehensive Latin American city of the hemisphere and enhancing its function, already demonstrated since the late eighteenth century thanks to Spanish American exiles and travelers, as cultural hemispheric crossroads.<sup>2</sup> Looking closely into this reality can help us deepen our understanding not just of the Latino experience but also of the American experience in general, both reflected in and transformed by interaction with its Latino component.

## **New York City and the Latinization of the U.S.**

According to the most recent estimates, New York City is home to 2,259,069 people who define

themselves as Hispanics.<sup>3</sup> That figure represents almost one-third of the city's total population (8,008,278 at the time of the 2000 census and an estimated 8,246,310 by 2007) and almost doubles the national average. Roughly 70 percent of New York Hispanics, or 1,576,150 people, were born in Latin America, comprising an outstanding 52 percent of all foreign-born New Yorkers.<sup>4</sup>

The breakdown of these statistics is even more revealing of the transformation undergone by New York City in the past few decades. Unlike Los Angeles, Miami, or Chicago, where one community prevails numerically over the others,<sup>5</sup> New York's largest Latino community, Puerto Ricans, currently accounts for less than thirty-five percent of the entire Hispanic population, followed by Dominicans (24.52), Mexicans (11.78), Ecuadorians (7.50), Colombians (4.47), Central Americans of all nationalities (6.16), and people from every other country in Central and South America (Cubans, the most important Spanish-language community of nineteenth-century New York, nowadays represent less than 2 percent of the city's Latino population). In other words, while still enjoying a predominantly Caribbean flavor, Hispanic New York's demographic mix is seemingly pointing into a broader, pan-Latino direction (see table 0.1).

.... As I have noted earlier, this demographic reality is a fairly recent phenomenon: in 1960, only 9 percent of the country's foreign-born population, or 900,000 people, were from Latin America. By 1990 the figure had jumped to 44 percent of the foreign-born population or 8.4 million people. According to projections elaborated by the Pew Hispanic Center, by 2050 the total Latino population will triple in size and make up almost 30 percent of the U.S. population.<sup>6</sup> New York is a harbinger of that future.

... But the reader may wonder whether I am overestimating the importance of New York as an exemplary case. Three-fourths of Hispanics in the state of New York reside within the city's five boroughs, and New York ranks fourth among the states with the largest Hispanic populations in the U.S.<sup>7</sup> However, the state of New York represents just 6.9 percent of the national total, lagging well behind the first two states in the ranking, California (29) and Texas (18.9), which make up half the national Latino population, and is surpassed by Florida (8.2).<sup>8</sup>

More than three-quarters of U.S. Latinos live in the West and the Southwest, and almost 60 percent of them are Mexican or Mexican American.<sup>9</sup> What, therefore, is the relevance of a multinational Hispanic New York in the larger landscape of a Hispanic United States?

The answer may lie in what Louis DeSipio described more than a decade ago as one of the key conditions for the development of a pan-ethnic Latino identity: an increasing geographic overlap among the different national-origin communities.<sup>10</sup> Traditionally, Hispanics have toiled and thrived in separate, even distant quarters: Mexican Americans in the Southwest and California, Puerto Ricans in New York and the Northeast, Cubans in Florida or New Jersey. It was not until the 1970s, as Félix Padilla explained in *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago*, that a substantial interaction between the two largest Latino groups of the twentieth century really came about.<sup>11</sup> In a smaller, though historically significant scale, New York preceded Chicago for almost a century.

... In addition to Spanish, all the other main languages of the Iberian peninsula—Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, and Basque—and many if not all the lesser-known ones found their way to New York too, as well as many indigenous languages from Mexico, Peru, and the rest of the Latin American countries.<sup>12</sup> But it is undoubtedly Spanish that holds the preeminent position as a collective identity marker. Unlike previous immigrant groups, Latinos from different nationalities, social classes, and racial backgrounds share one common language; in New York, says novelist Antonio Muñoz Molina, the linguistic unity of Spanish manifests itself through the richest variety of accents and dialects. This bond, as the research conducted by Milagros Ricourt and Ruby Danta confirms, enhances in those immigrants the sense of partaking in one overarching Hispanic identity, very much as it happened with Cuban and Puerto Rican immigrants more than a century ago.

