SWITCHING OF ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION
AMONG NEW YORK CITY LATINOS

By

ROSALYN NEGRÓN

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To Al
with whom all things are kept in perspective
I was sixteen when I decided that to become an anthropologist made perfect sense. Teenage aspirations born of lucid, idealistic dreams and a save-the-world complex are often solitary musings. At least they were for me. Having reached this point in my development as an anthropologist, the dreams are no less lucid or idealistic. But they are now grounded in appreciation for all those who have, in one way or another, seen to it that I get to this point.

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As the nation’s ethnic diversity continues to grow, issues like resource distribution, ethnic conflict, or social and political movements cannot be understood in terms of neatly packaged identities in competition. Today, an increasing number of people regularly switch from ethnicity to ethnicity in normal discourse, in an attempt to maximize their social, economic and political interests. While ethnic identification has long been understood by anthropologists to be a contextual phenomenon, less is known about how the process of ethnic identification switching works. The research examines this process ethnographically and linguistically – that is, how people negotiate between multiple ethnic identifications in everyday contexts – among Latinos in Queens, NY.

The 18 months of research proceeded in two phases: an ethnographic phase and a survey phase. This dissertation presents the results of the ethnographic phase, particularly the cases of two Latino men from Queens. In the ethnographic phase I accompanied eleven men and women, one week each, in a variety of daily routines and observed and recorded their verbal interactions. During my time with them I also collected life history interviews and social network assessment questionnaires. Using digital recorders, each participant independently collected an additional week’s worth of their verbal interactions.
Basing the analysis on transcribed interviews and naturally-occurring conversations, this research shows that there is no one-to-one relationship between biographical ethnicity and the use of ethnic markers. Flexible identification spanned multiple levels of inclusiveness (e.g. Latino, Ecuadorian, serrano, Quechua). Repertoires also crossed seemingly distinct boundaries (e.g. American, Ecuadorian, Colombian). Ethnic markers, particularly language-related ones, were manipulated in a number of creative ways by members and non-members alike, pushing the limits of what constitutes ethnic group membership and challenging notions of ethnic authenticity. People tended to switch ethnic identifications by changing to or emphasizing a certain language or dialect (including accents), or simply by keeping quiet and letting others’ assumptions take the lead. The reasons for switching ranged from the relatively minor (getting free drinks), to the quotidian (connecting with friends or landing better dates), to the vital (avoiding problems with immigration, making a sale, or in a job interview). When unpacked, these subtle and routine acts of flexibility reveal that ethnicity cannot be said to be who a person is, but rather a way of seeing and doing. The implications of this for the measurement and reporting of ethnicity (e.g. in the Census), and for understanding the Latino pan-ethnicity are discussed.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 A Rubric for Ethnic Choice

The topics that I have explored in my dissertation research have from the idea’s inception represented parallels in my own experience as a Latina who had come to the US at a young age. I did not necessarily set out to explore these parallels, as in a personal quest, but was certainly informed by my experiences and those of my family. I was born in Puerto Rico to a Puerto Rican father and a Dominican mother. My own mother has admitted to identifying as Puerto Rican for various reasons that lie somewhere between shame and convenience. Ethnicity for me has always been a matter of context and flexibility: Puerto Rican, Dominican, both of these, Latina, American, none of these.

Quite often I am asked to explain my ethnicity and appearance to others. Colombian, Egyptian, Pakistani, Venezuelan, Brazilian, Moroccan; I have been different things to different people. Undoubtedly, this quality, to be for others what they want to see in me, has helped me in my research. My ethnicity is not easily identifiable by my appearance alone. When I speak English my Spanish accent is barely detectable and when I speak Spanish my Puerto Rican accent is lost in the phonological mix that it has become, with the adoption of non-Puerto Rican elements of stress and intonation. Only the keenest ears can hear me transform /ɾ/ into /l/ or delete intervocalic and syllable final /s/ as is characteristic of the Puerto Rican dialect. I have acquired aspects of my speech, my style, my behavior, and even my perceptions from my many encounters, purposely sought or otherwise, with diversity.

A recent encounter provided the opportunity to apply to myself the very questions I’m asking about others’ use of ethnic identity in everyday contexts. I was invited to Shabbat service at the Lubavitch temple on Eastern Parkway in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, where the Lubavitch Chasidic movement has its headquarters. I had little idea of what the evening
would be like. The two Jewish companions who invited me explained the evening in Spanish. I was to visit “como turista,” “un templo ortodoxo,” a place where one of them had spent a week of contemplative study. I did not know that by “ortodoxo” they meant Chasidic. I was prepared for sitting alone in the women’s gallery. Yet I was surprised at my reaction upon exiting the subway stop at Eastern Parkway that the temple was Lubavitch.

I felt like the fact that I was not Jewish would matter more in this particular, conservative, context. I knew that it had to do with my perception of the seemingly impenetrable boundaries that surrounds the Chasidic community in New York City. I became self-conscious of my status as an outsider and it did not help that I had come conspicuously dressed for an evening out after the service. I was certain there would be no hope of me blending in. How curious, I thought to myself, that I earnestly sought for my ethnicity to be as undetectable as possible. But in my status as an outsider I wavered between pride and insecurity. I prided myself in the idea that somehow I would be one of the few Puerto Ricans who had come to worship among the regulars, that somehow I was making a statement about inclusiveness, cultural open-mindedness, and spiritual universality. My insecurity came from fear of not being able to respectfully perform the steps of worship without being completely humiliated – in essence, that I would be excluded. Certainly I could not just blend in.

As soon as I entered the women’s area I was approached by one of the worshipers about the bag that I was carrying. “You cannot carry here,” she said. Confused, I asked her what I was to do with the bag. I felt at that moment that there was no clearer sign of my outsider status than my total confusion about the protocol. This was the kind of encounter that I wanted to avoid but feared would be unavoidable. We went back and forth briefly about what I was to do with this bag and my embarrassment was apparent to another woman who had entered the area. “What is the matter?” asked the older woman. I explained that I had just learned that I could not carry a
bag but that I had no other place to put it. She immediately asked the dreaded question, “Are you Jewish?” After a brief pause, like that before a reluctant confession by someone caught in the act, I said that I was not. She then replied, “Then what is the problem?” At this revelation the younger woman who I encountered originally replied with some amazement, “You are not Jewish? But you look so Jewish!”

This encounter left me with several thoughts to mull over as I waited for the service to begin and well after it ended. What did it mean that as a non-Jew, the rules did not apply to me? Had I known the rules, would my non-Jewishness have been detected? What did my affiliation with the Jewish friends who accompanied me count for? How might have my interaction with the women been different if I spoke Hebrew or Yiddish? After deeper reflection, this experience helped organize my thinking about situational selection of ethnicity. In particular, it recalled and highlighted factors that form a rubric, if you will, for ethnic choice: image, context, knowledge, and performance.

Successful performance of a Jewish identity, (in my case passing (see Chapter 2) as Jewish), like in the successful performance of any identity, is linked to self-image (perception of ourselves) and outward image (the perception of others). In the social context of the Lubavitch temple, the cues presented by my physical appearance were translated in a way that led at least one woman to assume I was Jewish. Had I been in a mosque, my physical cues would have likely been interpreted differently. Context can determine how cues are read. Therefore the range of possible interpretations available for manipulation is extensive. Particularly for someone who can project an ambiguous or universal image, as is my case. A successful performance would have been further assisted by my knowledge of behavioral rules. Within the

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1 This is why increased ethnic diversity, inter-marriage, and multi-racial people mean that flexible ethnic self-presentation will become more common and more important to understand. It also points to the fact that some people and groups are still limited in their ethnic options (Waters, 1990).
context of this short-term encounter, knowledge of rules combined with my outward image would have afforded me entrance as an insider. As I will show, this sort of entrance, albeit temporary, has a number of advantages and tangible social and economic consequences. Long-term encounters and relationships are based on deeper knowledge of socio-cultural norms and models (whether ethnic based, work based, religion based, or language based). This knowledge can be collected through prolonged participation in particular social networks. And while it affords them an important advantage, people born to an ethnic group or having familial roots to that group (biographical ethnicity) do not have a monopoly on that knowledge.

However sensitive the issue may be about who indeed can claim to be Jew, Puerto Rican, Navajo or American, had my intention been to completely assimilate myself into the scene, and had I been prepared with all the behavioral markers, I would have accomplished at least initial acceptance. I became keenly aware of the fact that the criteria for inclusion in this particular context did not require that I be born Jewish. Apparently, my physical appearance, my image, raised no flags. I had, unknowingly passed that test. My behavior was the give away—what with carrying the bag on Shabbat, not speaking Hebrew or Yiddish, not knowing the liturgy, and the general social awkwardness that all these insecurities created. In a personal way the scene raised questions that I will attempt to tackle in this dissertation: Can anyone claim ethnic authenticity? Should researchers focus on observable markers or self-reports of some internal state to predict behavior? How key is language to the expression of ethnic identification?

The questions are many and as I will show through case studies of two ethnically flexible Latino men, situational ethnicity is a fruitful theoretical departure for students of ethnicity. With a few notable exceptions (c.f. Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Brubaker 2004; Bailey 2000; Okamura 1981; Nagata 1974), the now pro forma acknowledgements of ethnicity as situational, contextual, fluid, and flexible, give limited consideration to what this mutability implies. First, if
ethnicity is a contingent phenomenon then it cannot be said to dwell at the core of a person or who a person is. Essentialist or primordialist approaches (Shils 1957; Geertz 1963) to ethnicity have been outmoded in preference of constructivism. There is a second implication of flexible ethnicity: ethnicity is contingent because it entails a system of categories, schemas, and models that are not necessarily deeply embedded in the self (or even constructed) but accessed or activated situationally. A third implication of flexible ethnicity is that with so many choices available, which to choose, where and when is likely governed by predictable rules. More research should attend to the careful consideration of these rules. One crucial reason for a focus on the rules that govern ethnic self-presentation (Goffman 1959) is that they will illuminate what is captured by ethnic categories. For example the rules for ethnic self-identification using labels on a census form are different from rules for using language to self-identify to a group of intimate childhood friends. Knowledge of how people arrive at a particular ethnic choice is critical for understanding that choice and what is captured by that choice. It further brings attention to which ethnic choice can best predict a person’s behavior.

1.1 Research Question and Objectives

The guiding research question in this research is: under what conditions do Latinos in Queens, NY switch their ethnic self-identification? This involves the following specific objectives:

1) to document the incidence of multiple ethnic identifications among research participants. To accomplish this, I collected life history interviews that focused on the ethnic background of informants and their experiences with ethnicity (see Appendix A).

2) to determine the contexts under which people use ethnic identifications. This involved collecting data on characteristics of the communities and social networks of participants (see Appendix B). It also involved prolonged shadowing observations of the participants in their day-to-day activities.

3) to determine the resources acquired by using various ethnic identifications. In addition to the prolonged direct observations of verbal and nonverbal behavior, I
conducted brief and informal follow-up interviews to confirm observations about
the benefits received from an invocation.

4) to determine behaviors involved in switching. Along with direct observations,
this involved the linguistic analysis of participants’ verbal interactions.

5) to identify some basic rules for invoking one ethnic identification over another.
This will be based on the careful comparison of two case studies of Latino men who
switch frequently.

1.2 Conclusion

The ethnicity literature provides numerous examples of people invoking (or hiding) their
ethnicity to strengthen or weaken their ties to kin, community and the state and thereby to
improve access to economic and political resources (Barth 1969; Horowitz 1975, 1985; Kelly &
Nagel 2002; Patterson 1975). Less is know about how people go about doing this in their daily
lives. Beyond the potential for this work to make such contributions, I was delighted to find that
the research participants thought this to be highly relevant for them. Several opined that the
everyday experiences of urban Latinos were under-represented, and were excited about
contributing to work that would do just that. With several issues related to Latinos playing
prominently in the national stage (e.g. immigration legislation and bilingualism), my research
documents intimately how these themes play out in people’s everyday lives.
CHAPTER 2
ETHNICITY, IDENTIFICATION, AND SWITCHING

2.0 Introduction

For this research I stood humbly on the shoulders of giants in the fields of ethnicity studies, sociolinguistics, and cognitive anthropology. In this chapter I will cover some foundational research on ethnicity and identity, and specify the operationalizations of key variables in this study. A basic premise of this research is that ethnicity is a process with cognitive, linguistic and behavioral dimensions. To this effect I will present three areas compatible to such an approach. These are 1) categories, cultural models and schemas; and 2) social networks as sites for cultural knowledge acquisition and activation. A third area is the study of language itself; this will be covered in chapter three as it pertains to ethnicity. Finally, I will discuss some particulars of switching: why it’s done and how it’s done.

2.1 Ethnicity

In the most minimalist sense, ethnicity arises out of the cognitive, human tendency to categorize in order to simplify our environment. Thus, it tends to be conceptualized in terms of categories or groups. The earliest classifiable ethnic differences likely arose between human populations separated by space \(^2\). Each developing cultural patterns uniquely suited to their environment. With the emergence of ethnic difference so far in the human past, a key component of myriad definitions of ethnicity is the notion of origin, or common descent (whether real or imagined) (c.f. Weber (1922 [1968]); Horowitz 1985; Levine 1999). Thus, early theorizing on ethnicity was of a primordialist slant, where ethnic groups were characterized as “natural and eternal historical entities, with hermatically impermeable social boundaries (Gil-

\(^2\) Perhaps this categorization was an extension of an even earlier parsing method: kin vs. non-kin. Ethnicity has been conceptualized as an extension of the obligations and benefits associated with one’s own kin group. When ethnic group leaders appeal to their fellow members for support, their rhetoric is often intertwined with the rhetoric of kinship and familial obligation (Horowitz 1985, Fenton 1999).
White, 2001: 516),” and for which people develop deep-seated sentiments (Shils 1957; Geertz 1963). The intellectual companion to this view is the (now widely recognized as fallacious) belief that ethnic groups (and races) have essences.

Countering essentialist / primordialist thinking, the field is now dominated by constructivism; a diffuse theoretical approach that posits groups and categories like race, ethnicity, and gender as socially constructed, conditional, and contextual. However, scholars in recent years (Levine 1999; Gil-White 2001; Brubaker 2004) have raised concerns that the pendulum has swung too far. For example, Gil-White (2001) argues that while true that “ethnies” do not have essences, research data consistently show that people tend to process ethnic groups as if there were something “natural” or “essential” about them (see also Caulkins 2001). He writes:

These days ‘good’ anthropologists do not essentialize groups, and therefore no self-proclaimed essentialists are found in anthropology journals. But ordinary folk are not good anthropologists or sophisticated constructivist scholars. Quite to the contrary, they are naive essentialists…(2001: 516).

Gil-White goes on to layout a sophisticated cognitive scientific explanation for why humans are essentializers who tend to interpret ethnic groups as “species”. In his own critique of the state of constructivism within anthropology, Levine notes, “The news is full of ethnic cleansing and genocide while the anthropologists stress that ethnicity is 'invented' and set out to 'decentre' the notion (1999: 165).” Additionally, Brubaker suggests that constructivism has become so banal as to yield little of the theoretical friction from which new questions and directions emerge. Brubaker calls for constructivist scholars to go beyond “simply asserting that ethnicity, race, and nationhood are constructed… [and] help specify how they are constructed (2004: 18).” Their work suggests that what is missing is an approach that makes explicit the implicit cognitive leanings in the scholarly use of concepts like categorization, classification,
essentialism, construction, subjectivity, et al. to understand ethnicity (see Brubaker 2004). In its oft used conceptualization as solely a social construction, ethnicity is imbued with an indeterminacy that makes it incompatible with empirical inquiry. A key appeal of cognitive approaches to ethnicity is the methodological possibilities that such a shift offers.

2.2 Ethnicity and Cognition

2.2.1 Classification and Categorization

In the 1950s, Manchester School anthropologists working in Africa, notably Mitchell (1956) and Epstein (1958), described the classifications that urban Africans used to make sense of the extreme ethnic diversity of their surrounds as a “cognitive map” (Levine 1999). However, the most influential, early cognitive turn in ethnicity studies was proposed by Frederik Barth (1969) in his introduction to “Ethnic Groups and Boundaries”. Barth argued that because ethnic distinctions persist even in the face of group boundary change, what defines the ethnic group is cognitive self-ascription and ascription. The cultural activities often used to tell groups apart, (the “cultural stuff” as Barth called it) distract the analysis of how groups maintain cohesiveness and establish social networks and institutions through social interactions (Hechter 1974; Alba 1990). While cultural characteristics provide the basis for group solidarity and relationship and boundary maintenance (Hechter 1974), they may change in form and relevance through time and space; what is important is how they function to shape patterns of social interaction.

Barth’s work, like Mitchell and Epstein’s before it, centers classification and categorization as definitive elements of conceptualizations of ethnicity. Since then, it has been included as a key theme in several overviews of the field (Cohen 1978; Horowitz 1985; Eriksen 1993; Banks 1996; Jenkins 1997; Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Fenton 1999). The appropriateness of cognitive approaches to ethnicity is clearer yet when we consider, as Lakoff
suggests, that categorization is basic to “our thought, perception, action, and speech (1987: 5)”.

But framing ethnicity as a cognitive classificatory system, still begs the question of what is particularly “ethnic” about it. What classificatory criteria can be termed “ethnic”? Here I will borrow Levine’s definition: “ethnicity is that method of classifying people (both self and other) that uses origin (socially constructed) as its primary reference (1999: 168).” I further elaborate that the basis for inferring (or presuming) and communicating origin, among the participants in this study, is both physical appearance (e.g. somatic, ornamental) and behavior (e.g. language, discourse, socializing). Following Brubaker (2004), I treat ethnicity, race, and nationality as one domain rather than three, and use the terms interchangeably throughout the thesis.

Definitional clarification must also be made of identity. Using the above conceptualization as a platform, in its most basic sense, ethnic identity refers to the self-ascription or self-classification part of ethnicity. It does not preclude that people can classify themselves (and others) in multiple ways. And it does not assume that there is such a thing as a core self-classification or ethnic identity. Brubaker argues that identity, has been employed to describe how individual and collective action is driven by both instrumental “structurally determined interests” and non-instrumental “particularistic, understandings of self” (2004: 44). Rather than use the ambiguous identity term to do this conceptual and explanatory heavy-lifting, he offers identification (active, processual) and self-understanding (dispositional) as alternatives. Many of the behaviors discussed in this study are best described as ethnic identification. As the data will show, in identifying or categorizing oneself to others, a person can act independently of non-instrumental self-understanding.

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3 In this dissertation I will use “ethnic identification” instead of “ethnic identity”. I make exceptions when discussing or citing work done by others, to not alter the original meaning intended by their use of “identity”.

4 Along with identification Brubaker also suggested categorization and with self-understanding he suggested self-location.
2.2.2 Prototypes, Schemas and Cultural Models

Building on theory and methods in cognitive psychology and linguistics, cognitive anthropology has developed a number of conceptual tools relevant to ethnicity. In this research I apply schema theory and cultural models. Starting with what were fundamentally questions about categorization, pioneering efforts in cognitive anthropology sought to understand how people labeled different parts of their world (Goodenough 1956; Tyler 1969; Quinn and Holland 1987). In the course of the field’s development, it was noted that some category items were more representative of that category than others (Loundsbury 1964; Berlin and Kay 1969; Rosch 1977; Kay and McDaniel 1978; D’Andrade 1995; Quinn and Holland 1987). These stereotypic members, or prototypes, were found among kinship terms (Lounsbury 1964), color categories (Berlin and Kay 1969), and furniture types (Rosch 1975). The idea has been extended to prototypical event sequences and categories of people like bachelor and lie (Fillmore 1975; Coleman and Kay 1981; Sweetser 1987).

An important implication of prototype theory is that prototypes can serve as schemas, or schematic mental representations, for categories of things (Quinn and Holland, 1987). Schemas represent and process information and have been defined as significant to how humans perceive and interpret experiences (Casson 1983; Quinn and Holland 1987; D’Andrade 1995; Brubaker 2004). Along with related concepts like cultural models (D’Andrade, 1987), stereotypes, and scripts, a schema functions like “a kind of mental recognition ‘device’ which creates a complex interpretation from minimal inputs (D’Andrade 1995: 136).”

Two characteristics of schemas are particularly applicable to this research. First, schemas range from the universally shared to the idiosyncratic (Casson 1983). Schemas that are “intersubjectively,” though not necessarily universally, shared, have been described as cultural models (D’Andrade 1987). Examples of cultural domains analyzed from a cultural models
perspective are parenting (Lamm and Keller, 2007), business success (Caulkins, 1998), marriage (Quinn 1996), and anger (Lakoff and Kövecses (1987). I argue that categories like Puerto Rican, Mexican or Latino, can be further understood as intersubjectively shared schemas used to interpret the behavior of others and to frame one’s own behavior. The second pertinent characteristic of schemas is that they are organized hierarchically, so that top levels represent core concepts and lower levels have missing pieces that can be filled in by environmental / situational cues or “default values” (Minsky, 1975; Casson 1983; D’Andrade 1995). Ethnicity is one example of such environmental or situational cues, and can be “slotted” into schematic templates to “generate ethnic variants or subtypes of the schemas (Brubaker, 2004: 77).” As I will discuss in Chapter 3, other such “contextualization cues” (Gumperz 2001) include code- and dialect-switching.

2.2.3 Cognitive Structures and Behavior

This study is primarily concerned with how cognitive structures related to ethnicity motivate and guide behavior. Such a project must contend with the fact that much of the knowledge represented and processed by such structures (e.g. schemas) is implicit.

Furthermore, schemas process knowledge outside of conscious awareness (D’Andrade 1995). To be sure, behavior can be inconsistent with related knowledge structures constructed from what people say (Wimmer 2004; see Bernard, et. al. 1984 for a related discussion).

What then is the relationship between cognitive structures and behavior? Quinn and Holland (1987) acknowledge that cultural models cannot be assumed to always translate into behavior. Neither does all behavior stem from such cultural conceptualizations. However, they do insist that in enabling actors to make interpretations and inferences about experiences

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5 Quinn and Holland (1987) point out that most cultural knowledge falls somewhere in between inaccessibility and accessibility.
(particularly when these call for action), schemas and models can be goal-defining (ibid.; see also Quinn 1996; D’Andrade 1992; Lutz 1987; White 1987). They write:

[Cultural models] are used to perform a variety of cognitive tasks. Sometimes these cultural models serve to set goals for action, sometimes to plan the attainment of said goals, sometimes to direct the actualization of these goals, sometimes to make sense of the actions and fathom the goals of others, and sometimes to produce verbalizations that play various parts in all these projects… (ibid.: 6).

Thus, a final key point: the researchers stress the importance of talk itself, as action. A basic tenet of sociolinguistics, this notion will be explored in Chapter 3.

2.3 Social Networks and Ethnic Identification

The above discussion on ethnicity and cognition recalls one of Marvin Harris’ (1968) early critiques of cognitive anthropology. Cultural knowledge alone can not account for cultural differences, Harris argued. Emphasizing cognitive structure without accounting for environmental structure and infra-structure misses the mark (ibid.). But how to link the two? As a starting point, Brubaker’s (2004) comments, on the relationship between wider structure and the activation of schemas, are helpful:

Schemas must be activated by some stimulus or cue. Activation depends on proximate, situationally specific cues and triggers, not directly on large-scale structural or cultural contexts, though structural and cultural changes can affect the distribution of such proximate cues and thereby the probabilities of activation of schemas (ibid.: 76).

Thus, one way to link structure and infra-structure to the activation of schemas is by way of some mediating condition. Social networks provide such a medium. Network theory is considered an important approach for studying the link between individual action and overarching economic and social processes (Goss and Lindquist 1995).

In this research I take the position that patterns of ethnic identification are best understood by taking the following network-relevant issues into account: 1) reiterating Harris’ (1968) point
above: the link between broader structural conditions and patterns of ethnic identification. 2) the role of social interaction for shaping ethnic self-understanding; 3) the role of social context (e.g. social networks) in determining which of various social identifications and related behavior is appropriate in a given situation; 4) the link between multiple spheres of interactions and the development of multiple ethnic identifications; and 5) the normative pressure exerted by social networks and network components, which limit or determine the development of ethnic identification and ethnic-self understanding.

The importance of social networks for ethnic identification cannot be overstated. As sites of socialization, through interactions with network members people learn network-normative behavior and the cultural knowledge that guides such behavior. It is within their immediate social networks that people first come to think of themselves as part of “us” and distinct from “them”. But social networks can correspond with multiple social locations. Work networks, family networks, recreational networks, neighborhood networks; each of these associated with particular social identifications. Similarly, our network can reflect multiple ethnic group ties. Interaction in different areas of our social networks often requires the use of distinct frames of reference and behaviors. Thus, not only are social networks vital for attaining cultural knowledge but also “crucial environments for the activation of schemata, logics, and frames (DiMaggio 1997: 283).”

Because this dissertation addresses the use of multiple ethnic identifications, I’d like to discuss more in-depth how social networks can help us understand the development of these. Changes in ethnic self-understanding and the use of multiple ethnic identifications are tied to structurally determined patterns of interaction. For example, it is easy to see how an ethnically-mixed person can invoke multiple ethnic identifications. Depending on the influence of immediate kin, they can adopt either their mother’s or their father’s ethnic affiliations or develop
a third, multi-ethnic (or multi-racial) self-understanding out of the unique experiences and relationships that arise from straddling two worlds (Spickard & Fong 1995; Stephan & Stephan 1989). The 2000 Census indicates that claims of multiple identities will continue to rise. Forty-two percent of all multiple-race responses were given by young people younger than 18 years, even though they made up only 26% of the US population. This may foretell higher rates of multiple-race reporting in future censuses (Morning 2003). Important infra-structural and structural conditions (spurred by immigration and inter-ethnic unions) are translating themselves into individual behavior, by way of changing patterns of social interaction.

For people with a single biographical ethnicity, development of more than one ethnic identification is similarly tied to structurally-determined social relations. Multiple ethnic identifications can arise through linguistic or religious conversion (Horowitz 1975). The adoption of a new language or religion affects a person’s social network. With the development of new relationships comes pressure to conform to norms and aims defined by the new group (Cohen 1974). Over time people in such situations may develop a sense of belonging to the new group, while still possessing the cultural knowledge that linked them to another.

More commonly, multiple ethnic identifications emerge because group membership exists at multiple levels of inclusiveness (ibid.). For example, people can identify in terms of their national, racial, or regional affiliations. Each of these levels has corresponding behavioral markers. The ethnic categories invoked by people tend to be more specific, or less inclusive, as they come into daily contact with members of their own ethnic group (Cornell 1988; Kaufert 1977; Nagel 1994). For example, a Cuban woman can use the more inclusive category of Latina when interacting with members of non-Spanish speaking ethnic groups, as Cuban to another Latina, or may use the more specific category of Marielito when addressing other Cubans (Nagel 1994).
Finally, people who travel frequently across national borders (e.g. transnational migrants) may also find that they must ethnically categorized themselves in multiple ways. With changes in social context there are changes in how a person is perceived by others. Much to the chagrin of many immigrants who have lived for a long time in the US, they are categorized and treated as Americans when they return to their country of origin – even if they do not identify themselves as American when they live in this country. Consider terms like pocho (what Mexican nationals call Mexican-Americans and Chicanos to the north) and nuyorican (a Puerto Rican born and raised in New York). These have been used for decades to describe persons who identify themselves bi-ethnically.

2.4 Switching between Multiple Ethnic Identifications

We can now turn to a discussion of the central concern of this research: ethnic identification switching. The concept of ethnic identification switching, or situational ethnicity (Paden 1967; see Okamura 1981) traces to the work of Max Gluckman and his students in urban Africa. Evans-Pritchard (1937) had observed that among the Zande of Sudan beliefs in witchcraft were invoked according to what was situationally convenient. Building on this observation, Gluckman (1958 [1940]) described what he called situational selection, in which people claimed membership in a group depending on the situation. Cohen (1974) noted that situational ethnicity can be observed in Africa when two or more people from different ethnic groups want to signify the differences between them, especially when the groups represent different socioeconomic scales.

Ethnic identification switching\(^6\) is the use of different ethnic identifications across social contexts. As discussed above, basic to this process is the notion that people have access to

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\(^6\) In the literature, the term most often used to describe this process is situational ethnicity (Paden 1967; Cohen 1974, Nagata 1974, see Okamura 1981). “Ethnic identity switching” is also used (c.f. Eschbach & Gomez 1998). For consistency henceforth I will refer to this process as ethnic identification switching or EI switching.
multiple ethnic identifications. By “access” I refer to cultural knowledge (of markers and behavioral rules), shemas and models associated with an ethnic identification. Thus, EI switching should not be understood as some sort of mysterious intra-psychic transformation. At times it is an automatic shift between multiple, situationally appropriate frames of reference. Other times, it is the willful manipulation of categories and markers. As discussed above, people acquire the cultural knowledge that makes EI switching possible through their participation in social networks. I argue that the more diverse a network is the more opportunities (and needs) there are for learning diverse ethnic markers, models, etc. Therefore, while a single ethnic identification can be dominant as a reflection of network composition, it does not preclude the development of other identifications.

I’d like to the make distinctions between various types of switching. I should add that the boundaries between each of these types are by no means unyielding. They may best be understood as gradations of ethnic self-presentation.

1) Passing or Crossing (Sweetland 2002; Bucholtz 1999; Lo 1999; Cutler 1999; Rampton 1995)

Refers to the act of presenting oneself according to the behavioral and/or appearance-related norms and expectations of an ethnicity other than one’s biographical ethnicity. When I originally developed the idea for this research I did not expect that the most conspicuous switches I would witness would be passing. Both of the focal participants of this research (see Chapters 6 and 7) reported and were observed doing this sort of switch. Roberto, whose primary identification is Venezuelan, has passed himself off as Puerto Rican and convincingly used both Puerto Rican accent and lexicon to defend this claim. Abel, an immigrant from Ecuador, used similar strategies to present himself as Colombian, particularly when trying to make the sale. Passing was done by other participants in the study as well. Adalberto, who identifies as Mexican-American, told of an oft-repeated scenario he encounters in gay clubs. When talking to potential Latino partners he avoided identifying as Mexican, opting instead for passing as Puerto Rican. He explained his perception that in the gay community Mexican identity has an undesirable, repressed, generally un-cool connotation. This contrasted with Puerto Rican men who were celebrated for their fun-loving openness and unabashed sexuality. I should add that I never witnessed the women in this study making these bold sorts of switches and most did not.

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7 This dominant identification is likely the one to which people attach the most affective value. Or in other words, it may be another way to conceptualize “self-understanding” or “self-location.”
There was the exception of Lisa, who dislikes when strangers ask about her ethnicity. Lisa’s parents are from El Salvador and she can pass for Southeast Asian. She reports teasing curious strangers with this ambiguity by claiming to be Asian (“just to mess with them”). However, unlike the examples from the men, Lisa did not expect to be taken seriously.

2) Accommodation (Giles, et. al. 1987)

This act is usually manifested discursively (although here I extend the term to include kinesics and ornamental acts of self-presentation), and involves strategies that invoke ethnic identifications in order to achieve social approval, distinctiveness, or communicative efficiency. In this research I link it to ethnically-germane contexts, but the concept has been applied to other areas (Coles 1992; Aronsson, et. al. 1987). When accommodating, speakers may converge to the speech of others, diverge or maintain neutrality in their speech. This often occurs in contexts where passing would be impossible or inappropriate, but where ethnicity is prized as a way to achieve the acceptance of others. Achieving acceptance by one group at times happens vis-à-vis differentiation from another group. Situationally adopting mannerisms or styles of dress are some non-linguistic means of realizing this type of switch. A central motivation for accommodation as I’m developing it here is to signal familiarity with the norms and expectations of a particular ethnicity without the heavy commitment or potentially humiliation associated with other types of switching. In this way, people can (at least indirectly and temporarily) identify with an ethnic category.


Refers to the contextual act of shifting between multiple biographical ethnicities or different categorical levels of inclusiveness. The key difference between differentiated forms of identification and other types of switching is that the identifications used correspond more directly with ethnic self-understandings (usually the sorts preceded by “I am ___”). In other words, such switching is rarely called into question (by both self and others), because they are deeply grounded in personal experience. Examples of this sort of switching are easily found among ethnically-mixed people who choose to cultivate all aspects of their ethnic heritage. As such, multiple ethnic markers and models are readily available to them for presentation and/or activation.

2.5 Some Reasons Why People Switch

While EI switching is a multi-layered process that can depend on cognitive, interactional, socio-structural factors, what people get out of switching fall under four main categories (Nagata 1974): 1) for expediency of an exchange (i.e. to achieve immediate advantage); 2) as a consideration of social status (this refers to the comparative reference group principle, which stems out of a desire for positive association, particularly when questions of socio-economic status arise); 3) to express social distance; and 4) to express solidarity. In this study, participants
reported or were observed using ethnic flexibility to defend citizenship claims, make “the sale,” acquire special privileges, to strengthen social bonds, avoid rejection or threat, and in job interviews.

1) Expediency and social status considerations

In a city like New York, ethnic networks and the trust-based transactions based on those networks are crucial to the economic advancement of ethnic groups. To the extent that people invoke an ethnic identification to create and maintain bonds with others who share a similar identification, they capitalize on the business partnerships or job opportunities that materialize from these interactions (Bonacich 1973; Hannerz 1974; Ooka & Wellman 2006; Patterson 1975; Sanders & Nee 1987). For some Latinos, economic advancement means invoking a more inclusive, pan-ethnic identification (i.e. “I am Latino,” rather than “I am Dominican”) (Padilla 1984).

Economic advantages occur at the intersection between state policies and personal goals. A number of state regulations exist that confer economic resources on the basis of ethnic affiliation (Nagel 1994, Fenton 1999). In the US this includes affirmative action legislation and policies regulating the distribution of aid and incentives to Native American tribal members. With the ongoing immigration debate, the ability to claim American identification is at a premium. In this research, some participants reported using American citizenship claims when applying for work or when entering the country from a trip abroad. Therefore, the American identification marker *par excellence* is the American passport. For example, one participant reported identifying himself as Dominican in most situations except in an international airport. While he considered his nationality to be “100% Dominican,” he acknowledged that his “legal nationality” was American. As this and other participants’ cases illustrate, the substantial transnational movement of people is making international frontiers less significant. State tools for marking citizens and controlling the flow of people through its borders, (e.g. the passport) have become less a way to claim citizenship and more a marker of the flexible nature of citizenship (Ong 1999).

More minor invocations take place in daily life. Multi-linguals may recall moments where a language switch was used to smoothen a transaction at a restaurant, store, or when traveling. EI switching is not unlike this process (as I will later show they often go hand in hand). Consider, for example, a Dominican-Puerto Rican participant who reported rarely using the Dominican identification; except, she added, “To get free drinks at a cruise once because our waitress was Dominican. I think it was like six drinks.”

2) Expression of social distance

People can also use ethnic identification to create a distinction between them and others perceived to be economically disadvantaged. Waters (1994) writes of a second-generation West Indian teenager living in New York City who asked her mother to teach her a West Indian accent. She planned to use the accent when she applied for a job or a place to live. The teen’s strategy was to emphasize aspects of herself that set her apart from African Americans, whom she perceived to be less economically successful. It’s also not uncommon for people to invoke an identity associated with the more visible ethnic groups in the broader social context (Alba 1990). For some Latinos in New York City this has meant identifying as Puerto Rican. There
are cases in which people choose to distance themselves from the ethnic group they were born into. Adalberto’s gay club example is one such case. Another Dominican participant indicated that to avoid being “judged” he rarely used Dominican identification. He explained that as a “Euro-Latino” who left the Dominican Republic with his family for political reasons, he did not share the associations made of dark-skinned Dominicans who arrived for economic reasons.

3) Expression of solidarity

As a basis for forging bonds with others, invoking different ethnic identities is a way of both strengthening and broadening one’s social support network and improving social relationships. Among ethnically-mixed Latinos (i.e. their parents belong to different ethnic groups), Stephan & Stephan (1989) found that participants reported feeling one distinct ethnic identity when with the closest members of their social network, while more than one identity was salient in a number of other contexts. It has also been observed that a person will often adopt the ethnic identity of a spouse or partner (Spickard & Fong 1995). Similarly, Kaufert (1977) found that Ghanaian university students reported switching to a more inclusive ethnic identity that de-emphasized their ethnic ties to a particular town or dialect in order to facilitate their adjustment as newcomers to university life. Their more exclusive kin-based identity, on the other hand, was most frequently invoked to mobilize the resources of their family to help them through their studies.

2.6 Conclusion

I this chapter I overviewed the ethnicity and cognitive anthropological literature that has guided my analysis and interpretation of the data presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Drawing on this literature, as well as work in sociolinguistics, and my observations from the field, I define three types of switching: 1) differentiated identification, 2) accommodation, and 3) passing or crossing. Cognitive and social network perspectives undergird much of the discussion in this chapter, and throughout the dissertation. To complete my theoretical framework, in Chapter 3 I cover research from sociolinguistics.
3.0 Introduction

Language is both a marker of ethnic identification and a medium for its construction. It reveals the categories, logics, schemas, and presuppositions that enable people to order and act upon their social worlds. As such, language facilitates intra-group cohesion by reproducing and reinforcing shared cultural models. The compatibility between language and a cognitive approach to ethnicity goes beyond methodological considerations; they represent a unified theoretical approach to the mental processes involved in ethnic identification.

Linguistic flexibility (multi-lingualism, multi-dialectism, multi-sociolectism) coupled with an ethnically ambiguous physical appearance, offers speakers exceptional control over ethnic self-presentation. As this dissertation will illustrate, some Latinos are in an especially advantageous position to manipulate ethnic and linguistic categories, expectations, and assumptions. The US Latino pan-ethnicity includes at least nineteen dialects (Lipski, 2004), socio-historical roots in nearly every continent, and distinct immigration histories within the US. This makes Latinos an ideal group for examining the salience and negotiation of multiple ethnic identifications.