... From the seminal figure of José Martí to Juan Ramón Jiménez, Federico García Lorca, Gabriela Mistral, Diego Rivera, Joaquín Torres-García, and many other major literary and artistic personalities of the past to scores of contemporary writers, artists, and intellectuals, a perennial diaspora of Hispanic-American talent has turned New York into one of the undisputable centers

of the Spanish-language cultural world.<sup>13</sup> Along with Paris, New York is the only city not belonging to the former Spanish Empire that can make that claim; unlike Paris, it can also be claimed by Latin Americans as their own. Puerto Rican author Luis Rafael Sánchez called it the capital of Hispanic America.<sup>14</sup> In fact, New York is one of the capital nodes of an even larger network—along with Barcelona, Mexico City, Madrid, or Buenos Aires, it is one of the epicenters of the global Spanish-language semiosphere.<sup>15</sup>

... A second set of reasons, implicit in my previous argument, is that New York's largest Latino communities of the past two centuries had its roots in the Caribbean and its own history, as I have been arguing throughout this introduction, is interweaved with that region. Yet the conceptual and physical boundaries of a Hispanic Caribbean are not as obvious as they appear to be. Again, Gilroy's perspective is to the point: as a transnational creation, the Black Atlantic constitutes a paradigm for the study of a world that is transnational par excellence. The extraordinary complexity of the Caribbean—the intermingling ethnic, linguistic, and national-origin threads of its multicultural makeup, from Chinese, Indian, African to British, Dutch, French, German, Spanish, or Portuguese—challenges any protectionist view of identity that would attempt to fence off a community from alien influences.<sup>16</sup> This point, as we shall see, has major implications in the case of Hispanic New York.

... No description of the Caribbean would be complete without a survey of its creolized religions. It was in the Caribbean, as a result of the clash between the spiritual beliefs of masters and slaves, that the current meaning of the word *syncretism* took hold (its definition as “fusion of differing religious creeds” was forged by European humanists during the theological debates sparked by the Reformation, but they applied it exclusively to different forms of Christianity). Although increasingly sharing the limelight with the Virgin of Guadalupe and other symbolic representations of a growing Mexican presence, Afro-Caribbean religions are conspicuously visible in New York's cityscape through the *botánicas*, metaphorical synthesis of the multiple weaves that make up the mixed fabric of Caribbean culture: the amalgamated iconography of Christian saints and animistic deities, the overwhelming poignancy of the senses, the healing

power of Nature. **17** Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's selection will introduce the reader to concepts such as transculturation, ritual and performance, which are necessary to decode the tenets of that syncretic spirituality and its ramifications in the general culture. Some of the most significant occur in the visual and performance arts; the work of Ana Mendieta or Jean-Michel Basquiat—the latter subject of Negrón-Muntaner's essay—are a case in point.

Finally, it was a war started in the Caribbean that set the stage for the emergence of the U.S. as a global power. When in 1895 José Martí left New York to lead the invasion of Cuba, his priority was to obtain his country's independence before expansionist politicians at Washington could find an excuse to get involved in the conflict and replace Spain's rule with their own; Martí's death in a skirmish shortly after arriving on the island and the inability of his fellow revolutionaries to win a decisive battle opened the door to U.S. intervention. The Spanish-American War—that “splendid little war,” in John Hay's words—allowed the U.S. to take over Spain's last possessions in the Western hemisphere and the Pacific at the same time that it was annexing Hawaii, effectively launching the nation's imperialistic phase. On the other hand, the limitations imposed on Cuba's independence by the Platt Amendment and the irresolution of Puerto Rico's colonial status fueled the antigringo sentiment Spain's defeat had already spread all over Latin America, a sentiment that successive U.S. interventions in the region would only strengthen.