3.1 Language and Ethnic Identification

Besides a medium for cultural reproduction and individual actualization, language serves as a tool for categorization of self and others (Fishman 1977; Giles & Johnson 1981; Giles & Coupland 1991). In multi-ethnic settings language may be the least ambiguous criteria used to categorize people into ethnic groups. Even among groups that speak the same language, lexical, grammatical and phonological variations are important ways to distinguish between various national or regional populations. Researchers assert that among all the criteria for membership in an ethnic group, language is potentially the strongest cue to a person’s ethnic identity.
This is because a person’s accent, speech style, and language choice is acquired, in contrast to inherited characteristics such as physical appearance. Language markers are used by people as a cue to the strength of a person’s ethnic identification. Depending on what associations are made of a particular identification, this can lead to inferences about someone’s personality traits, or their suitability for a job (de la Zerda & Hopper 1979; Kalin & Rayko 1980 in Giles and Johnson 1981).

Ethno-linguistic identity theory (Giles and Johnson 1987) suggests that when ethnic group identity is salient for individuals, they may attempt to make themselves favorably distinct on dimensions such as language. Distinctiveness strategies include speech style accentuation, code-switching, and the use of vernacular. Often these strategies are used to exclude out-group members from within-group interactions (Drake 1980). Therefore, language is not just an attribute of a person, group, or community but an important way that people identify themselves and others (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985).

In fact, LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) see language as an act of identity and suggest that linguistic behavior involves shifts of identity by the speaker. Through these identity shifts during interactions, speakers affiliate with or disaffiliate from particular groups. LePage and Tabouret-Keller were particularly interested in bilingual and multi-lingual (or bi-dilective) interactions, and how acts of identity were accomplished through the choice of lexis, grammar, pronunciation or code. However, as Sebba and Wooton (1998) point out, monolinguals can do this as well, albeit through different communicative resources (e.g. style-shifting (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998; Bell 1997)). What is distinct about bilinguals is that they can invoke ethnicity through a more varied range of linguistic strategies.

Flexibility over ethnic self-presentation has clear social, economic, and political advantages. Fishman (1989: 37) writes that modern man is “a shrewd calculator of membership
benefits.” Through variable ethnic identification a person can profit from the resources offered in each of the various groups she may belong to. As a marker of ethnic identification, language is one key tool for securing such resources. Just as ethnic groups vary in socio-economic status relative to other groups, so do languages and dialects. Often the survival of a language and the extent to which a group will identify themselves by a particular language will depend on its economic viability (Kwan-Terry 2000; Giles and Coupland 1991; see also Bernard (1996) for a related discussion about preserving vanishing languages).

But beyond the instrumental advantages, it is clear that language is notable for the way that it helps shape individual self-understanding. One hypothesis predicts that the loss of knowledge of a native language results in the loss of one’s original group identity (Pool 1979 in Eastman 1981). Language is featured as a key variable in scales that measure acculturation or the salience of particular ethnic identities (Phinney 1992; Cuéllar, et. al. 1995). A way to understand this is that loss of an ethnic group-related language leads to weakened ethnic identification when language loss limits the extent to which one can forge relationships with other members of that group. Zentella (1990a) addresses this issue in her study of Puerto Rican return migrants. For these migrants, learning or maintaining Spanish is tied to the survival of their Puerto Rican identity. The right of non-Spanish speaking Puerto Ricans to claim Puerto Rican identity has been challenged and labeled pseudo-ethnicity (Seda Bonilla 1975). Rosario (1983, cited in Zentella 1990a) writes: “el ser puertorriqueño envuelve el conservar vivo el idioma corriente de nuestro pueblo” (‘being Puerto Rican entails the live conservation of the common language of our people’).

Then there are those who argue that the relationship between language and identity is not so clear cut. Researchers point out that linking social identity with behavior, (in this case language), is complex and despite refined methods and theoretical developments, not a
straightforward endeavor (Milroy 1980, Fishman 1999). For instance, a person may have two or
three languages or dialects available but a multiplicity of social identities, therefore the
relationship between these is not one-to-one (Sebba and Wooton 1998). In some cases, what
language a person knows and uses and what ethnic identification they claim may be unrelated
(e.g. an immigrant may know American English quite well but not think of themselves as
American). Similarly, ethnic groups are not the only groups with distinct communicative styles
(e.g. Yorkshire). Yet another example of the complex relationship between language and self-
identification can be found among groups that maintained a distinct ethnic identity after language
loss (e.g. East Indians in the Caribbean) (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985).

Consequently, despite the fact that language is integral to group cohesion and inter-group
relations, there are a number of factors that complicate the study of language as a marker of
ethnic identification. How can researchers distinguish between EI-related language use and
language use with purely linguistic functions? How do researchers determine which of several
identities is invoked in communication? What evidence do researchers need to conclude that a
language marker used by one interlocutor is received and understood by another? In the next
sections I present some approaches that have been put to the task of answering these types of
questions.

### 3.2 Approaches to the Study of Language and Identification

#### 3.2.1 Cultural Models in Language (Holland and Quinn, eds. 1987; Wimmer 2004)

Early research on cultural models used semantic analysis to understand how cultural
knowledge is organized. The listing, labeling, and sorting exercises employed to this theoretical
task were effective for describing relationships among words and sketching out maps of cultural
domains. However, they fell short of revealing the underlying cultural understandings that gave
these words meaning. For that, far richer linguistic data are needed. Quinn and Holland (1987:
An important concern in such research is discovering what is left unspoken when people talk about things in the world, whether they are social categories and institutions like gender and marriage, or natural processes like evaporation. Presupposed knowledge is revealed, for example, in the information dropped out between propositions, a cognitive task supported by proposition-schemas (Lakoff 1984). Image-schemas and metaphors (ibid.) enable speakers to make multiple relations across physical and cultural domains. Thus, they present the researcher with a way to construct cultural models by tracing these connections. The function of models, schemas, and metaphors is not unlike that of contextualization cues developed in the field of interactional sociolinguistics (discussed below). Both allow interactants to efficiently invoke shared knowledge needed for interpretation. In my own work, the cultural models approach will provide a framework for analyzing the way that language-related ethnic markers index presupposed worlds during interaction.

I have also tried to understand how Latinos in New York City categorize their ethnic landscape and how these categories are revealed in their talk. Recent work by Wimmer (2004) is an elegant example of a cognitive approach working in tandem with other methods for a nuanced view into ethnic categorization processes. Wimmer applied discourse and social network analyses to data collected from three Swiss immigrant neighborhoods. Based on participants’ discourse, he identified a central cognitive scheme that distinguished between “order” (we) and “disorder” (they). Thus, a key finding of the study was that participants did not primarily divide themselves and others according to ethnic categories. One might predict that this descent-blind distinction mirrored descent-blind group formation. However, results of the network analysis yielded mixed results. On the one hand, the personal networks of participants were largely
ethnically homogenous: Italians related mostly with Italians, Turks with Turks, etc. Still, exogamous relationships (particularly among the second generation) corresponded with the central cognitive scheme found through the discourse analysis. The study might have benefited from a consensus analysis (Romney, et. al. 1986) to determine whether the cognitive scheme was most salient for those whose networks reflected descent-blind relations. But on the whole, Wimmer’s work demonstrates how complex the link between thought, discourse, and behavior can be. It’s precisely this sort of mixed-method approach that the task calls for, and which I have tried to apply in this research.

3.2.2 Language and Social Networks

Wimmer’s study is, to my knowledge, unique in combining cognitive, discursive, and social network analytic approaches to understand ethnicity and ethnic group formation. While a number of studies have addressed social network issues in language use (Ghosh Johnson 2005; Milroy and Milroy 2002; Bailey 2000; Kerswill and Williams 2000; Eckert 2000; Penny 2000; Zentella 1997), little has been done on the relationship between network attributes and ethnic identification switching. In Chapters 6 and 7 I explore the notion that ethnically heterogeneous networks encourage linguistic and ethnic flexibility. Here, I will discuss some of the foundational studies of language and social networks.

Early on, Bloomfield (1933) theorized on the relationship between language and networks of interaction. He pointed out that linguistic diversity is related to the amount of verbal communication between speakers. These communication networks mediate between language and various environmental factors. In Bloomfield’s view, political, economic or geographical variables are not directly reflected in the speech. These variables affect language only to the extent that they facilitate or constrain communication. Thus, early dialect studies demonstrated that speech variation is a function of networks of relationships, rather than environmental factors.
Later applications of the network concept to language are characterized by an interest on how networks mediate between social identities and language use. Two works in particular stand out: Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) influential study of code-switching in Norway and Milroy’s (1980) cogent book on social networks and language variation in Belfast. Milroy was among the first to systematically apply the network concept to the study of linguistic variation.

Gumperz (1982) noted that network structure is influenced by many factors unique to a person (e.g. things like occupation and education). Because of this, networks cut across socio-economic categories (Blom & Gumperz 1972). This means that speakers from similar social backgrounds may show very different patterns of language use. Rather than use these social categories (e.g. class, the limits of which are not always measurable), to predict language use, the network approach takes both social and individualistic factors into account. Therefore, networks can account for variability in individualistic linguistic behavior in communities (Milroy 1980).

In her work on urban kinship relations Bott (1957) identified two types of role systems, or networks. These have been applied fruitfully in sociolinguistic research. The first type, closed, or family role system, is associated with communal values and stress status distinctions. Closed networks encourage propriety in speech and lead to restrictive use of codes among its members (Gumperz 1972). Along the same lines, these closed networks (also referred to as “dense” in the literature – see below), tend to reinforce the use of a local language variety (Milroy and Milroy 1992; Labov 2001). On the other hand, open, or person-role systems, emphasize individual creativity and oblige members to use codes well suited for to the transmission of new information, often with standardized features common in the wider society (ibid.; Gumperz 1972). In Hemnesberget, Norway Blom and Gumperz (1972) found three types of networks that conformed to Bott’s original formulation: local, kin-based networks; non-local networks of urban
migrants doing business in the local town; and those that occupy a middle ground and include both local and non-local ties. The local-kin based networks were, in Bott’s term, closed networks where local values and the local dialect prevailed. The non-local networks were open, and characterized by the use of the standard, pan-Norwegian dialect and adherence to national / regional values.

Milroy (1980; see also Milroy and Milroy 2002) adds another characteristic to the networks identified by Bott and developed in linguistic research by Gumperz. According to Milroy, closed networks tend to be multiplex, meaning that each individual in a network is likely to be linked to others in more than one capacity. Open networks, on the other hand, tend to be uniplex. In addition to the multiplexity concept, Milroy used network density as another measure of network activity. Density measures the extent to which members of a person’s network are linked to each other. Milroy proposed that rather than use the terms open and closed, we could speak of these networks in more systematic terms, as being more or less dense. Because of the dominance of kin relations in closed networks they tend to be more dense than open networks. Dense networks have the capacity to maintain normative consensus among its members and language use is just one of the behaviors that these networks define.

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8 Addressing linguistic change, Penny (2000) and Eckert (2000) have developed these ideas further. In an argument reminiscent of Granovetter (1973), Penny (2000) states that linguistic change spreads across groups via weak ties. The argument being that strong ties exert normative pressures. Eckert (2000) agrees, but adds that the identity of the weak tie will determine their influence as agents of change.

9 Parallel concepts developed by sociologist Ron Burt (1992) are applicable here. Network redundancy, where a person’s network members are all tied to each other, results in the sort of redundancy of shared ideas and values described by Milroy and Gumperz. Social actors able to bridge (or fill in structural holes) between enclosed social networks benefit from the kinds of new ideas from which creativity springs. In terms of language use, the structural holes model may illuminate how innovative linguistic features emerge and spread across groups. In fact, according Labov (2001) linguistic innovations spread when they are brought to influence leaders central to their network and having weak ties to other networks.
In an intriguing twist to the work just outlined, Valentín-Márquez (2006) presents the case of /s/ realized as a glottal stop in Puerto Rican Spanish. Valentín-Márquez notes that this linguistic variable has become more common in recent years. Citing use of the glottal stop among reggaeton musicians, he looks to the genre for insights about the linguistic feature’s emergence. According to Valentín-Márquez, reggaeton has mediated American cultural practices adopted and adapted by adolescents on the island. Valentín-Márquez was able to show statistically that young women were more likely to realize their /s/ using a glottal stop. This is despite the fact that they were more likely to express negative attitudes towards reggaeton. Valentín-Márquez turned to their social networks and found that they belonged to a local evangelical church network. He went on to argue that use of the innovative feature was to gain acceptance within adolescent social networks where reggaeton was common frame of reference. In other words, because they could not relate via shared musical tastes, they adopted the glottal stop to distinguish themselves from adults and align themselves with their peers (ibid.). So while membership in the local church network exerted enough normative pressure to discourage the young women from adopting reggaeton music and culture, the strong pull exerted by their peer groups have encouraged their linguistic innovation. They seem to fall somewhere in between the closed / open, conservative / creative distinction suggested by the literature on language use and social networks. Might they be the structural hole-bridging innovators described above (f. n. 12)?

As would be expected, how language was used as an ethnic marker in my study depended on whether participants interacted with close ties, weak ties, or strangers. Language for signaling group membership with network members tended to: 1) be automatic or taken-for-granted, 2) encourage in-group cohesion, and 3) happen less frequently with close network members.
When invoking their ethnicity with strangers, participants aimed to create a favorable first impression on them. In those cases where contact was temporary, some participants admitted to invoking whichever identification would expedite their immediate goals (e.g. free drinks, make a sale, fast service). If they could easily get away with it, people were more likely to pass or cross in these sorts of transient encounters. Language use is the most effective way to manage first impressions in ethnically relevant contexts. A well placed lexical item borrowed from a target dialect, a switch to Spanish in an English dominant conversation, or an emphasized accent efficiently aligns the necessary frames of reference. I should note that labels or pre-packaged ethnic origin responses (“I’m Mexican,” “I was born in D.R. but raised in the US,” “My parents are from El Salvador”) are the most direct ways to signal ethnic affiliation but not always the most practical. Unless another person asks the question, (“Where are you from?” or “What’s your ethnic background?”) to volunteer such information could disrupt conversational flow or seem out of context. There are ways to get people to ask these questions (e.g. by asking them first), but one would have to wait until the contextually appropriate turn. Labels and pre-packaged responses are also potentially dissonant for the speaker, specifically if the speaker is passing or can’t back up a claim. This is why most of the participants in this study did not use labels other than Latino/Hispanic and the nationality labels that pertained to them. The one exception was Abel (see Chapter 7) who silently nodded when an interlocutor said, “You’re Colombian, right?,” even though he has no ties to Colombia. It was common, however, for several of these participants to code-switch, dialect-switch, and borrow the lexicon of countries and cultures they could not otherwise claim on the basis of origin.

Often the possibility for the sort of ethnic flexibility Abel and others in this study displayed stems from network membership. I have noted that through our participation in social networks we learn the models of thought and behavior that allow us to be recognized as part of a set.
Thus, Ghosh-Johnson (2005) reports of Iris, a young Cuban and Mexican woman who aligned herself with Puerto Ricans in her talk. Iris had mostly Puerto Rican friends and was considered Puerto Rican by this friendship group. Similarly, Sweetland (2002) describes the case of Delilah, a white woman who authentically used African American Vernacular English in her daily interactions. Consider the following excerpt from an interview with one of Delilah’s black friends:

In explaining why it didn’t bother him that Delilah ‘spoke Ebonics,’ Will noted that it only made sense: ‘Well she basically black.’ When I pointed out that she was, by all other indications, white, he responded with a list of reasons why Delilah wasn’t ‘really white’: ‘She listen to the good shit [rap], act stupid and loud just like we do, she talk to all black guys basically…but it’s not like she just doing it cause they black and she’s tryin to be down or something like that. That’s how she is. She been like that…I mean she come up with blacks so that’s how she acts (ibid.: 525).

What is implied from these examples is that the ascription or acceptance of others as belonging to a category serves a mutually reinforcing role with ethnic self-presentation.

3.2.3 Speech Accommodation

Giles first developed Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) in his study of interpersonal accent convergence during interviews. SAT addresses the motivations and constraints governing speech shifts during social interactions. The theory also accounts for the social consequences of these shifts. Giles and his colleagues (1987) describe speech accommodation as strategies that achieve social approval, distinctiveness, or communicative efficiency. Drawing on social psychological similarity-attraction research, speech accommodation theory states that a person can induce another to evaluate him or her more favorably by reducing certain differences between them. Giles, et. al. (1973) note that in exchange theory terms (see Homans 1961, Byrne 1969); an accommodation may involve certain costs for the speaker. These costs include expanded effort and potential identity change. Therefore, such behavior may only be initiated if
possible rewards are available. Research does indicate that the more effort a speaker puts into accommodating to a listener’s speech, the more favorably they are viewed (Giles, et. al. 1973; Giles, et. al. 1987).

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) extend elements of SAT to their framework for the analysis of identity in linguistic interaction. They use the term *adequation* to emphasize, the fact that in order for groups or individuals to be positioned as alike, they need not – and in any case cannot – be identical, but must merely be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes (ibid.: 599).

Like in speech accommodation, *adequation* is a process whereby interactants emphasize similarities and de-emphasize differences to align themselves to others. But whereas Giles (1973) suggested that these sorts of accommodations can (but do not have to) lead to identity change (described above as a “cost”), Bucholtz & Hall highlight adequation as one of the tactics of intersubjective identity construction. The authors also offer *distinction* as a counterpart to *adequation*.

### 3.2.4 Code Choice

Code-switching (CS) is the use of two or more linguistic varieties (i.e. distinct and unrelated languages or two styles of the same language) in an interaction. Here, I discuss dialect-switching as a case of CS. A switch can occur between turns, within turns, and intra-sententially (Bailey 2000). Blom and Gumperz (1972) see switching as falling into at least one of three overlapping categories: *situational*, *metaphorical*, and *contextualization* switching. In *situational* switching, context (in which ethnicity can factor in) determines which code will be used. For example, people look for a number of group membership indicators, including gender, age and status, and social setting to assess the appropriateness of a code choice or code-switching itself. Becker (1997) suggests that speakers don’t CS unless they know the linguistic background and social identities of interlocutors. This (and other types of switching) suggests
conscious action, but it should be noted that some switches occur below the level of awareness. With metaphorical switching, the social setting remains outwardly unchanged, but the code-choice may signal a change in topic or social role. Blom and Gumperz’s example of situational switching involved a government clerk and a local citizen attending to business matters in the standard official language. Upon completion of the transaction they stepped aside for a private chat using the more personal local dialect. Finally, unmarked, contextualization switches center the act of switching itself as a conversational resource (Gumperz 2001; Bailey 2000; Li 1994; Auer 1984). Thus, “individual switches serve instead as contextualization, or framing, cues to mark off quotations, changes in topic, etc. from surrounding speech (Bailey 2000: 242).”

In terms of the identification or identity functions of CS, bilinguals can change the directionality of CS (from English to Spanish or from Spanish to English; regional dialect to a majority language). It is also common for bilinguals or multi-linguals to scatter words or phrases in a second language throughout a mostly monolingual conversation. For example, Spanish-speaking bilinguals may briefly switch to words and phrases like *bueno, lo que sea, y todo, pos, andale pues*, to mark their Latino ethnicity (Jacobson 1982, Toribio 2002). A special case of CS is language or code-crossing. This is characterized as the unexpected (and often viewed as “illegitimate” or “inauthentic”) switch to an out-group code (Rampton 2000; Rampton 1995). One of the ways that code-crossing differs from established conceptualizations of CS, is that crossing is said to require little competence (Rampton 1995; see also Sweetland 2002). Though not phrased like this in the literature, one feature of crossing that seems amenable to schema or cultural model analysis is described by Rampton (2000: 55) as follows:

> When a relatively unexpected language code gets used, it usually inserts images of a particular social type into the flow of interaction, and it both instantiates and sparks off heightened displays of the participants’ orientations to one another, to the representations, and to the relationship between them.
The identity functions of CS are among the most widely explored areas in bilingual studies (Williams 2006; Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Greer 2005; Bailey 2001; Gafaranga 2001; Cutler 1999; Lo 1999; Sebba and Wooton 1998; Zentella 1997; Rampton 1995). The prevailing conceptual orientation is that identity is constructed or co-constructed discursively, rather than a pre-existing given of category or group membership (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Within this framework, code-choice is but one of several linguistic strategies that encode a relationship between a social identity and aspects of the social context.

My own approach is kindred to the constructivist conviction that a person can identify independently of category membership. However, I prefer to think of CS in the sense put forth by Gumperz (2001; see also Levinson 2002): as cues that establish the context in which messages are interpreted and understood (see section 3.5.2 below). Furthermore, I am sympathetic to Conversation Analytic frameworks that examine the links among social categories, linguistic strategies, and context made relevant by the participants themselves (c.f. Schlegoff 1997; Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Gafaranga 2005; Cashman 2005). As De Fina, et.al. (2006:5) put it:

The researcher's task is then to reconstruct the processes of adscription and negotiation of identities as they are manifested within the activity in which participants are engaged. These arguments echo Schegloff’s polemic stance against the imposition of ad hoc interpretive categories by “politically informed” analysts.

Dialect switching was one form of CS commonly found among the participants in this dissertation study. Who switched to which dialect and why, suggested patterns of dialect classification and use consistent with that found by Zentella (1990b). Among Latinos in New York, class, race and education affects the extent to which Spanish speaking groups assimilate each other’s dialects (ibid.). Zentella investigated dialectical contact at the lexical level in the various New York City Spanish varieties. Her findings point to a number of social barriers to the
adoption of lexical items from both Puerto Rican and Dominican Spanish. Zentella particularly found widespread rejection of the Dominican lexicon by Colombians, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans. In contrast, the Dominicans were the only group that adopted from all other groups without exception. Zentella suggests that Colombians, Cubans and Puerto Ricans contribute to Dominican linguistic insecurity by their widespread rejection of Dominican Spanish. I would add that another dialect not adopted by the New Yorkers in my own study is Mexican Spanish. With the exception of expression like “andale pues” or “orale” to caricature or mock Mexicans, non-Mexican participants in this study did switch or accommodate to this variety of Spanish.

For Guitart (1982) speakers of radical dialects, (e.g. Caribbean Spanish), tend to imitate conservative speakers, not vice versa. This suggests that radical dialects are reserved for members of one’s own group and more conservative speech is used in business and other contacts with out-group members where the economic stakes are higher. However, Zentella (1990b) offers evidence to the contrary. She observed that some conservative speakers switched their code because of their identification with a group of radical speakers. For example, some Mexicans who married into Puerto Rican families (Zentella herself is part Mexican and part Puerto Rican) or South American community workers in Dominican neighborhoods who switched because of political ideology. Labov (1972) and Waters (1994) have shown the tendency for non-black groups to adopt African American Venacular English (AAVE), particularly those whose networks includes more Blacks. In general, dialect crossing may be done in certain instances for very practical purposes. Some adopt the Puerto Rican dialect to avoid persecution by immigrant authorities given that all Puerto Ricans are US citizens.

To be exact, this sort of dialect-adoption can best be described as accent-adoption. Emphasizing or hiding an accent is a possible way to either invoke a positively evaluated identification or de-emphasize a negatively evaluated one (Waters 1994; Giles and Coupland...
1991). As Cutler (1999: 431) points out, scholars have “commented on the relative ease with which outsiders can acquire phonological and lexical features of another dialect vs. the difficulty of acquiring the grammar” (c.f. Labov 1972; Labov and Harris 1986; Ash and Myhill 1986). Blom and Gumperz (1972) distinguish between dialect switching (co-occurrence of lexical, phonological, and morphological rules) and monolingual style-shifting, “which may take place at the phonological level only (Milroy 1980: 34).” However, neither is a choice between discrete entities (ibid.).

3.3 Analyzing Language and Interaction

Recognizing that a combination of approaches is a good way to proceed in sociolinguistic research (Boxer 2002), three analytical approaches have guided my work with the linguistic data: discourse analysis in general, and conversation analysis and interactional sociolinguistics in particular. All are concerned with talk-in-(naturally occurring) interaction.

3.3.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) describes a broad range of methods and orientations used to study language use, both in its spoken and written forms. In general, discourse is understood to be anything beyond the sentence level. Some discourse analysts, particularly critical theorists, examine the broad range of linguistic and nonlinguistic social practices and ideologies that construct and sustain social inequality (Schiffrin, et. al. 2001). The analysis of spoken discourse usually requires long stretches of, ideally, naturally-occurring talk. These are analyzed at multiple levels and dimensions including sounds, gestures, syntax, lexicon, style, rhetoric and meaning. To varying degrees depending on theoretical and disciplinary orientation, discourse analysts also consider participant attributes as it pertains to a talk sequence.
3.3.2 Ethnography of Speaking and Interactional Sociolinguistics

As the name suggests, ethnography of speaking (ES) unites ethnography with linguistic analysis (Hymes 1962). Hymes (1968) argued that speaking was an area of importance for the anthropological study of behavior. He wrote that; “[t]he ethnography of speaking is concerned with the situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking as an activity in its own right” (ibid.: 101). Discovering patterns and functions of speaking involves intensive speech community research. Speech communities are those where its members share knowledge of the communicative constraints and options governing a significant number of social situations (Gumperz 1972). The researcher must collect information on local norms and values and the local social system before analysis and interpretation of the speech event (the basic unit of analysis of verbal interactions) can take place. In ES data is characteristically naturally occurring speech.

One of the objectives of ES is to determine what members of speech communities know about when, where and with whom to use linguistic features: i.e. communicative competence. In some communities, competence is determined by how appropriately members alternate between varieties within their linguistic repertoires. These are the totality of linguistic resources available to members of particular speech communities (Gumperz 1972) and can include dialects, languages and speech styles. The appropriateness of language choice is dependent on extra-linguistic factors like setting, participant attributes (e.g. social identity of speakers), and communicative intent. Thus, in ES research, context is of primary importance.

In fact, research shows that language use can vary according to the domain where a speech event takes place (Fishman 1972). According to Fishman (ibid.) domains are “institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences” (441). These include family, friendship, religion, education, and employment (Greenfield 1968). Each of these domains is characterized
by specific role relationships (social statuses), locales and topics. Fishman argues that domains allow us to understand that language choice is part of broader sociocultural norms and expectations.

Grounded in earlier ES studies Gumperz went on to develop Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS). Gumperz sees IS as bridging the gap between research on cultural and linguistic diversity and constructivist approaches that focus on localized interaction (Gumperz 2001). Thus, a fundamental concern of IS is shared and non-shared interpretations and the background knowledge needed in the interpretative process. Like ES, IS takes non-linguistic factors like setting and participant attributes into account. Both are regarded as micro-ethnographic in their analysis of interaction. Gumperz (1972) suggested that the analysis of language use and speech events involves the analysis of a significant and representative range of different contexts. Only through systematic and painstaking fieldwork can regularity in the activities bound to ethnic group identities be discovered.

Interactional Sociolinguistics departs from ES in its central concern on miscommunication in ethnically diverse environments. Advancing this agenda, Gumperz introduced the concept of *contextualization cues*. These, usually, prosodic triggers work with lexical material to establish the context in which messages are interpreted and understood (Gumperz 2001, Levinson 2002). Beyond lexical misunderstanding, cross-cultural miscommunication occurs when speakers do not understand each others indirect allusions. Gumperz argues that such background knowledge is learned through our direct contact with close network members (Gumperz 2001). The very same indirect signaling mechanisms that helps us be understood by our network members, allows others to assess our social identities. These signaling mechanisms include accents, intonation and stress patterns. Code-switching is one important *non*-prosodic contextualization cue (ibid.). Representing shifts in contextual presuppositions, code-switching as an interpretative tool makes
sense when speakers share the same or similar presuppositions. Therefore, like accents, code-switching functions to signal shared cultural/ethnic models and frames.

3.3.3 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) of bilingual interactions is a more recent development (see Auer 1998), following in the tradition first developed by Gumperz (1982). Gumperz described bilingual conversations as consisting of socially ordered discourse strategies. But where Gumperz and Scotton (1983) see these strategies as symbolic action (i.e. they index localized norms and values), proponents of CA see language as practical social action or an activity in its own right. The CA approach emphasizes interpretation based on participant actions that have demonstrable effects, rather than on “context free symbolic” social categories external to the interaction.

CA has its roots in the field of ethnomethodology. Developed by Harold Garfinkel in the 1960s, ethnomethodology is concerned with the techniques that people use to accomplish their everyday tasks. Uncovering these techniques requires the fine description of interactions, specifically in a conversational setting. Thus, CA is the hallmark method of ethnomethodology. CA is carried out through the careful analysis of turn-taking between speakers (Sacks, et. al. 1974) and relies on what can be gleaned inductively from detailed transcripts of conversation. In CA little attention is paid to variables like speakers’ identities, relationships, and setting. Only when speakers can be shown to invoke these categories in the course of the conversation are they of interest to the conversation analyst (Li 2002).

How then do speakers invoke identities during a conversation? Antaki & Widdicombe (1998: 5) stress that in talk-in-interaction, identities are rarely “named out loud” but inferred from the acts which have been accomplished. This notion draws on Sacks, et. al.’s (1974: 225) viewer’s maxim which states that identities and activities are co-selective. Therefore, any claim
that a particular identification is significantly present in talk must be supported by the work it has accomplished in the same talk. One way this is done is through membership categorization analysis (MCA) (Sacks 1992). MCA focuses on the membership categories, membership categorization devices and category predicates that people use to describe themselves and others and that are invoked to accomplish a number of things in the conversation.

CA is criticized for being atheoretical and purely descriptive. Researchers who use CA are also criticized for not explaining their interpretations in a systematic and explicit manner and neglecting aspects of the wider social context (Li 2002). Those who defend CA argue that the approach is not atheoretical, but rather “has a different conception of how to theorize about social life, and a different notion of the nature of evidence and how to validate hypotheses” (ibid.: 171). Validating hypotheses with CA is similar to the grounded theory method. Analysis begins without a priori theory, but the ultimate goal is to find patterns in the text (H.R. Bernard, personal communication).

**3.4 Conclusion**

People use language varieties at their disposal to convey a number of ethnic affiliations. This can be done through code choice (including dialects and distinct styles within one language), accents and pronunciation, and discourse. Linguistic choices (and by extension ethnic choices), are acquired and cultivated through participation in social networks. These networks also serve to activate or trigger appropriate discursive strategies.

The burden on the researcher is to show whether a language resource is used to invoke an ethnic identification and which of various identifications is marked by a linguistic strategy. This study draws on several DA approaches concerned with talk-in-interaction. I’m interested in developing the idea that ethnic identification is the activation of ethnically salient, intersubjectively shared models have been influenced by work on cultural models in language.
As I have discussed above, this cognitive orientation is concerned with how people come to learn and share culture and how these shared presuppositions are employed in daily interaction. Methodologically, it is challenging to pair categories of identification with speaker intentions. The rigor offered by Conversation Analysis, its fine-tooth-comb techniques and commitment to revealing patterns directly accessible in speech transcripts, will be employed here. Finally, the linguistic data I collected for this project was but one data element among several. The research was intensely ethnographic and significant amounts of contextual information (interviews and field notes) were collected. This study departs from Conversation Analytic methods by bringing in the external, contextual data needed to make interpretations. Thus, I integrate theory and methods from the Ethnography of Speaking and Interactional Sociolinguistic into my analysis.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODS

4.0 Introduction

Discovering how and why New York City Latinos switch ethnic identifications posed a number of methodological challenges. When I first considered taking on the research question, I asked relatives, friends and co-workers to keep track of how often they switched their ethnic identification in one week. I wanted a general idea of the likelihood of observing this behavior in the field. I suggested that they be aware of instances when they used multiple ethnic labels or languages, or even instances when they felt their behavior change depending on who they were talking to. I asked them to be aware of this particularly when they interacted with people of ethnicities different than their own.

As it turned out, the consensus of this tiny exploratory sample was that they rarely switched. At least, they were rarely aware of it. The three possibilities I encountered at that point were a) switching is not a common occurrence; and/or b) switching is difficult to detect in a short span of time; and/or c) people switch a lot but don’t know it. There was also the matter of correctly interpreting people’s intentions if and when I observed them invoke multiple ethnicities. Nevertheless, I felt strongly that ethnic identification switching was a phenomenon with plenty of theoretical, anecdotal, and personal precedence. The task was to design a research protocol that would better my chances for observing and recognizing naturally-occurring instances of identification switching while working within a limited time frame. I also needed to incorporate methods that would yield data crucial to the accurate classification of identification invocation behaviors – to be more certain about the meaning and significance of ethnic markers participants would use. Finally, recognizing that with ethnographic observations alone I would not be able to account for most factors contextualizing a switch, a survey phase would allow me to test the ethnic identification response in a range of scenarios.
The research was designed to collect data about the proximate and ultimate conditions that contextualize a switch. Data on the ultimate conditions included participants’ socio-demographic circumstances, their physical environment (the community where they lived), social environment (their social network), and their ethnic identification. Proximate conditions would be those observable in the naturally-occurring social context, before, during, and after a switch. The research design involved two main phases of data collection. The purpose of the first phase was to gather in-depth ethnographic information from a small sample of participants. To help correctly identify instances of ethnic identification invocation and switching, I conducted life-history interviews, social network surveys, and continuous monitoring observations with eleven Latino men and women. This phase produced data with high internal validity and provided detailed information about the process of ethnic identification switching. The knowledge gained from the first phase was applied to the design of social network and vignette surveys administered in the second phase. These surveys were conducted on a large sample of participants to achieve greater external validity. Each piece of the research design will be discussed in turn, beginning with initial stages of the ethnographic phase.

4.1 Entering the Field

4.1.1 Field Site 1: Astoria, Queens

I first entered the field in February of 2005. To be exact, the field was a three- by-nine block section of Astoria, Queens. Since the 1960s, Astoria has been the site of New York’s largest Greek community (Williams & Mejia 2001). To this day, the neighborhood has maintained a distinctly Greek feel, with its restaurants, cafes, Greek orthodox churches, community organizations, and numerous Greek-owned businesses (e.g. butcher shops, bakeries, and laundromats). In more recent years (and even since I entered the field in 2005), Astoria has received a large number of immigrants from Russia, Mexico, Colombia, Bosnia, Brazil, and
Bangladesh, just to name a few key representative groups. In describing Astoria, one participant said, “You know how they say New York is the melting pot of the world? Well, Astoria is the melting pot of New York.” This is the reason I chose Astoria.

The small section that I selected for the initial weeks of fieldwork is one of the busiest neighborhoods in Astoria, particularly because of its dense concentration of small- to medium-sized businesses. The borders of this dense commercial and residential area are four of the most active streets in all of Queens. To the north and south are 30th Avenue (Grand Avenue) and Broadway. To the east and west are Steinway Street and 31st Street. For nine blocks, starting at Steinway Street and ending at 31st street, 30th Avenue is a one-stop center for shoppers and urban anthropologists alike. A five minute walk down this quintessentially Queens avenue will present observers with Thai, Italian, Colombian, Brazilian, Indian, Mexican and (of course), Greek eateries, Latino-owned money wiring centers, international meat and fish shops, news stands selling Bosnian and Croatian magazines and newspapers, supermarkets announcing Halal selections, and real estate businesses whose outdoor signs display last names from all the major ethnic groups in Astoria.

Broadway, to the south is similar to 30th Avenue; though when I first started fieldwork the avenue was less densely packed with businesses. This has changed. That I have observed this change in my two years so far in Queens, attests to Astoria’s rapid growth and importance. Recently, the neighborhood has experienced a frenzy of apartment seekers, mostly young professionals, for whom Manhattan’s consistently rising rent prices and living costs are not an option. Astoria is a ten minute subway ride into midtown Manhattan. The N and W line runs along 31st Street, the western-most boundary of my Astoria field site. This proximity, its relatively low rent prices, and reputation as an up-and-coming, ethnically diverse community, is changing Astoria’s demographics in a very short time.
Another set of trains to and from Manhattan stop at Steinway Street. Named after Henry Steinweg, of the Steinway piano-making family, Steinway Street attracts shoppers from other parts of Queens. The stores found along this active corridor tend to be national retail stores, restaurants, and banks like the G.A.P, Starbucks, and Bank of America. There are also several large but locally-owned discount clothes, electronics, and pet stores. Because it was central and well-known, I met most potential participants for screening interviews at Steinway Street.

I entered Astoria intending to unobtrusively observe and record life in a mixed New York City immigrant neighborhood. I paid particular attention to interactions within and between members of Astoria’s many ethnic groups. My goal was to familiarize myself with the area, meet potential research participants or people who could help me find them, and get a sense of the neighborhood’s ethnic group relations. My first field notes document early impressions about ethnicity in the everyday life of Astorians. The notes also detailed some methodological issues I had not fully considered until actually beginning observations.

Today is the first day of me sitting down, like a tape recorder, video recorder to absorb and capture the web of words, interactions, activities that surround me here, in a small park (Athens Park on 30th Street) in Astoria Queens. What am I thinking? First, about the process, about how I will come to feel completely at ease with holding a pen and paper taking notes from life’s dictations. At once conspicuous and unseen. I’m also thinking about this observation process itself. What am I waiting to hear and see? What am I missing while I write? What do I note and what do I leave to dissipate into the air? I am sitting in a park, close to sundown, among small children, adolescent, and old alike. Of course, as with many descriptions of ethnically diverse communities I am compelled to write down what I see and hear around me that can capture the worlds, lives, spaces, thoughts, that come into contact in immigrant communities like Astoria.