... Up to this point, I have used *Hispanic* and *Latino* as apparently interchangeable terms. This is customary in both scholarly and popular works, although there is also a serious academic and grassroots debate about the meaning and political implications of using one or the other. **18** The debate goes back to the civil rights era, when Chicano and Puerto Rican organizations chose *Latino/a* as a panethnic denomination over the bureaucratically tainted *Hispanic*, the label employed by the government in the census and as a generic category for policy purposes; some even rejected *Hispanic* as ideologically charged with Spain's colonial legacy. Most specialized literature on Hispanics or Latinos in the U.S. use both terms to designate a minority historically

defined by experiences of exclusion and discrimination akin to those endured by African Americans; in the case of black Latinos the parallel can be extended to the experience of slavery itself.

In Latin America and Spain, on the other hand, *Hispanic* and *Hispanic-American* have traditionally referred to the cultural heritage of all Spanish-language people (although *Latino*, undoubtedly as an effect of U.S. global influence, increasingly appears there as synonymous in the media and everyday conversation, particularly in connection to popular music and entertainment). In his classic handbook on Latin American literature, the great Dominican humanist Pedro Henríquez Ureña even included Brazil under the Hispanic banner, an inclusion ultimately justified by the original meaning of *Hispania*, a name given by the Romans to the whole Iberian peninsula.<sup>19</sup> Except when mutually substituting them in order to avoid monotony, I employ *Hispanic* in this specific sense, and *Latino/a* to refer to the U.S. descendants of Latin American and Iberian immigrants who tend to speak English as their first language and may or may not identify with their ancestors' cultural heritage.

Why *Hispanic* New York, then, and not *Latino* New York? Because I am not just talking of Latinos or Latinas in the U.S. sense of the word—nor am I talking exclusively from the point of view of U.S. history, but rather from a perspective that considers New York a node in a hemispheric and transoceanic network of cultural exchanges and cross-fertilizations. From this perspective, *Hispanic* is the most comprehensive term, since it allows us, for example, to link New York Spanish-language art and literary traditions with the larger cultural traditions of Latin America and Spain and, at the same time, to broaden the Latino national canon and the self-perception of the U.S. as a bilingual country.<sup>20</sup>

.... The underlying assumption for selecting the pieces gathered in this volume is precisely that New York embodies a hemispheric idea of the Americas, an idea anticipated by nineteenth-century authors such as Whitman and Martí but that only the twentieth-century wave of immigration made possible. In the following selections readers will find the threads of that rich multicultural heritage; by weaving them together I hope to help reconstruct an all-

encompassing narrative of the Hispanic New York experience with thought-provoking insight into the past, present, and future of our hemisphere.

## Notes

21.

U.S. Census Bureau, “The Hispanic Population,” census 2000 brief, table 3, The Largest Places in Total Population and in Hispanic Population. See <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-3.pdf>. See also U.S. Census Bureau, “Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin,” census 2000 brief, March 2001, and “U.S. Census Bureau Guidance on the Presentation and Comparison of Race and Hispanic Origin Data,” June 12, 2003; see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/compraceho.html>

22.

By the end of the 1700s, New York and Philadelphia constituted not only what William Charvat called the “publishing axis” that defined the country’s literary standards but also one of the leading Spanish-language print centers of the hemisphere, where exiles and revolutionaries published scores of periodicals and books that helped disseminate the political creed of liberalism and ideals of independence throughout Spanish America. William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America, 1790–1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), p. 23. See Rodrigo Lazo, “La Famosa Filadelfia: The Hemispheric American City and Constitutional Debates,” in Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, eds., *Hemispheric American Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers

University Press, 2008), pp. 57–74. According to Benedict Anderson, the nation-states that sprung to independence in British and Spanish America between 1776 and 1825 are a conspicuous example of the convergence of capitalism, print technologies, and language that “created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.” Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), p. 46.