Across from me I see a pizzeria and Janata Grocery (a Halal meat shop and grocer, etc.). I see Acapulco Café. Beyond, I see a supermarket, no doubt one of those where ethnic food varieties are thoroughly offered and where a mix of people, Latino, Asian, European, shop. Among the pedestrians are those that I can identify and those that I cannot. The children in the playground, probably junior high school students, speak in English, but among them is a mix of Latinos and south Asians. I see Muslim women with their headdresses and young blacks, whites and Latinos on their skateboards. The skateboard kids are interesting…they sport grungy, skateboarder looks, unkempt hair and speak in unaccented English.

It seems true, at least on the surface, that ethnicity does not enter into the routine movements of life, the lives that I see around me; as parents take their children to the park, as couples walk together, as businessmen talk business. How then to get under the surface and understand what role ethnicity has for structuring interactions.
Some difficulty also lies in the subject matter. I am not interviewing people involved in a certain subculture that I can easily target and ask relevant questions to. I am not interviewing people about an activity that is tangible and easy to remember or understand. I am not asking questions about responses to an event that occurred in the community. Instead I must ask first about their own perceptions of their ethnicity...something which as I walk about Astoria I feel does not seem to enter into surface parlance, but rather looms in the background or remains covered underneath daily routine or daily understanding for those in the community. Ethnicity seems at once all encompassing and irrelevant. This I must confirm. All encompassing in the sense that in an immigrant community, with multiple languages, cultures, national backgrounds blending, merging, meeting, clashing it seeps into the very character of the community, it becomes what the community attracts, it defines it. Yet it is perhaps wholly taken for granted and un-contemplated.

From these initial unobtrusive observations I moved to conducting informal interviews with community members. Whenever possible I spoke with people who sat in the neighborhood parks or loitered on street corners. Usually, I staked out businesses that had steady customer traffic and asked the owners if I could inconspicuously station myself in their stores. The most memorable establishment, one that I would visit on repeated occasions, was the International Meat Market on 30th Avenue. This was a successful Greek-owned (one of the owners was also Venezuelan) meat shop that employed workers from Mexico and Argentina. The owners, two men in their mid-30s, and the other butchers had learned key words and phrases (and in some cases spoke fluently) in several languages, including Spanish, Italian, Croatian, and Greek. Because of their clientele they truly lived up to the store’s name. The shops consistent current of customers and alluring mix of languages and nationalities made it an ideal place to observe ethnic identification switching.

After Astoria, I eventually moved on to the slightly more daunting second field site: Corona/Jackson Heights, Queens. I chose Astoria because of its ethnic diversity, but also because Latinos were a visible part of the community. To assess whether the community where a person lives affects the development of multiple ethnic identities and switching, I chose Corona as a counterpoint to Astoria. It is also very diverse, but a place where Latinos are the overwhelming majority. A place where anyone could forget they were still in New York.
4.1.2 Field Site 2: Corona / Jackson Heights, Queens

My observations in Corona / Jackson Heights (CJH) began in late May of 2005, after I had already recruited some of the key informants who are the focus of this research. While my initial observations in Astoria happened as I worked independently, I got to know CJH with research participants as my guides. I had actually traveled to CJH on several occasions before May and found it a challenging place to approach people in the streets or enter businesses to just sit and watch. The traffic of pedestrians is denser along CJH’s main thoroughfares, like Roosevelt Avenue and Junction Boulevard. Businesses along Roosevelt Avenue are cramped; many of them (including retail stores) are situated in small windowless suites in second and third floors. The number of undocumented immigrants in this area is high, and so there tends to be an air of suspicion towards outsiders.

Most of my research was concentrated at the predominantly Latino intersections of Corona Plaza and Jackson Heights between Northern Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue. These two neighborhoods lie about 2 ½ miles east of Astoria in northwest Queens. At the northernmost border of the CJH field site is Northern Boulevard. This important, highly commercial boulevard connects Flushing in the east, with Astoria and Long Island City (Astoria’s sister neighborhood, often called Astoria) along a 7 mile stretch of road. Running parallel to Northern Boulevard, four long blocks to the south, is Roosevelt Avenue. Roosevelt Ave. connects Flushing to Woodside, Queens, historically an Irish enclave southwest of LIC/Astoria.

Along Roosevelt Avenue runs the 7 train. Dubbed the “immigrant express,” the 7 train starts at Times Square in Manhattan, passes through LIC, Woodside, Jackson Heights, Corona, eventually ending in Flushing, the site of a well-established Asian community. Thus, the train travels though contiguous ethnic enclaves. Picture a train densely populated with women and men from more than 50 countries, speaking as many languages, both the working-class and the
poor, with middle-class professionals, citizens, residents, and undocumented immigrants. At Woodside, Irish constructions workers and Filipino nurses unload. First stop in Jackson Heights, Punjabi business owners and Colombian high school student enter and leave the train. At the next stop in Jackson Heights, Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Mexican salesmen, laborers, and office workers join the mix. Once in Corona, Latino passengers from all of Latin American, especially the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico, disembark to shop, work, eat, or wait. By the time the 7 train makes its final stop in Flushing, most of the passengers are Chinese and Korean.

The majority of my observations about this exceptional neighborhood were the backdrop of interactions I observed and recorded during the continuous monitoring phase. I will now discuss this next phase of my ethnographic work in Queens.

4.2 Continuous Monitoring (CM) Observation Phase

The eleven women and men who are the focus of this study were selected through short screening interviews from a pool of potential participants who responded to online and newspaper advertisements, flyers or word of mouth. The response to my recruitment efforts was moderate, possibly because of the highly obtrusive nature of the research. Members of two groups in particular were difficult to find: Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. This is ironic given that Puerto Ricans and Mexicans represent two of the largest Latino groups in the city. However, it is not difficult to pinpoint the difficulties with recruiting Mexican participants. The rate of undocumented immigration among Mexican immigrants in New York is quite high and many are suspicious of research or investigaciones (particularly those related to immigration). I did interview one potential participant, an undocumented Mexican restaurant worker, who was open to the research experience. In the end I could not work with him because his boss (understandably) objected to my presence in her restaurant. One of the reasons for the low
response rate of Puerto Rican participants is that I limited the continuous monitoring phase to specific neighborhoods in Queens. While there are thousands of Puerto Ricans in Queens they are not concentrated in one area. Thus, I had no area to target with flyers and newspaper ads.

I looked for people who represented a range of backgrounds and experiences and whose daily routines cut across at least three domains of social interaction (e.g. work, home, social gatherings). Some of the eleven have been in the US for most of their lives and have developed an awareness of their Latino identification as potentially politically and economically advantageous. They view their identification as a commodity to be highlighted when applying for work or developing new relationships. Then there are those—particularly the more recent migrants—who have no choice but to acknowledge that they are different and have less flexibility over their ethnic self-presentation. This is often the consequence of limited English language skills or undocumented immigrant status.

4.2.1 Recruiting and Selecting Participants for Continuous Monitoring

Recruitment was carried out in four monthly cycles, starting in April and ending in July of 2005. Usually at the beginning of each month, I placed an ad in the employment and community activities sections of Craigslist (http://newyork.craigslist.org), along with flyers posted along busy streets in both Astoria and CJH. I also placed ads in the employment section of Spanish-language newspapers, *El Especialito*, a free bi-weekly newspaper, and *El Diario*, the New York metro area’s largest Spanish language newspaper. Finally, I had contacts in community organizations, most effectively Catholic Charities in Astoria and Forest Hills Community House in Jackson Heights, who agreed to spread the word about my research. All ads indicated the compensation for participation, which was $200.

The most effective recruitment tool was Craigslist. While I received responses from all the recruitment channels I used, in the end, 9 out of the 11 CM participants learned about the study
through Craigslist. Of the two non-Craigslist participants, one called after being informed by an ESOL program supervisor, the other after seeing a flyer. Craigslist was self-selective for a certain type of participant. They tended to be women, in their early-20s to mid-30s, spoke English, had access to computers and the internet, and were born in the US or had lived here most of their lives. Initially I was concerned that Craigslist would also be self-selective for unemployed people, given that I posted mostly in the employment section. However, many of those who responded were looking to supplement their incomes (my ads offered monetary compensation) and had at least a part-time job.

Contrary to my initial thinking, Spanish-language newspapers were highly ineffective as a recruitment tool during the CM phase. The handful of people who responded to these ads really were looking for steady work. Once I told them that I was not offering employment, most quickly hung up. Others had daily routines that, because of their unemployment, would not have offered me a range of interactions to observe. I imagine that the low response rate from these newspapers was due to two factors: 1) a general unfamiliarity with research, particularly research involving “life-documentation” among the mostly immigrant, Spanish-speaking readership; 2) mistrust of researchers among undocumented Latino immigrant readers. This is confirmed by the non-response from flyers I posted in the mostly Latino and Spanish-speaking Corona Plaza.

I received 46 email responses to my ads. Although I did not keep record of the phone calls, I received about the same number of calls as emails. This initial screening gave me a first-hand view into the process of ethnic identification switching. Several non-Latino men tried to make a case to me for participating in the study. One said, “No I’m not Latino, but I have a lot of Latino friends and know a lot about the culture.” Another earnestly responded, “I’m not, but I can if you want me to be.” One Brazilian man, who I agreed to meet in person because of his compelling story, also insisted on identifying as Latino. I’m familiar with the debate about
whether Brazilians should be classified as Latino or not. However, I made it clear to him that I sought participants from the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. His argument for classification as a Latino hinged on three factors: 1) fluency in Spanish; 2) passage to the US from Brazil through the Mexican border; and 3) reliance on a social support network of Latinos when he first arrived to the US. Thus, he identified strongly with the Latino immigration experience. He especially stressed his life-threatening Mexican border cross that, in his view, was something of a Latino badge of courage.

Of the approximately 100 responses that I received about the study, I met with 23 people in person and selected 11 out of those 23. Potential participants were narrowed down from the initial pool based on their sincere interest in participating, availability, neighborhood of residence, gender, age, nationality, and unique life circumstances. The research design required a sample of 6 people from Astoria and 6 from CJH, equal parts men and women. I also sought a mix of immigrants and US-born Latinos, the working-class, and people in their 20s. At about the mid-mark of the CM phase (June/July) it became increasingly difficult to find people who were middle-aged or older, men, foreign-born, professional, Puerto Rican, Mexican, or from Astoria.

The 23 people who cleared the initial email and phone screening were scheduled for face-to-face screening interviews. The purpose of these short, informal meetings was to explain more in-depth the purpose of my study and to learn about the daily routines of each participant. I explained to all potential participants that participation involved me following them around for one week, while I recorded their conversations. I also told them that for a second week they would be required to record their conversations on their own. Finally, I explained that prior to observations I would interview them about their life and experiences with ethnicity. While all participants understood that the study was about everyday experiences with ethnicity, to avoid
further self-monitoring that might affect data, I did not tell them that the express focus of the research was on EI switching. EI switching was raised as a topic, among many topics, during my life-history interviews and informal conversations with them.

As I mentioned above, I sought participants whose daily routines were varied and cut across multiple domains of interaction. Therefore, I asked each participant to take me through a typical week. Those who were not selected reported having few daily interactions or activities (usually because of unemployment) or had daily routines that would make it difficult for me to be present. The 11 men and women who were selected worked, and/or attended school, maintained regular contact with family and friends, and had some unique life story highly relevant to the topic on ethnic identification switching (e.g. maintained a transnational lifestyle or had an ethnically diverse family history). Two participants in the final sample lived in neighborhoods other than Astoria or CJH. Because of the difficulty in finding willing Latino participants in Astoria, I had to substitute Astoria with neighborhoods having similar demographic characteristics. They had to be neighborhoods with Latino representation but great ethnic heterogeneity. Therefore, I accepted responses from potential participants who lived in Elmhurst (the most ethnically diverse neighborhood in the country) and Woodside, both in Queens.

In general, my screening was successful in identifying participants with whom I experienced and documented a range of activities. However, one participant, Adalberto (see below), had an inconsistent work schedule as a hairdresser and few interactions outside of work. I had to end observations with him after two days.

The final CM sample was as follows:\(^{10}\):

\(^{10}\) Real names have been replaced with pseudonyms. Roberto’s real name (specifically its pronunciation in Spanish) becomes important in Chapter 6’s linguistic data. Therefore, I chose Roberto because it left the linguistic analysis intact.
Alfredo (Corona): 41 year old Dominican man, maintenance worker at a major Manhattan university.
Mildred (Woodside): 36 year old Dominican woman, marketing executive for a small start up company.
Adalberto (Astoria): 28 year old Mexican-American man, hairdresser originally from Texas.
Alma (Jackson Heights): 48 year old Colombian sales woman, trained in Colombia as an industrial engineer.
Julia (Jackson Heights): 19-year old Colombian woman, fashion design student.
Roberto (Astoria): 36 year old Venezuelan man, life guard and entrepreneur.
Abel (Corona): 37 year old Ecuadorian satellite TV salesman.
Luis (Elmhurst): 40 year old Ecuadorian woman, children’s tennis instructor and casino dealer.
Anthony (Corona): 29 year old Puerto Rican and Cuban man, under-employed physical trainer and semi-pro wrestler.

4.2.2 Continuous Monitoring Schedules and Pre-CM Data

During the face-to-face screening interview with each of the final 11 participants I outlined in detail what would be involved in participation. Each participant agreed to work with me for two weeks. They understood that in the first week I would schedule 5-8 hour periods of daily intensive observations. I assured them that together we would develop an observation schedule that captured times when they were most likely to interact with others and that also did not impose too many inconveniences on them. These scheduled observations were to take place in every area of their life that they felt comfortable with me observing. These domains included work, school, at-home interactions, church, shopping, and in recreational social gatherings. Participants agreed to, and indeed, were curious about wearing a small digital recorder throughout the two weeks. In the first week, audio recordings were supplemented by detailed field notes taken throughout the monitoring. Using recorders I provided, each participant would independently collect additional verbal interactions in the second week of their participation. Each person was free to turn off the recorder whenever they wanted.
Participants also agreed to provide additional pre-CM information. These pre-CM data helped me to properly classify and contextualize observed behavior. First I carried out life-history interviews, and then I interviewed them about their social networks.

Life-history interviews (see Appendix A):

These 3 to 5 hour interviews, conducted in both English and Spanish, identified life experiences that contributed to the formation of each participant’s ethnic identification. Starting with childhood and ending in the present (at the time of the interview), participants were asked questions ranging from early family relationships and traditions, experiences with racial and ethnic discrimination, workplace diversity, pastimes, political and community participation, romantic relationships, immigration stories, and language use. The interviews of eight out of the eleven CM participants were conducted in one sitting. Because of scheduling difficulties, I divided the other three respondents’ interviews into parts. The longest interview went on for 4 hours and 50 minutes; the shortest for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Most interviews took 2 ½ to 3 hours to complete.

One important purpose of these interviews was to create a tentative list of all the possible ethnic identifications participants could invoke during the CM observations. Additionally, the life history interview functioned as an ice-breaker; a bonding prelude to the potentially compromising observations that would come. With the printed interview questions in hand as a guide, I encouraged respondents to take the discussion where they wanted. In this way, they opened up intimate details about their life that made the intensive observations seem less intrusive. Naturally, some respondents opened up more than others. It was always the case that those who shared the most private details in their life history interviews also placed fewer boundaries to my observations.

Personal social network interviews (see Appendix B):
Using Egonet (McCarty 2003), I collected data on each participant’s network composition (e.g. percentage of network that is of a particular ethnic background) and network structure (e.g. the percentage of people in a participant’s network who know each other). Beside network data, Egonet allowed me to collect socio-demographic information from each participant. These included gender, age, income, education and occupation, as well information about the ethnic background of parents and spouse / partner. The purpose of these data was to first, lay out their social environment in a way that would help me recognize interlocutors during observations; understand aspects of their social network that would affect their ethnic identification; and provide visual data that I could refer back to when reviewing and coding CM notes.

The computer-assisted egocentric network questionnaire took 1 ½ hour to complete and was structured in four parts. The first part asked socio-demographic questions about each participant, or ego. The second part was the name generator that elicited the names of 45 people that the ego knew. A known person was defined as someone the ego recognized by face and by name and who in turn recognized the ego by face and name. I further asked that they only list people they had known for at least two years and who they could contact if they had to. In the third section, participants had to indicate the age, gender, nationality, race, relationship and closeness to each network member (alter) listed. Finally, participants had to rate the likelihood that alters would talk to each other in their absence. The software enables this task by displaying alter names in pairs, beginning with the first name on the 45 name list and going in the order that the names were listed. This first name is paired with the second name on the list, then the third name, etc. until each possible pair is presented once for evaluation. Participants had to evaluate a total of 780 ties, indicating whether alter A and alter B were very likely; somewhat likely; or not at all likely to talk in ego’s absence. For purposes of this research, a tie existed in cases were alters were very likely to talk.
Egonet has a feature that will visualize the results of the network questionnaire. Alters are displayed as nodes. Socio-demographic or attribute data for each alter are displayed using color, size, or shape. Each alter attribute can be displayed one at a time or in combination, depending on the needs of the researcher. For example, during network visualization interviews in this research I first displayed the nationality of each alter using color (red = Puerto Rican, yellow = Dominican, green = Colombian, etc.). Then I displayed gender using shape (circle = woman, square = man). In this way I could view the gender and nationality of each alter simultaneously. Finally, using size, I displayed the level of closeness the ego felt to each alter. The larger the node the closer the ego felt to that alter. Egonet uses algorithms developed within the field of social network analysis to calculate the relative distance and positioning of nodes based on the presence or absence of ties. Ties are displayed using lines between nodes. The remarkable thing about this feature is that it displays the nodes and ties in such a way that it reflects visually the reported patterns of relationships in the participant’s immediate social environment. Thus, a tightly connected ball where all or most nodes are tied indicates a very dense social network. Displays with three or four clusters, or components, suggests that the ego maintains several sub-groups that have little or no contact with each other (e.g. a family group, work group, or school group). Each participant’s visual can provide insights challenging to discover with standard survey questions or even formal interviewing alone. When I used these visualizations to interview the eleven CM participants, I was able to gather clues about their isolation or gregariousness, friendship-making practices, daily routines, satisfaction with social life and relationships, and sense of belonging to different ethnic groups.

4.2.3 Observations

Observations began on the day after each of the participants completed their life-history and social network interviews. From the beginning, participants responded to this process with
fascination. It reminded Lisa of MTV’s “The Real World,” a show in which young men and women are selected to live out their lives for 3 months under the merciless gaze of video cameras. Her “Real World” approach to the observations meant that I was best served to stay in the background and keep up or lose her in a crowded street or store (which I did on occasion). Anthony and Julia boasted to their friends and family that a researcher was “doing a documentary” of their lives, and introduced me accordingly. Alma, Abel and Adalberto were periodically reluctant and embarrassed to admit to others that they were research participants and would actually integrate me more into their daily routines as a “friend” to lessen the awkward distance between them and me. Regardless of the level of fascination or embarrassment felt by each participant, the continuous monitoring of these busy urban men and women alternated between the tediously rote and exhausting, to the deeply moving and exciting. True to life I suppose.

Actually, the most uncomfortable aspect of the CM observations was the digital audio recorders that they had to wear. I selected small (4” x 1 ½”), high-end, lightweight recorders that fit into cell phone cases. These cases were clipped on to their pant waists or pockets. Remote control clip-on mics were attached to the recorders. Participants usually clipped the mics to their shirt pockets, collars or lapels. The remote control feature on the microphones was invaluable to the respondents. All became adept at pausing or stopping recordings on the fly; for example, during trips to the bathroom, when requiring privacy, or during silent moments of inactivity. However, a consequence of having these recorders on for hours at a time over a two week period was that it remained on, unnoticed and forgotten, even during bathroom trips, idle points and extremely frank conversations (e.g. with me as the subject matter).

In keeping with IRB requirements, I asked that participants tell interlocutors about the recorder, before engaging in long conversations. Usually the mic was conspicuous enough that
interlocutors noticed it and asked about it. At times, I had to chime in from the sidelines if a participant did not point out the recorder when they should have. Abel consistently neglected to inform interlocutors about the recorder. In his case I asked him to wear a name label on which I wrote: “Research participant. I am wearing a recorder”.

My intention was to observe participants for seven straight days (5-8 hours each day) in the first week and let them free with the recorders in the second week. It did not pan out this way. This was especially because participants had at least one day in which it would be impractical for me to be present: days that involved lots of resting at home, off-limit work areas, or romantic dates. Instead, I asked that they let me observe for 6 days, at least 5 of them in sequence, with the option to reserve one day of observation for a later date. For example, Julia opted to reserve one of her days for me to attend the Puerto Rican Day with her. Roberto, who I observed in late April / early May, suggested that we trade one of his idle days for an important June street festival he was to due to work at. Mildred invited me to a friend’s wedding dinner several weeks before I was actually scheduled to begin her observations. This worked out fine, as it gave me more varied situations to observe.

Most of the eleven CM participants were incredibly open and cooperative with the observations. Even while there were numerous impractical situations that I was not allowed access to; after less than one week of being with each participant I was included in a host of truly unique and intimate moments. This seems to be one of the key benefits of this particular approach of CM versus more prolonged rapport-building ethnographic techniques. The structured, short-term, and intensive nature of this method suspends many standard rules of trust- and relationship-building. And of course, each of the CM participants bought into it the moment they agreed to participate, so they were ready to shed some boundaries. Therefore, while Mildred did not ask me to accompany her on a first date with a man she met online, Anthony
included me in his first face-to-face meeting with a woman he met online. Luis and Alfredo rarely scheduled me to observe on days when they did seemingly boring and routine tasks like laundry or food shopping. Esperanza, Julia and Lisa, however, allowed me to tag along when they ran these errands. I witnessed family conflicts, business negotiations, dating service phone interviews, undocumented immigrant labor recruitment, and other sensitive areas of interaction. While I usually observed unobtrusively, as is common in CM; there was plenty of opportunity to observe as a participant.

It was often appropriate, and encouraged, for me to engage in the interactions I was to observe. “It’s time to put your notebook down,” or “Are you going to write down all of this?” were common appeals. However, continuous monitoring tends to involve a certain level of detachment from the scene and the subjects under observation. I tried to keep a balance of both engagement and detachment. This was not necessarily a methodological choice made in the planning stages, but an adjustment to the actual observation circumstances I encountered. When I was fully engaged as a participant, it became difficult to keep the desired detailed, itemized notes about behavior. Yet, as a participant there was little obvious reactivity to my presence or monitoring. On the other hand, monitoring and note-taking from a distance affected participants differently depending on how many people were involved in an interaction. As expected, the more people in an interaction the more easily I was ignored and the more natural the interactions. If the participant was alone with me or talking with just one other person, three things sometimes happened: 1) participants sought interactions with others so that I would “have something to observe”. The participant would call a friend and talk casually, or ask to hang out that day; 2) participants and their sole interlocutors would talk less or limit the topics they talked about. This tended to happen because of the discomfort felt by non-focal persons; 3) participants and their interlocutors performed or exaggerated certain behaviors (i.e. “showed off”) (c.f. Labov (1972))
and Observer’s Paradox). This happened with only a few people. Some narrated their behaviors or observations directly into the mic as in a documentary. Others made requests of friends or family that began with words like, “Show her how you ________”.

A small notebook was ever present during the observations. When I first entered a scene, I noted who was there, taking care to describe age, gender, general appearance, languages spoken, and racial and ethnic identification. I also documented the setting, including time of observation, addresses, landmarks, physical condition of the area, and sounds. Given that participants carried recorders to capture their conversations, the purpose of the notes was to contextualize these recordings. I did not spend too much time writing about what people said, and focused the notes on what people did and how they did it. I also wrote down my own thoughts, feelings and interpretations about the scenes. Finally, I noted all instances in which participants invoked their ethnicity or switched languages or dialects. After the fact, I referred back to participants with questions about these occurrences. My questions centered on their intentions.

Because I understood that reactivity is an important concern in CM, the second week was designed to capture naturally occurring conversations without my presence. Typically, I met participants in the mornings before they started their day to download the previous day’s recordings onto my laptop. When needed, I also replaced batteries. Since the recorder had a memory capacity of 8 hours and 56 minutes, it had sufficient space for a day of uninterrupted recording or two days of recording with stopping and pausing. Based on recording times, participants collected a total of 288 hours of recordings. This was about the same amount of time I spent observing them in the first week (290 hours). Therefore in those two weeks with each participant I collected a total of 578 hours of recording.
4.3 Survey Phase

The CM observation phase ended in mid-September of 2005. I immediately began preparations for the survey phase of the research. The purpose of the surveys was to collect the data needed to test a set of hypotheses developed in the initial stages of the project. To test these hypotheses I needed socio-demographic, social network, and vignette data on a large sample of New York Latinos. As in the CM phase, I intended to collect data from Queens Latinos only; specifically from Astoria and Corona/Jackson Heights. My original target was 100 participants from each site. I knew soon after I began recruitment for the CM observations that it would be too time consuming to limit my sampling frame to these two areas, particularly if I wanted a good representation of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. Furthermore, because this phase of the research was carried out in collaboration with Christopher McCarty at the University of Florida Survey Research Center, a number of changes had to be made to the original sampling design. McCarty was conducting a multi-site study, with José Luis Molina at the University of Barcelona, to develop a social network measure of acculturation among immigrants in Northeast Spain and Miami\textsuperscript{11}. The research design of my own study called for the administration of social network surveys to a large sample of Latinos (both immigrant and non-immigrant). We found a way to meet the goals of both research projects.

4.3.1 Survey Protocol

As with the social network survey that I administered to the CM sample of eleven, the survey for the acculturation study was to be administered using Egonet. In September, I received a survey protocol that was being used for the study in Spain. My first task was to modify this survey protocol for the New York City population. Mainly this involved changing response

\textsuperscript{11} This project was funded by the National Science Foundation Award No. BCS-0417429.
categories to reflect the ethnic groups in NYC; changing ethnic group specific questions to apply to the NYC groups I would administer the surveys to; changing skip conditions, and translating survey questions. Each group would be given a tailored version of the survey with the option to take the survey in either English or Spanish. A total of eight questionnaires were programmed: English and Spanish versions for Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Colombians, and Mexicans. I made these modifications directly into the Egonet questionnaire-builder interface. After some testing and tweaking, the survey was ready for the field by the second week in October.

The computer-assisted questionnaire was organized in four parts: 1) ego questions; 2) name generator; 3) alter questions; and 4) alter-pair questions. This structure was identical to the one administered in the CM phase. The acculturation study required that participants take the ARSMA-II acculturation scale, a set of questions related to health, and another aimed at transnational practices. Besides the social network questions, my study required socio-demographic and ethnic identification items. A vignette survey (see below) was also included, though these surveys were administered on paper. Because of the added ego questions, the social network survey in the second phase would take an average of 2 ½ hours to complete. This fact affected sampling considerably.

4.3.2 Sampling

McCarty and Molina’s study required social network surveys from 100 Puerto Ricans and 100 Dominicans. In order to meet the sampling needs of my research, we agreed to collect further surveys from members of other Latino groups. We decided on Colombians and Mexicans. After Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, these two groups have the largest populations in New York City. I also felt that between these four groups a range of immigration and ethnic histories would be represented. Quotas were set for 50 surveys from Colombians and 50 from Mexicans. As I will discuss later, this goal was not met. In addition to these sampling
requirements, the acculturation study needed for at least 2/3 of the sample to be first generation immigrant. Hypotheses testing in my study on ethnic identification switching, required a final sample of 200 Latinos, 50 from each of the groups named above.

To better our chances of finding as many people as possible, recruitment was targeted over a large area. Participation was open to Latinos in all five boroughs of NYC. With a time-consuming survey and limited resources, this was crucial. Again, I employed the ubiquitous Craigslist once a month as well as El Especialito and El Diario to reach the target population. Along with these, I posted flyers in Queens and benefited from word-of-mouth recruitment. Unlike in phase one, all of these outlets yielded good responses. Craigslist, of course, was most effective. However, because of the type of participant that Craigslist tended to yield (young, second-generation, Puerto Rican and Dominican), I relied on this method less and less as the months wore on.

Job listing features in Craigslist’s enables recruiters to specify job categories for each listing. Choices include “healthcare jobs,” “government jobs,” “entertainment jobs,” “maintenance jobs” among several others. These categories were very useful for meeting sample quotas. For example, “admin/office jobs” and “tech-support jobs” reached younger Latinos with more schooling and English-proficiency. “Retail/food jobs” yielded responses from participants with lower educational attainment and was the most effective (for Craigslist) in finding first generation Latinos who spoke more Spanish. El Especialito and El Diario were good for finding first generation immigrants, mostly working class, who spoke little to no English.

An interesting, indirect, finding of the survey phase was related to sample recruitment. Members of each of the Latino groups differed in how much they relied on word-of-mouth to find me. Craigslist was very good for finding second-generation Puerto Ricans. And rarely did a potential Puerto Rican participant call me because a friend or relative passed on the
information. Craigslist was also very good for finding second-generation Dominicans, but Dominicans, much more than Puerto Ricans, tended to encourage friends and family to call me. Most tellingly, half (19) of the final sample of 37 Colombians came to me through word-of-mouth. My take is that Colombians and Dominicans, being more recent migrants, continue to rely more heavily on networks of information; for finding work, money, housing, and other resources. Colombian and Dominican communities also tend to be more tightly knight. The Puerto Rican enclaves of the past; in East Harlem, the Lower East Side, and parts of the Bronx, are not the same today. These communities are diminishing and Puerto Ricans dispersing throughout the city and other parts of the northeast and southeast. The Dominican communities, in Washington Heights and Corona, and the Colombian community in Jackson Heights continue to have many of the characteristics of bounded ethnic enclaves. Finally, both word-of-mouth and advertising were ineffective in recruiting Mexicans. Two factors may explain this: 1) poor access to computers and the internet in this population; 2) mistrust of research related to immigration due to high rates of undocumented immigration among New York City Mexicans. A total of 252 participants took the survey: 100 Dominicans, 100 Puerto Ricans, 37 Colombians, and 15 Mexicans.

4.3.3 Administering the Surveys

Equipped with four lap tops, a schedule book and a rolling suitcase, I traveled throughout the city administering the surveys. When I received a call or email about the study I asked the potential participant where he/she lived. My initial strategy was to make it as easy as possible for the respondent so that they would, first, agree to take the survey and second, actually show up. I needed further selling points because participants were turned off by how long the survey took to complete and the compensation ($25) relative to time. I figured that the closer to their home I could have them take the survey, the less likely they would deny me. For my own
security, I very rarely administered surveys in people’s homes. Instead, I became intimately
acquainted with the New York City and Brooklyn Public Library system. Hostos Community
College in the Bronx and Catholic Charities in Queens also allowed me to set up my computers
on site. Occasionally, I administered surveys at Starbucks because they had electrical outlets for
computers.

Trying to accommodate each participant’s location preference was a bad idea. First of all,
the more obscure the neighborhood one person requested the less likely I could find other
participants who could also go to that location. It was not uncommon for a person to make an
appointment way up in North Bronx, 45 minutes from midtown Manhattan and one hour from
my home, and not keep the appointment. Without other participants at that same location as
back up, the trip back home was a sorry ride. Secondly, traveling to so many different parts of
the city with four computers, while instructive, physically drained me within three months.

I decided to rely on four or five major libraries in central locations; one in the Bronx,
three in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn. Eventually, I administered most surveys at two main
libraries in midtown Manhattan. When people called to schedule an appointment I gave them
these libraries as choices. People really did not have a problem traveling to take the survey.
Actually, they expected to go to the survey, rather than have the survey go to them. Another
benefit of limiting the survey schedule to a few libraries was that I could schedule many more
appointments in one day (since there was less time wasted traveling). That way, even with the
normal no-shows, I would usually have at least one person to interview. Using this method I
could interview up to 20 people in one day. On average I interviewed seven people a day.

While this helped me not fall behind with meeting project deadlines, there were clear
disadvantages to scheduling too many people in one day. Besides causing me to become
fatigued, one very important disadvantage was that I could not closely monitor participants as
they took the survey. Also, participants varied in their proficiency on the computer, with recent migrants tending to have difficulties taking the survey. This meant that I had to enter their responses for them. If more than one person needed this kind of help, a 2 ½ hour survey could take four hours to complete. At the same time, the data quality was affected. Fortunately, part of the survey involved interviewing the participants about their results using network visuals. Most mistakes were caught at this stage and corrected.

4.3.4 Visualization Interviews

I will not spend too much time discussing the visualization interviews in phase two, as the process was very similar to that in phase one. McCarty provided an interview protocol to use with the visualizations. This same protocol was being used in Spain and Miami (see Appendices C and D) and focused on the relationship between different social network factors, acculturation and adjustment to life in the United States. Interviews, which were digitally recorded, ranged from 5 minutes to one hour; but on average lasted 25 minutes. Not everyone was able to do these visualization interviews. Several people, for example, whose survey took longer than 2 ½ hours felt strongly that they could not give any more time to the study. Others just simply ran out of time and had pressing commitments after the survey. In the end, two hundred and seven people were interviewed using the network visualizations.

4.3.5 Vignette Surveys

A vignette survey (Rossi & Noch, 1982), also known as a factorial survey, was designed for this study on ethnic identification switching. This component of the survey phase comprised of nine vignettes of hypothetical situations. For each scenario participants had to indicate how they would identify themselves ethnically. An extra question was included in the survey for participants to list and rank all the ethnic labels they use or have used. I also included a vignette which was not based on the factorial design and was the same in each survey administered. This
survey allowed me to identify which factors are significant to the invocation of a particular ethnic identification. Moreover, the survey is a way to operationalize ethnic identification switching for hypotheses testing purposes. Thus, ethnic identification switching exists if participants report using more than one identification across the different scenarios.

Using my observations from the ethnographic phase of the research I made a list of factors and corresponding levels that influenced ethnic identification. The factors were: 1) social setting; 2) resource at stake; 3) ethnicity of interlocutor; 4) age of interlocutor; and 4) and language spoken by interlocutor. Each of these factors had several levels and these levels were used to create the vignettes. As an example, the levels of “social setting” presented for evaluation were: job interview, census questionnaire, unfamiliar neighborhood, party, ethnic festival / celebration, community protest, airport, and sales encounter. For “ethnicity of interlocutor,” the levels used were: Puerto Rican, Dominican, Colombian, Mexican, neutral Latino, white American, African American, Indian, and Chinese. There were seven levels of “resource at stake,” three levels of “interlocutor age,” and five levels of “language spoken.”

Vignettes, in factorial survey design, are comprised of the randomly combined levels from each of the factors of interest. Using MS Access, I created tables containing the levels of each factor. I wrote a query that randomly pulled one level at a time from each table and put these combinations in a separate table. In the next step I copied and pasted each of these combinations onto a word document and arranged them into readable vignettes. To reduce question-order effects, I used a random number generator to determine the order of each of the vignettes (each vignette was given an ID number from 1 through 9). Spanish translations of the factors and levels were put through this same process.

Immediately after finishing the social network survey, I handed participants the vignette surveys to complete by hand. Their first task was to list all the ethnic labels they used to identify
themselves to others. I asked that they also include labels they use very seldom. Next, participants had to rank these, starting with the ethnic label they used most often. For purposes of completing the vignettes, the ethnic label they reported using most often was their primary ethnic identification. At this point they were ready to begin the vignettes. Here’s a sample vignette from one of the surveys:

*h. You applied for an important full-time job. The job is difficult to get. You interview with an older Dominican man who speaks to you in Spanish. What ethnicity would you want the interviewer to know you are?*

☐ I would want the person to known my primary ethnic identification.

☐ I would want the person to know the following ethnic identification.

In addition to questions about their ethnic identification, the survey included a question about language choice in each scenario. After the respondents completed the vignette survey, I interviewed them about their responses.

Because the vignettes were randomly generated, some of the scenarios presented were nonsensical, irrelevant to the participant or highly unlikely to happen. Concerned that such scenarios would cause the participant to not take the survey seriously, thus diminishing data quality, I decided to clean the surveys of any problematic vignettes. When I identified a problem vignette I replaced it with another having the same ID number. Therefore, while measures were taken to reduce bias, ensure that participants evaluated as many combinations as possible and improve replicability; my own judgments about what was realistic and possible certainly influenced which scenarios participants were presented.

When I began the survey phase in October, the vignette survey was not ready to launch. It took me a couple of months to design and assemble the vignettes. I worked on these as I began collecting surveys for the acculturation study. Therefore, not everyone who took the social network survey also read the vignettes. In fact, the vignettes were administered to just over half,
or 128, of the final phase-two sample. After 1 ½ year of field work, I administered my last survey in May of 2006.

4.4 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I discussed a number of limitations of the research. Both in the ethnographic and survey phase, sampling was a challenge. Finding Puerto Rican (especially first generation), Mexican, and first generation immigrant participants in general was problematic. In the ethnographic phase there is also an over-representation of young voices. Although I sought participants older than 50 years old, the recruitment methods I used did not reach out to enough older Latinos. Fortunately, in the survey phase I was able to interview more men and women above the age of 50, including two septuagenarians. Their experiences will be incorporated into this dissertation.

In the survey phase, data quality would have been improved had the survey not been so long (respondent fatigue was an issue) and had I limited the number of surveys administered at a time to two, instead of four. Nevertheless, the interviews collected using the network visualizations were very rich, and most mistakes were fixable.