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U.S. Census Bureau, *2005–2007 American Community Survey*, March 1, 2009, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=New+York+City&\\_cityTown=New+York+City&\\_state=04000US36&\\_zip=&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=New+York+City&_cityTown=New+York+City&_state=04000US36&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010); see also “Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2007,” Pew Hispanic Center, May 3, 2009, <http://pewhispanic.org/factsheets/factsheet.php?FactsheetID=46>.

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts: a) the decennial census, which is a count of every person living in the United States. The last census was conducted on April 1, 2010 (see <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>); by the time this book’s manuscript went to print, the census results were still unavailable; b) the Population Estimates Program, which produces annual estimates of the total number of inhabitants of states, counties, and cities. In the case of New York, those data are also reviewed by the Department of City Planning; and c) the nationwide American Community Survey (ACS), which aims at filling in the gaps between each census and may differ from Population Estimates due to their different statistical procedures. In 2000, according to that year’s census, New York Hispanics were 2,216,554, or one-third of the city’s entire population. The last ACS, conducted in 2005–2007 estimated the city’s total population as 8,246,310 people, of which 5,987,241 (72.45 percent) are classified as “Not Hispanic or Latino,” and 2,259,069 (27.39 percent) as “Hispanic or Latino.” See U.S. Census Bureau, *2005–2007 American Community Survey*. See also U.S. Census Bureau, “Methodology for the United States Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin” (Vintage 2008): April 1,

2000 to July 1, 2008, <http://www.census.gov/popest/topics/methodology/2008-nat-meth.html>.

The annual Population Estimates are also reviewed by NYC Department of City Planning demographers, who through a process afforded by the Census Bureau have successfully challenged the Bureau's 2007 population estimates for each borough. See <http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/challenges.html>. In July 1, 2008, according to NYC Department of City Planning, New York City's population reached a historical peak of 8,363,710, largely due to the increase of the Hispanic population. See "The 'current' population of New York City," July 1, 2009, <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml>, and Sam Roberts, "Hispanic Population Growth Pushed New York to Census Record" *The New York Times*, May 14, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/nyregion/14nycensus.html>

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. U.S. Census Bureau, *2005–2007 American Community Survey*. "Place of Birth" and "World Region of Birth of Foreign Born," March 1, 2009, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=16000US3651000&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR5&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US3651000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on). Between 2005 and 2007 exactly 3,028,174, or 36.72 percent of NYC's total population, were foreign-born; of the 63 percent that was native, 50 percent were born in New York. See *ibidem*, "Population and Housing Narrative Profile" at [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?\\_bm=y&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_NP01&-geo\\_id=16000US3651000&-gc\\_url=&-ds\\_name=&-\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_NP01&-geo_id=16000US3651000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=&-_lang=en).

**25**

. In Miami, the U.S. city that closest resembles New York as a compendium of all Latin American nationalities, Cubans constitute an estimate 48.61 percent of the total Hispanic population, which in turn amounts to around 68.8 percent of the city's entire population. See 2005–2007 ACS at [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bmy&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR5&-geo\\_id=16000US1245000&-gc\\_url=&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bmy&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US1245000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on), under "Hispanic or Latino and Race." In Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston, the three cities

that follow New York in the ranking of largest places in total population and in Hispanic population, the leading Latino group (Mexicans) represent an estimate 68.85, 73.85, and 75.79 percent, respectively, of the entire Latino population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2007 ACS, for Los Angeles,

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US0644000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on)

[qr\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR5&-geo\\_id=16000US0644000&-gc\\_url=&-](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US0644000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on)

[ds\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US0644000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on); for Chicago

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US1714000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on)

[qr\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR5&-geo\\_id=16000US1714000&-gc\\_url=&-](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US1714000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on)

[ds\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US1714000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on); and for

Houston [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US4835000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on)

[qr\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR5&-geo\\_id=16000US4835000&-gc\\_url=&-](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US4835000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on)

[ds\\_name=ACS\\_2007\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US4835000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on). See also U.S.