These limitations notwithstanding, the key strength of the research design was the significant variety (and quantity) of data that were collected. Interviews, social network surveys, vignette surveys, naturally occurring conversations, observation data, and linguistic data: enough for several dissertations. This dissertation will focus on the results of the ethnographic phase (field notes, interviews, and recordings) and the visualization interviews of the survey phase.
CHAPTER 5
LATINO ETHNICITY IN NEW YORK

5.0 Introduction: Latino Bonds & Divides

On April 10, 2006, my son Al and I traveled to City Hall in Manhattan, one of the sites of a nation-wide immigration rally. By the time we arrived, thousands had already converged and we met the rally several blocks from City Hall. Coming from Queens, we shared the train with many others, (mostly Mexicans, by their flags) who decided to mobilize on that day: parents with young children, teenagers, housewives and men just off from work, all wearing expectant looks. It was striking to me how hundreds of previously silent voices found a boldness that day. For months I had found it difficult to recruit Mexicans to participate in my study. As a community health volunteer working mostly with immigrant women, I learned of the hidden distress of women with little access to the world outside of their rooms or their backbreaking, under-the-table jobs. These women had entered the US illegally and feared a forced return to their countries. That April day, however, they were unafraid and unashamed of their status or identification. They announced themselves to the rest of New York proudly.

The next thing that struck me as we joined the mass of demonstrators in lower Manhattan was the diversity. I don’t just mean the diversity of countries represented; New York’s must have been the most eclectic demonstration. As I took in the sounds and images around me, at least two worlds became apparent. Thousands were like the women and men who traveled with me from Queens: immigrants, many undocumented, speaking only Spanish, who ventured out of safe enclaves like Corona carrying their countries’ flags, shouting “Sí se puede!” Then there were those more like…me. Young, Americanized, English-speaking men and women of color. We did not carry flags and did not wear t-shirts declaring our origins. Many, like me, carried cameras, or organized banners and displays decrying the American government, or world trade, or capitalism. These were men and women who already lived in a safe world.
Al and I quickly wove our way through the slow moving current of demonstrators. We followed the sound of tribal drums and found a crowd had circled around drummers. The rhythms came from a Korean drumming group and the circle that had formed around them waved flags from Mexico, Haiti, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and the US. Accompanying the drums was a futbol jersey-wearing Latino trumpeter who played the Star Spangled Banner and familiar salsa tunes. Spectators shouted, “Viva la hispanidad, viven los hispanos!” It was a moment in which real boundaries among distinct groups, with distinct histories were ignored. The scene, while impromptu, purposefully presented a strong sense of solidarity across all immigrant groups, particularly across all Latino groups.

Reflecting on this show of unity, I looked around for my birth country’s flag: the Puerto Rican flag. I could not spot any. Having left the island for the US at the age of nine, I have always considered myself an immigrant. So, while conscious that Puerto Ricans’ special status excludes them from much of the immigration debate, I expected to see more empathetic gestures of support from the Puerto Rican community. I discovered unexpected evidence of Puerto Ricans’ detachment from the immigration plight of many other Latinos when I recruited participants for my research. Some of my ads read that I sought immigrants from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Colombia. To my bemusement, I received several vitriolic emails from Puerto Ricans who took great offense to the use of the word immigrants and Puerto Ricans together. They cited Puerto Rican sacrifices in American wars, citizenship, and their long history in the US. One person even sent me a picture of immigration rights demonstrators crossing the Brooklyn Bridge and wrote, “Here’s your target market. Maybe they’ll want to give you an interview.”

I suspected that the people who sent me these defensive emails were born and raised in the US. Surely, someone who had actually experienced the emotional, economic, and social
upheaval of immigration would relate with the demonstrators. But the immigration protests of spring 2006 revealed that this was not sound logic. On April 11, a day after the rally, I interviewed one Dominican man named Jon. Jon arrived to the US with a tourist visa in the 1960s. He eventually overstayed the visa and lived illegally in the US for years before petitioning for a green card through his wife. I asked Jon for his opinions of the immigration rallies. His assured response was that no special rights should be afforded to undocumented immigrants, especially amnesty. “Lo’ mejicanos vienen aqui para abusar del sistema” (‘The Mexicans come here to abuse the system’), he said. When I asked him to justify this given his own immigration experience, he explained that his case was different: his intention from the beginning was to work hard and get his papers as quickly as possible.

These anecdotes serve to paint a picture of a contradictory Latino pan-ethnicity. One the one hand, Latinos are bonded by a common language, similar geo-political histories, intertwined political destinies, and shared neighborhoods where their lives overlap on a daily basis (Ricourt & Danta 2003, Suárez-Orozco & Páez 2002). Yet the similarities between Latino groups arguably end there. Latinos run the gamut: from the Mexican who can trace ancestors here back a century or more, to the Ecuadorian who just arrived; from the educated Cuban businessman, to the Puerto Rican high school drop out and factory worker; from the black Dominican to the white Colombian. A number of scholars have reflected on these contrasts (see for example Suárez-Orozco & Páez 2002, Portes & Truelove 1987, Padilla 1984, Stepick and Stepick 2002, Torres-Saillant 2002). Equally as important are the generational and background differences that exist even between people of the same group. Ask any recent Puerto Rican migrant what they have in common with Nuyoricans and the response will be a resounding, “nothing”. Scholars argue that the differences are too significant for Latinos to be grouped together for analysis or policy treatment (Portes & Truelove 1987).
There is a case to be made for both these arguments. Antecedents to migration are strikingly similar across certain groups. For example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican migrations were triggered by a shift from diversified, subsistence economies to capitalist agriculture and industrialization. More often though, one group’s socio-historical circumstances contrasts with another. For instance, the forms of reception for each migrant group have been quite different. As Portes and Böröcz (1989) show, immigrants to the US experience divergent modes of incorporation. This term is useful for understanding how Latino groups in New York show dissimilar patterns of ethnic identification formation.

In this chapter I will outline briefly the immigration histories of each of the five major Latino groups in New York City. These were also the groups I most often came in contact with during fieldwork: Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Ecuadorians, and Colombians. I will also discuss how these contrasting histories of migration and incorporation to the US help explain differences in ethnic identification. Finally, I will comment on the development of pan-ethnic Latino identification in New York.

5.1 Latino Immigration to New York

In 2000, there were 2.1 million Latinos in the city (2.8 million in New York State). Census population estimates for all of New York State indicate that Latinos numbered just over 3 million statewide in 2005 (Census 2006). Keeping NYC / NY State proportions the same; this would suggest that the NYC population of Latinos was approximately 2.3 million in 2006. This is almost 1 / 3 of the total NYC population. According to the 2000 Census, Puerto Ricans, the largest Latino group, totaled 789,172. Dominicans, the fastest growing ethnic group in the city, totaled 406,806. In the past 10 years, the Mexican population has also grown at rates much faster than Puerto Ricans. Seven years ago there were 186,872 Mexicans. More recent estimates put the number near 244,000 (US Census 2005). Census estimates of undocumented immigrants
in New York suggest that the total Mexican population is much higher (US Census 2003). Ecuadorians are the fourth largest Latino group with 101,005. This number rose 1% since 1990. In contrast, the number of Colombians decreased to 77,154 in 2000.

5.1.1 Puerto Ricans

Of the five, Puerto Ricans have been in New York the longest. Historically, when a Puerto Rican said they were moving to the US they really just meant New York. As a child, my only image of the US was a tiny “neighboring” island, much like my own Puerto Rico, named “Nueva York”. US and New York were one and the same. And the relationship between P.R. and N.Y. was an intimate one. When things got tough in Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans left for New York and vice versa. Some argue that the island and Puerto Rican communities in New York have both paid a heavy price for this inconsistency (Suro 1999). But despite the bleak statistics of the New York Puerto Rican community (e.g. high poverty rates, high dropout rates, high AIDS rates, high incarceration rates), Nuyoricans have greatly influenced native conceptions of what a Latino is. Much like Mexicans have defined Latinoness in the southwest.

As both citizens and foreigners, the experience of Puerto Ricans in the US is unique. Such is the case with much of Puerto Rico’s history with the United States. Puerto Rico is beset with ambiguity: a colony, but not quite a colony; a model for third world development, but essentially dependent; an island with a vibrant national culture, yet widely Americanized. When the US took over the island from Spain in 1898 small Puerto Rican migrant communities already existed in the States. Puerto Rican independentistas living in these communities were hopeful that the US would help free Puerto Rico from Spanish rule. As it turned out, under American control Puerto Rico had less economic and political sovereignty than under Spain’s Charter of Autonomy granted in 1897. Thus began an exploitative relationship that, even after Puerto
Ricans were granted US citizenship in 1917 and commonwealth status in 1952, has remained largely unaltered.

By 1910 there were approximately 2,000 Puerto Ricans in the United States (Rodríguez, et. al. 1980). Puerto Ricans came as students, revolutionaries, field hands and factory workers. In response to demand for workers during World War I, Puerto Ricans arrived in larger numbers. They settled in the area of the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Harlem. By 1920 there were 7,364 Puerto Ricans living in New York City (Fitzpatrick 1971). On the island, the economy was in disarray, with unemployment and poverty rates rising precipitously. These conditions were a direct result of US-led economic development that changed the island from a diversified subsistence economy, to one solely dependent on sugar production. In the 1920s the decline of the sugarcane industry hit Puerto Rico hard. A substantial proportion of those who immigrated to the US were from Puerto Rico’s peasant class. As was commonly the case, these agrarian workers had first moved to Puerto Rico’s urban areas seeking work. With the consolidation of land for large-scale sugar production and a shift from labor to capital intensive practices, the island had a large labor surplus.

While migration slowed during World War II, after 1945 Puerto Ricans began leaving the island in large numbers. Unrestricted migration to the mainland was crucial to the success of Operation Bootstrap (1848 – 1965), a program to industrialize the island. Cheap San Juan – New York airplane flights and Puerto Ricans’ status as citizens encouraged intense labor recruitment of the islands young, blue-collar workers. During the migration phase’s peak year (dubbed the largest airborne migration in history), 470,000 Puerto Ricans arrived in the US. This is more than the immigration totals of any country including Mexico (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). Puerto Ricans settled in Chicago, Florida, and throughout the eastern seaboard, but especially
New York. Since then, Puerto Ricans became America’s third largest ethnic minority, after African Americans and Mexican Americans.

The low barrier to US entry unique about Puerto Rican migration has promoted two trends. First, large numbers of Puerto Rico’s lower classes migrated (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). Second, it has allowed for *va y ven* (back-and-forth) migratory movement. Gonzalez (2000) suggests that the easy migration between the mainland and the island has encouraged the flight of the US Puerto Rican community’s middle class. As Gonzalez explains, those who were able to save money and learn English returned to the island and started businesses. There they joined the island’s middle class as employers, leaving Puerto Rican *barrrios* in the US without a developing middle class. Gonzalez writes, “The result of back and forth migration has been a Puerto Rican middle class here that is less stable and less connected to institution building among the masses of poor people than in, say the Mexican and Cuban immigrant communities” (2000:258).

In 1960, 60 percent of Puerto Rican workers in New York were in factory jobs. Between 1970 and 1980, New York City lost over 270,000 such jobs and city employment fell by 8.6 percent (Waldinger 1986). For the first time the Puerto Ricans’ status as citizens and a tendency to unionize worked to their disadvantage. Faced with a declining industry, manufacturers preferred the more pliable and less expensive new immigrant labor (e.g. Dominicans). Thousands of unemployed Puerto Ricans returned to the island. By 1972, 14 percent of Puerto Rico’s population consisted of return migrants (Lopez 1974). On the mainland, conditions in the already impoverished New York Puerto Rican communities worsened. As with the African American community, their plight was intensified by pervasive discrimination. Puerto Ricans tended to settle near historically black communities in New York and occupied similar job niches. By the 1980s, Puerto Ricans had the lowest labor force participation rates, highest un-
employment levels, the highest incidence of poverty, and the lowest levels of education of the three major US Latino groups (Tienda 1984). These conditions limited the options available to newcomers (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). This deterioration has encouraged both the new and the settled to seek better conditions outside of New York City. In 1990, there were nearly 900,000 Puerto Ricans in the city. This number decreased by 6% in 2000; the most significant decrease of any New York Latino group.

Frequent visits back home allowed thousands of Puerto Ricans to stay connected to social networks, information, and cultural practices and traditions on the island. For the second generation, these connections, however tenuous, serve to authenticate claims to ethnic group belongingness when other bonds (e.g. language or first hand experience with the native country) are absent. Inevitably, circular migrants and their children also develop social networks and new cultural practices and lifestyles tied to their local communities in New York. Each context requires distinct modes of identification and distinct practices; what many scholars have called a bi-cultural identity.

Puerto Rican bi-cultural identity has been widely explored both by Puerto Rican American literary authors (see for example Santiago 1994) and researchers (Duany 2002, Acosta-Belen 2000, Romberg 1996). The commonly-used term, Nuyorican, captures the dual points of reference for New York Puerto Ricans. But in spite of, or perhaps because of, this bi-cultural identity the Nuyorican has become something of a pariah in mainstream New York society and among more recent Latino migrants. I spoke to one young Puerto Rican man who contrasted his circumstances with that of Nuyoricans (he was a professional who had come to the US to study and work). He saw the Nuyorican situation as “sad because they are rejected by both Americans and Puerto Ricans on the island”. The biggest problem, he said, “was that Nuyoricans did not speak Spanish”. Thus they could not adequately comprehend and reproduce Puerto Rican
cultural practices and traditions. We can add that without the ability to speak fluent Spanish, many have lost an advantage in the labor market to Spanish bilinguals.

Bi-cultural identity is not unique to Puerto Ricans. Any migrant that divides her time, investment, sentiments, between the country of origin and the US will require a broad repertoire of context specific (ethnic) behaviors. Furthermore, my interviews suggest that those who identify as Nuyorican actually have little contact with Puerto Rico. The self-concepts that New York Puerto Ricans have developed are very much New York-based. Consider the following excerpt from a self-identified Puerto Rican named Abygail. Abygail was born and raised in New York. Her mother was a second-generation Puerto Rican immigrant and her father migrated from Puerto Rico at the age of 12. Abygail, who is married to a second-generation St. Croixian man, is the mother of bi-racial children.

It gives you an understanding that only a Puerto Rican could have. If you are not born and raised a Puerto Rican you just don’t know! You just don’t know. Like for instance I know where the best restaurant in New York is. The best cuchifritos in all of New York is on 103rd between Lexington and 3rd, and when you get off the train you walk up the...(laughing). And that’s something only a Puerto Rican could know. You understand what I’m saying? There are things that you only know ‘cause that’s your culture. I make a very good pot of beans, yo!...There are some things that you could only know...being who you are.

Abygail also mentioned that while she is often assumed to be a light-skinned African American, anyone would know what she really was by the Puerto Rican flags and art work that adorn her apartment. Thus, the Nuyorican depends heavily on the use of symbols and tokens to defend claims to Puerto Rican identification. These are meaningful and necessary within the context of New York City but not sufficiently authentic on the island. What requires little defense is the Puerto Rican’s place within New York. Through sheer numbers and a long history in the city, Puerto Ricans have come to dominate native perceptions of Latino ethnicity in the
northeast. One consequence of this is that Latinos from other groups, or especially Latinos with only one Puerto Rican parent, will invoke or emphasize Puerto Rican identity to defend their own claims to Latino identity, to street-smarts, to New York grittiness. If the New York City Puerto Rican population continues to decrease, it will be interesting to see what group takes their place, and how NY Puerto Ricans themselves will identify.

5.1.2 Dominicans

In the 1960s, the annual average of Dominican emigrants to the United States was over 9,000. By the 1970s the average climbed to over 14,000 and then to 20,000 in the first half of the 1980s (INS 1961-1980, 1984, 1986). In 1991 and 1992, the number of Dominicans who entered the US reached over 40,000 each year (Torres-Saillant and Hernandez 1998). Overwhelmingly, these migrants chose New York City as their destination. Between 1980 and 1990 Dominicans were the fastest growing ethnic group in New York, increasing from 125,380 to 332,713 (ibid.). While other groups (i.e. Puerto Ricans and Cubans) decrease in numbers, the number of Dominicans in New York rises. In the 1960s, Dominican migrants tended to settle near established Latino communities in New York. Today, the largest Dominican communities can be found in Manhattan’s Upper West Side, Lower East Side and Jackson Heights-Corona in Queens.

According to Grasmuck and Pessar (1991), skilled and semi-skilled workers’ wages and security were indirectly threatened by the large reserve of labor in the Dominican Republic. This middle class group could also afford the expensive trip to the United States. Thus, most migrants after 1966 were from the urban middle-class. In 1991 a government doctor in the Dominican Republic earned about $160 a month (ibid.). The same doctor could improve his income substantially by working as an operative in New York’s garment industry. Because of this,
Dominicans in New York are overrepresented in low-paying blue-collar manufacturing jobs and underrepresented in the professional and managerial categories (only 9.6 percent in 1990).

A large number of Dominicans who work in the manufacturing industry are undocumented. Contradicting illegal alien stereotypes, undocumented Dominicans were far more likely to have held professional or managerial jobs in the Dominican Republic. In contrast, documented Dominican migrants tended to cluster in unskilled occupations. This is explained by the ample number of Dominicans who overstay tourist visas selectively issued to those most likely to return: people with skills and resources (Hendricks 1974; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

As with other immigrants, the barriers to professional re-licensing have constrained Dominicans’ livelihood choices. The economic picture for Dominicans is not complete without considering the exceptional levels of entrepreneurship in response to such constraints. Dominicans dominate in the ownership of bodegas, medium-sized supermarket chains, retail stores, gypsy cabs, and garment contracting. According to the Dominican Federation of Merchants and Industrialists, Dominicans own 70 percent of all bodegas in New York City (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). We can trace part of this phenomenon to the unique conditions that existed in 1960s New York when Dominicans arrived in large numbers. They moved to the city at a time when whites were leaving. Neighborhoods in the Upper West Side and parts of the Bronx saw large numbers of apartments vacated and decreased rent prices. The poor immigrant communities that emerged in the wake of white flight boomed but were underserved. For example, unlicensed car services (gypsy cabs) thrived to compensate for the lack of yellow cabs that ventured into the worst parts of upper Manhattan. As these businesses prospered, capital was reinvested in other businesses in upper Manhattan; including restaurants, retail stores, and bodegas (Suro 1999).
Then and now these micro-enterprises relied heavily on the cooperative efforts of kin and friendship networks. These tightly knit networks are the base from which employees are hired, resources are pooled, and new entrepreneurs emerge. Therefore, Dominican enclaves like Washington Heights are considerably disconnected and insulated from the rest of New York. What is also unique to Dominicans, at least before Mexicans settled in New York in large numbers, is the deeply transnational character of these kin and business networks. Not only do Dominicans invest in New York businesses, but a considerable amount of profit is invested in businesses in the Dominican Republic. Millions of dollars are also sent home to build second homes for Dominican immigrants. The US Embassy in Santo Domingo estimated Dominican remittances at $1.4 billion dollars (Boly, 1996).