Census Bureau. The Hispanic Population, Census 2000 brief.

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Pew Hispanic Center, “U.S. Population Projections: 2005–2050, 2.11.2008,”

<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=85>.

27

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Press Release: “U.S. Hispanic Population Surpasses 45 Million Now 15 Percent of Total,” May 1, 2008,

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/011910.html>.

See Table 1: “Estimate of the Population by Race Alone or in Combination and Hispanic Origin for the U.S. and States, July 1, 2007.”

28

Ibid.

29

U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population*, p. 3.

30

Louis DeSipio, “More Than the Sum of Its Parts: The Building Blocks of a Pan-Ethnic Latino Identity,” in Wilbur C. Rich, ed., *The Politics of Minority Coalitions: Race*,

*Ethnicity, and Shared Uncertainties* (New York: Praeger, 1996), p. 186.

31.

Félix Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985). This book played a crucial role in setting the theoretical framework for the ongoing discussion on pan-Latinidad.

32.

Among the active African-Caribbean members of the Antillean independence movement was a very young Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, the future donor of the collection that gave birth to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and who had recently migrated to New York from his native Puerto Rico. See *infra* . . . and note 3, page... (in Carmen Dolores Hernandez article).

33.

The growth of Latin American indigenous languages in New York is one of the novelties brought by the immigration surge of recent decades. The phenomenon comprises Amerindian languages from: 1. Mexico; 2. the Andean region, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, etc.; 3. the rest of Central and South America.

1. According to Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas (National Institute of Indigenous Languages), there are 364 surviving Amerindian languages and dialects in that country. They are divided into 11 language families, 68 linguistic groups, and their regional forms, which are sometimes mutually unintelligible. The two main linguistic groups of the Mixteco-Poblano region (the states of Puebla, Oaxaca, and Guerrero, where most of New York's Mexican immigrants come from) are Náhuatl, or Náhua, and Mixteco, which includes the variances of Tlapaneco and Zapoteco. As with the rest of Latin American indigenous languages, there is no official information about the number of their local speakers, which varies significantly depending on geographical factors, age, and level of schooling. Younger Mixteco-Poblano immigrants, for instance, tend to be bilingual Spanish and Mixteco or Náhua speakers, for since the 1990s the preservation of pre-Colombian languages has been a federal policy in Mexico. On the

other hand, there are also cases of monolingual Mixteco speakers, such as the members (mostly elders, women, and children) of a Staten Island community of immigrants from San Pedro, Oaxaca. A third Mexican linguistic group that is supposedly present in the New York area is Mayan, although this is most likely to be found among Guatemalan and other Central American immigrants. I am deeply thankful to Eduardo Peñaloza, coordinator of Educational Programming of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Consulate General of Mexico in New York, for this information. See Mexico, Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, “Catálogo de las lenguas indígenas nacionales: Variantes lingüísticas de México con sus autodenominaciones y referencias geoestadísticas,” March 15, 2009, <http://www.inali.gob.mx/catalogo2007/>.

2. There are two major Amerindian languages from the South American Andean region: Quechua and Aymara. Quechua (alternative spellings: Quichua, Keshua, also Runa-Simi) was the lingua franca of the Tahuantinsuyo, or Incan Empire; after the Spanish Conquest it continued to be used—in fact, it was expanded—as the local language of government and local administration. As in the cases analyzed before, Quechua is a family of languages and dialectical variances, sometimes very different among themselves. It is found in a vast geographical area ranging from Colombia to Northern Argentina. There are an estimated twelve million bilingual or monolingual Quechua native speakers, most of them in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia; although there are no official statistics, in the New York area it is certainly spoken or understood by most immigrants from those countries. Aymara was the second largest language of the Incan Empire, and today is spoken by approximately two million people in Bolivia, parts of Peru, and Northern Chile. It can be heard mostly in Bolivian communities, which in the Northeast are concentrated in Washington, DC and Virginia. I thank Miryam Yataco for this information. The most comprehensive information about Quechua and Aymara can be found at <http://www.quechua.org.uk//Eng/Main/>.

3. Although as in the previous cases, there is no official information on the

number of speakers, it seems reasonable to expect a repetition of the pattern existing in the home country. For example, it is likely that the four-thousand-odd Paraguayans living in New York City speak Guaraní, Paraguay's official language alongside Spanish, and so on.

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I have elaborated more extensively on this point in my essay "Is New York the New Center of Latin-American Literary Culture?" *Salmagundi*, vol. no.161–162 (Spring-Summer 2009): 182-191. A previous Spanish-language version, "Nueva York y la literatura hispanoamericana," appeared in *El País*, May 17, 2007, [http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/Nueva/York/literatura/hispanoamericana/elpepiopi/20070517elpepiopi\\_5/Tes/](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/Nueva/York/literatura/hispanoamericana/elpepiopi/20070517elpepiopi_5/Tes/).

35

Luis Rafael Sánchez, "El cuarteto nuevayorkés," in *La guagua aérea* (San Juan: Cultural, 1994), pp. 23–34. The complete passage reads: "New York would be the other capital of Puerto Rico if it were not already the capital of all of Spanish America. In New York the capital that Bolivar envisioned, embracing all of the hemisphere's Spanish-speaking nationalities, is being built." ["Nueva York sería la otra capital de Puerto Rico si no lo fuera de toda Hispanoamérica. En Nueva York se cimenta la capital ensoñada por Bolivar, la que aloja todas las nacionalidades de la America en español."]

36

See Juri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, introduction by Umberto Eco (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). I owe the idea of connecting Lotman's notion of semiosphere with the concept of Border and Latino multi-identities to Donna Kabalen de Bichara, a professor at Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, México, who in turn presented it at the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Conference held in Houston, Texas, November 14–15, 2008. For the idea of cities as nodes of a network of material and symbolic exchanges, see Saskia Sassen, ed., *Global Networks, Linked Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

37

For a brief survey of the new directions in academic research and literary work, see

Myrna García-Calderon, “Current Approaches to Hispanic Caribbean Writing: An Overview,” *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 74 40, no. 1 (2007): 61–72.

**38**. See Orlando José Hernández, prologue to his translation of Graciany Miranda Archilla, *Hungry Dust/Polvo Hambriento* (Lima: Latino Press, Latin American Writers Institute, Hostos Community College, CUNY/Santo Oficio, 2005), pp. 21–22.

**39** The closest thing to an “official” definition of Hispanics in the U.S. derives from Public Law 94-311 of 1976, which required the collection and publication of data of “Americans of Spanish descent” in censuses and in surveys produced by schools, public health facilities and other government agencies. In compliance to that piece of legislation, in 1977 the Office of Management and Budget developed the “Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity,” also known as Statistical Policy Directive 15, or Directive 15. Revised in 1997, these Standards define Hispanic or Latino as any “person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race”; the term “Spanish origin” can be used in addition to the former two. (Note that this definition includes non-Latin Americans, such as Spaniards, but excludes non-Spanish Latin Americans, such as Brazilians, as well as their European counterpart, Portuguese.) For a history of Directive 15, see Alice Robbin (2000), “Classifying racial and ethnic group data: The politics of negotiation and accommodation.” *Journal of Government Information*, 27(2), 129-156. The U.S. Census Bureau, however, does *not* apply Directive 15 to counting Hispanics; instead, it relies entirely on the self-definition provided by the respondents to the census questionnaire. In this regard, a 2006 Pew Hispanic Center survey found that generally, 48 percent of Latino adults describe themselves first by their country of origin; 26 percent by the terms Latino or Hispanic; and 24 percent by the term American. As for a preference between “Hispanic” and “Latino”, another Pew survey found that 36 percent of respondents prefer the term “Hispanic,” 21 percent prefer “Latino,” and the rest have no preference. See Jeffrey Passel and Paul Taylor, “Who’s Hispanic?” Pew Hispanic Center, Special Report, 5.28.2009, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/111.pdf>.

The classic scholarly reference on this issue is Suzanne Oboler’s *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of Representation in the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). For some recent academic contributions, see Jorge Duany, “Puerto

Rican, Hispanic or Latino? Recent Debates on National and Pan-ethnic Identities,” *Centro Journal* 15, no.2 (Fall 2003): 256–67; and Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Malden, MA, Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). For a preliminary bibliography, see also: Harvey Choldin, “Statistics and Politics: The ‘Hispanic’ Issue in the 1980 Census,” *Demography* 23, no. 3 (August 1986): 403–18; David E. Hayes-Bautista and Jorge Chapa, “Latino Terminology: Conceptual Basis for Standardized Terminology,” *American Journal of Public Health* 77, no. 1 (January 1987): 61–68; Edward Murguia, “On Latino/Hispanic Ethnic Identity,” *Latino Studies Journal* 2, no.3 (September 1991): 8–18; Clara E. Rodriguez, *Changing Race: Latinos, the Census, and the History of Ethnicity in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Ilan Stavans, *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity in America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995); Xavier F. Totti, “The Making of a Latino Ethnic Identity,” *Dissent* (Fall 1987): 537–43; and Fernando M. Treviño, “Standardized Terminology for Standardized Populations,” *American Journal of Public Health* 77 (1987), 89-72. On the issue of panethnic identity, see David López and Yen Espíritu, “Panethnicity in the United States: A Theoretical Framework,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13 (1990): 198–224, and the bibliographical references included at the end of Milagros Ricourt and Ruby Danta, “The Emergence of Latino Panethnicity,” this volume. See also: “Identity Politics and the Latino vs. Hispanic Debate: A Data-Driven Learning Guide,” Ann Arbor, Michigan: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2009-04-16. Doi:10.3886/identitypol, retrieved August 31, 2009, <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/OLC/identitypol.xml>.

Last year, the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court generated a spirited public discussion on the meaning of the terms Hispanic and Latino (as well as on the “wise-Latina” Sotomayor’s remark). Some the most relevant contributions in the print media and the blogosphere are: Esther J. Cepeda, “Living in Label Land: Are you Hispanic or Latino? May 31, 2009 <http://www.600words.com>; Michael Jones-Correa Answers About Latino Politics, *The New York Times*, City Room, June 12, 2009, <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/12/answers-about-latino-politics-part-3/>; Neil A. Lewis, “Was a Hispanic Justice on the Court in the 1930s?” *The New York Times*,

May 26, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/us/27hispanic.html? r=2>; Gregory Rodriguez, “The generic Latino: What does the nomination of Sonia Sotomayor really say?” *The Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 2009 <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jun/01/opinio/oe-rodriguez>; and Passel and Taylor, *cit.*; Jonathan Zimmerman, “Judge Sotomayor: A Mythic ‘Hispanic’”

40

Pedro Henríquez Ureña, trans. Gilbert Chase, *A Concise History of Latin American Culture* (New York: Praeger, 1966). Original Spanish-language version, *Historia de la cultura en la América Hispánica* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura económica, 1947). See also Henríquez Ureña, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945).

41

For a brief presentation of the conflicting sides of this issue and a critique of an exclusionary view among Latino scholars, see Edmundo Paz Soldán, “Latino, Latin American, Spanish American, North American, or All at the Same Time?” in Nelsy Echávez-Solano and K. C. Dworkin y Méndez, eds., *Spanish and Empire* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007), pp. 139–52. See also Debra Castillo, *Redreaming America: Towards a Bilingual American Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005); and “Los ‘nuevos’ latinos y la globalización de los estudios literarios,” in Boris Muñoz and Silvia Spitta, eds., *Más allá de la ciudad letrada: Crónicas y espacios urbanos* (Pittsburgh: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2003), pp. 439–59.