In the 1970s, their immigrant status gave them an advantage in New York’s declining manufacturing sector. However, in the 1980s and 1990s the city continued to lose manufacturing jobs. Overrepresented in this sector, the Dominican community suffered a serious blow. Despite the considerable number of skilled and semi-skilled Dominican migrants that entered the US after the revolution, by the 1990s it was clear that Dominicans were among the most impoverished New Yorkers. In contrast to earlier trends, Dominicans have low levels of educational attainment compared to other groups (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Torres-Saillant & Hernandez 1998; Hernandez and Rivera-Batiz 1997). Analyzing data from the US Department of Commerce, a 1997 study found that the income of the Dominican population was the lowest of all the major racial and ethnic groups in New York City; that the community's unemployment rate was at 19 percent; and that at 45 percent, the percentage of Dominicans living below the poverty line is more than double the city's overall average (Hernandez and Rivera-Batiz 1997).

Part of this picture is the lack of English proficiency among many Dominican migrants. A consequence of living in the cloistral Dominican communities of Manhattan’s upper west side
and the Bronx is that a person can live for decades without having to learn much English. I have family that arrived from D.R. to Washington Heights in the 1960s who still have very poor English language skills. Those who do work in jobs outside of these enclaves are in industries (e.g. garment) with Spanish-speaking co-workers and even Spanish-speaking bosses (whether they are Latino or not). Thus, the most stubborn obstacle to economic stability cited by the Dominicans I interviewed was language. A silver-lining to this difficult reality is that second generation Dominican migrants, in becoming their family’s interpreters, learn to speak both languages well; much more so than Puerto Ricans. Add to this the common practice of sending children for extended summer visits to the Dominican Republic, and young Dominican men and women grow up with strong ties to the D.R.

Another obstacle faced by Dominicans is skin color. As the darkest of the New York Latinos, Dominicans are discriminated against even by members of other Latino groups. In the 1½ years that I observed and interviewed Latinos in New York, I got the impression that other Latinos, particularly white Colombians, were the most harsh in their assessments of Dominicans. Zentella (1990) reports that Dominican’s low standing in the hierarchy of New York Latinos also has consequences for how the Dominican dialect is perceived and used. A twist to the racial experience of Dominicans in New York is the seemingly contradictory racial preferences of Dominicans themselves. Dominicans enter the US with notions of blackness that differ markedly from American racial conceptions. Whereas in the Dominican Republic dark-skinned Dominicans choose among a range of racial categories (reserving pure black for Haitians), in the US a person with any trace of African ancestry is labeled black. Thus, some Dominicans have reported that they did not perceive themselves in terms of a black racial identity until they arrived in the US (Torres-Saillant 1998, Duany 1998).
Because the racial system on the island is also more complex than that in the US, Puerto Ricans share a similar story. In the early years of their immigration history Puerto Ricans also tended to settle near historically-African American communities in New York City. Because of this, (and not unlike what happened to early Irish immigrants), Puerto Ricans were categorized with African Americans, and subject to discrimination. Both Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in New York, particularly young men who face limited economic and social upward mobility, have embraced black American culture and identity. For example, Puerto Ricans have adopted features of African American Vernacular in their speech (Wolfram 1973, Zentalla 1997). One of my favorite examples how this association between Puerto Rican and black can work to a person’s advantage, actually comes from Roberto, a Venezuelan participant of this research.

Roberto is white and blue-eyed. Except for when he speaks in Spanish, he is indistinguishable from other white Americans. One day Roberto traveled to a black neighborhood to buy drugs. Apparently this neighborhood was known to be dangerous and frequented by undercover police officers. Here Roberto describes how he appropriated Puerto Rican (Boricua) identity to avoid trouble with blacks:

You know one thing when you are in a black neighborhood, right? You don’t want these motherfucking molletos to think you’re white-white! Fuck that! Me hago boricua…instantly! Like I remember, the last time I got high I was on my way to cop [buy] and I knew these niggas was not even gonna look at me. You know what I did? I turned the phone to vibrate so it won’t ring and I had the thing y me pongo hablar (‘and I start to talk’), “Mira que si este, que si lo otro, cla, cla, cla…” (‘Look, this and that, blah, blah, blah’). Hablando una conversación con el aire (‘Having a conversation with the air’)! Pero en español (‘But in Spanish’). En boricua (‘In Puerto Rican’). Y los tipos ahí (‘And the dudes there’): “Bueno (‘Well’), you’re not white!”

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12 a derogatory word for a dark-skinned person
As this example illustrates some Latino immigrants have used American racial categories and associations to their advantage, thus affecting patterns of EI invocation. Immigrants who can pass as white (or would otherwise be classified as white) find that emphasizing a white racial identity allows them greater social and economic mobility (e.g. Cubans and Colombians). In contrast, because the American racial binary stigmatizes blacks, dark-skinned Latinos are at a disadvantage. Therefore, dark-skinned Dominicans and Puerto Ricans may choose to lessen the impact of black skin by emphasizing their Latino background (Patterson 1975). I argue that upwardly mobile Latinos from all groups will develop and invoke an EI that distinguishes them from black Americans.

5.1.3 Mexicans

In October 1986, the US Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). In the years leading up to the legislation, the US economy was in a decline and cold-war hysteria prevailed. Widespread calls to curb Mexican immigration conflicted with the needs of large-scale American farms. To satisfy the agricultural sector, 3 million formerly undocumented long-term immigrants and undocumented farm workers were given amnesty (Massey, et. al. 2002). To satisfy Congress’ demands and calm public fears IRCA also increased the INS enforcement budget, imposed sanctions against employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers, and increased the budget for work-site inspections (Bean et. al. 1989; Goodies 1986). However, the legislation had the opposite effect intended. It encouraged long-term settlement in the US, the dispersal of Mexican migration over other parts of the country, and an increase in the prevalence of dependents on workers (Massey et. al. 2002). The legislation also failed to reduce undocumented migration.

The increasingly restrictive legislations of the 1980s (including Proposition 187) attracted thousands of Mexican migrants away from the West. More immigrant-friendly New York saw a
dramatic increase in its Mexican-origin population (Alonso-Zaldivar 1999; Dallas 2001). After Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, Mexicans are now the third largest Latino group in New York City. In 1990 the Census reported 61,722 Mexicans lived in there. By 2000 this number had increased by 200 percent. Some accounts put this number as high as 275,000 (Smith 2002). At this growth rate, more than half a million Mexicans will be living in New York City by 2010 (Dallas 2001).

Vibrant Mexican communities can now be found in all five boroughs. In East Harlem and parts of the Bronx, the Mexican flag is slowly replacing the Puerto Rican flag in tenant windows. Part of Corona in Queens has become a Little Mexico of sorts. Numerous taco stands, cramped traditional medicine boutiques with curanderos and psychics, Mexican music stores and novelty marts serve the almost exclusively Latino community. In addition to these establishments, the sidewalks are open space for the enterprising. Clandestine ventures involving prostitution and the sale of falsified document (e.g. social security cards) are rampant. To avoid trouble with the law, these sellers advertise their services using few, well-targeted words at the passers-by. Surreptitiously distributed business cards and flyers make it into the hands of the select. There are high rates of small business development among the Mexicans of New York. The rate of self-employment is at 3.7%, compared to 3.3% among other Latinos (NYC Department of City Planning 2000).

Most new Mexican migrants come to the city to work in restaurants, garment factories and corner groceries. The Mexican Consulate estimates that 70 to 80 percent of the Mexican community in New York is undocumented. Undocumented day laborers station themselves at strategic spots throughout the city. Men wait for hours near hardware stores, U-Hauls, bus stations, and other pre-determined areas for temporary work. I remember distinctly the day one of my research participants set out to “pick up a couple of Mexicans” for a cleaning project. We
drove down Broadway in Astoria in a white van. The driver had only to wave his hands out the window before more than five workers fought to make it into the still-moving van. To avoid scenes like this, Mexican community leaders have established day labor cooperatives in some parts of the city. One near Coney Island in Brooklyn has workers sign in early every morning. They are then assigned a job on a first-come-first-served basis. In a given week, all men who are part of this cooperative have the same chance of finding a temporary assignment. Employers who recruit workers at these sites must guarantee a set wage. It is no secret that the employers who usually recruit these workers pay them poorly; often well below the minimum wage. Thus, throughout the city and including other Latinos, Mexicans are viewed and treated as dispensable, easily replaceable labor commodities. Nevertheless, unemployment among New York Mexicans is lower than in other Latino communities (Census 2005).

Whereas Mexican immigrants to southwestern US tended to originate from western and northwestern Mexican states like Jalisco, Zacatecas, Michoacan, Guanajuato (Durand and Massey 2003), a new trend developed for New York. The majority of New York Mexicans come from south central Mexico, particularly Puebla and to a lesser extent Guerrero and Oaxaca (ibid.). Poblanos alone make up more than half of the Mexican population in New York (Dallas 2001). These settlement patterns are due in large part to the heavy reliance on familial and friendship networks among Mexican immigrants. New arrivals are often received into severely over-occupied apartments. Opportunistic New York landlords have met the demand for cheap housing by creating apartments, sometimes in violation of city codes, to accommodate as many people as are willing to cohabitate. One Mexican woman whose social network data I collected, listed more than 20 relatives and close friends who shared apartments in one building in Manhattan’s upper west side. The majority of her remaining network was also Mexican.
Restrictive immigration policies, undocumented migrations, and dependence on kin networks offer few opportunities for developing non-Mexican or non-Latino affiliations. As with Dominicans, submersion in Mexican-dominant daily life discourages English-language learning and flexible ethnic self-presentation. Census statistics support this (Cordero-Guzmán 2006). Mexicans are more likely to be non-US citizens; 60% compared to 24% among other Latino communities. They are also less likely to be English proficient; 38.7% do not speak English well or at all compared to 21.6% among other Latinos. As I will discuss in a later chapter, data on the use of ethnic labels among the Mexican participants in this study confirm that Mexicans identified exclusively as Mexican. If they used other labels, these were specific to the regions in Mexico where they were from.

5.1.4 Ecuadorians

In 1994 the Ecuadorian government agreed to grant dual-citizenship to Ecuadorians living abroad. Not only did this recognize the growing Ecuadorian community in the United States, but also the community’s transnational character.

A modest phase of Ecuadorian immigration to the United States began in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The effects of a failing Ecuadorian banana market in the early 1960s were deeply-felt in the coastal lowlands (the Costa) and in the Andean highlands (the Sierra) where many migrant workers to the Costa originated. This coincided with the passing of the Hart-Celler Act of 1965 which abolished national-origin quotas. Ecuadorians perceived the Act as indicative of a newly receptive America (Kyle 2000). Also, in the late 1950s airplane travel between Ecuador and New York City became easier. Thus, Ecuador – US immigration tripled during the 1960s. These pioneering migrants tended to be urban, middle class, relatively educated, from the coastal areas, and documented.
The second, and current, phase of mass Ecuadorian labor migration began with the decline in the Panama hat trade after World War II. Panama hat cottage industry was the cornerstone of the Azuayan economy throughout much of the 19th century. The decline was induced by America’s switch to cheaper straw hats from Asia. By the end of the 1970s Ecuadorian migrants were men, largely undocumented, from both urban and rural areas in the Sierra, and especially from the south-central provinces of Azuay and Cañar (Kyle 2000). Overwhelmingly, these migrants have settled in New York City.

It is not clear why New York City emerged as the primary destination choice among Ecuadorian migrants. Zambrano (1999) suggests early migrants to New York relied upon contacts within banana corporations to secure tourist visas. These visas later converted to worker visas in New York. Kyle (2000) suggests that in the 1950s the young middle class migrants (many came from families tied to the hat trade as exporters), relied on commercial networks linking New York and the centers of Panama hat production in rural Ecuador.

In New York, Ecuadorians are among the fastest growing ethnic groups. Using census figures adjusted with the Current Population Survey 2000, Logan (2001) estimates that 396,400 Ecuadorians live in New York. According to the 2000 Census, 57,716 (56 percent of all New York Ecuadorians) live in Queens alone. Most of those in Queens settle in the Jackson Heights- Corona community. Researchers have cautioned against relying solely on 2000 Census figures for Latino counts: the method for recording Latino populations were inadequate and tended to undercount new Latino groups (e.g. Dominicans, Ecuadorians, and Colombians). Undercounts are also inevitable due to undocumented migration. Undocumented Ecuadorians in New York City have outnumbered other groups with historically high rates of undocumented migration (e.g. Dominicans). The New York Department of City Planning estimates that in 1993, Ecuadorians constituted the number-one undocumented migrant group in New York, with 27,000
undocumented Ecuadorians in the state and an equal number elsewhere in the United States (New York Department of City Planning 1996).

Ecuadorians in the US tend to lead bi-national lives. Upon arrival to the US, most men work as day laborers or in service-sector jobs (e.g. restaurants and hotels). Women tend to work in the garment industry or restaurants (New York City Department of Planning 1999). Most often Ecuadorian migrants are married men with households in Ecuador they must support. Seeing migration as a temporary means to an end, these young men arrange volatile living arrangements, travel back and forth from Ecuador, and move among various households of family and friends (Pribilsky 2003 in Jokisch and Pribilsky 2002). To keep economic options open in Ecuador as well as the US, Ecuadorians have developed networks connecting home and host community (Jokisch & Pribilsky 2002). Evidence for this is found in the proliferation of courier services in New York and Ecuador and the billions of dollars in remittances Ecuadorians have sent home. In 2003 alone, remittances to Ecuador totaled $1.54 billion dollars (Latin American News Digest 2004). On average, every Ecuadorian sent money home eight times in 2003 (ibid.). This money is used for house-building or the purchase of land (Jokisch & Pribilsky 2002).

Permanent immigration fosters a sense of belonging to and/or greater participation in the receiving society. With permanent settlement comes greater investment in a broad range of relationships (at work, community, school, etc.), and greater exposure to American culture and values. Conventional assimilation theory predicts that permanent settlement encourages immigrants to adopt American identity. In contrast, migrants who enter the US with the intention to settle temporarily (like Ecuadorians who tend to be target earners) may feel a limited obligation to the wider society and see little need to forge relationships with others not directly tied to their migration goals.
Among the Ecuadorians I came in contact with in Queens, work-related contacts tended to be other Ecuadorians. Interestingly, there is a sense among Ecuadorians that a person from the coast (costeños), say Guayaquil, can trust other Latinos more their own compatriots from the Ecuadorian Sierras (serranos), and vice versa. Regional conflicts that exist in Ecuador have been transplanted in New York. The costeño refers to a serrano as indio and perceives him as backwards and conservative. Serranos think of costenos as proud and pretentious. Also, no bounded Ecuadorian communities exist here. Instead, Ecuadorians are dispersed among other Latinos. Therefore, my observations suggest that while Ecuadorians tend to rely on other Ecuadorians (especially from the same region) in work-related areas, they are very likely to develop ties with other Latinos.

5.1.5 Colombians

On April 9, 1948 popular Liberal leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, was assassinated in the streets of Bogotá. The Liberal uprising that ensued spread epidemically throughout Colombia’s countryside. Lasting almost ten years, La Violencia involved the bloody repression of Liberal and communist peasants by the right-wing Colombian government. Peasants formed armed self-defense movements in response to the offensives. These consolidated under the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 1964. Since then, numerous other guerilla groups arose, including those inspired by the Cuban revolution (e.g. National Liberation Army – ELN). In the years after the civil war, Colombia’s economy collapsed. The percentage of Colombia’s workforce living in absolute poverty more than doubled, from 25 percent to 50.7 percent and as high as 67 percent for rural laborers (Leech 2002). The cocaine boom in the 1970s lured thousands of landless peasants and urban unemployed workers to coca plant cultivation, cocaine production, and distribution.
These conditions set the stage for the proliferation of guerilla and right-wing paramilitary forces that along with drug cartels and Colombia’s own (US trained) military have vied for control over Colombia’s people and territory. Over the past forty years a low-intensity civil war has ravaged the countryside displacing 600,000 Colombians in the 1980s alone (Meertens and Segura-Escobar 1996). Today Colombia has the highest homicide rate in Latin America and all types of crime, including kidnappings, extortion and theft have multiplied (Vélez et. al. 2003).

Since the mid-1990s economic conditions worsened after a period of growth, with unemployment escalating to almost 20 percent (ibid.).

More than 72,000 Colombians arrived during the 1960s, 77,000 in the 1970s, and 122,000 in the 1980s. A major wave of Colombian migration began with the recession in the mid-1990s. Today there are over half a million Colombians living in the US (Logan 2001, Portes and Truelove 1987). Migrants tend to be skilled and educated white Colombians from the upper and middle classes. Thus, the country has experienced a serious capital and brain drain. Increasingly, those that remain in the country are poor and highly susceptible to the temptations of the drug market. The poor have also become easy targets for paramilitary and guerilla recruitment.

New York and Florida are the preferred destinations for Colombian immigrants to the US. Miami is a particularly key destination of upper class Colombians. In New York, a successful ethnic enclave in Queens has established a strong Colombian middle class. Colombians have opened small businesses and work in fairly well-paying jobs compared to other Latino groups in the City. Of course, re-licensing and re-certification has been an obstacle for some professionals. Middle and upper class Colombians have found that they must take jobs that they would not consider back home (Brinkley-Rogers 2001). Poverty and unemployment rates in the Colombian community are comparable to those found among Cubans. In 2000 the Colombians had an
unemployment rate of 4.3 percent (compared to 5.8 percent for Cubans and 8.6 percent for Dominicans) (Logan 2001).

Those Colombians who flee because of real threats to their own or their family’s lives have encountered a catch in US asylum law. Because the US is Colombia’s ally in the fight against left-wing guerillas and drug traffickers, Colombians are ineligible for political refugee status. This has resulted in high rates of undocumented migration among Colombians. Commonly, undocumented Colombians have overstayed tourist visas, refusing to return to the violent conditions at home. Thousands others try to enter the US without visas. As Chardy (2001) reports, an increasing number of Colombians have taken international flights that connect through the US. Upon arrival they abandon their travels and request political asylum. According to INS figures 2,747 applications for asylum were filed in 2000, compared to 427 in 1999 (ibid.). American legislators have tried to address the human rights problem with The Andean Adjustment Act of 2003. If passed this bill would grant protected status to thousands of Colombians who arrived here before December of 1995.

Within the hierarchy of ethnic groups in New York, Colombians enjoy favorable perceptions and treatment from other New Yorkers. Within Latino communities, their educational and professional status has marked them as respectable and even enviable. Abel, an Ecuadorian participant in this study, told me that to avoid being mistreated and typecast as a poor, Ecuadorian laborer, he tells people that he is Colombian. In fact, I saw him do this while trying to make a sale. Outside of Latino communities, the fact that many Colombians are white means that they suffer from little discrimination. The lack of such an obstacle has undoubtedly contributed to their success. When I asked Alma, another participant in the ethnographic phase of this research, to talk about her own feelings as a Colombian woman, she had the following to share:
Yo me siento orgullosa de ser colombiana. A mí no me da pena. A todo el mundo le digo yo soy colombiana porque independientemente de que piensan que los colombianos trabajan con droga, los colombianos somos muy educados y muy educados. Para mí, colombianos somos muy educados, tenemos, hay diferencia con países de otro, el nivel educa-... El nivel no de educación, el nivel de...buenos modales. Manners; de los colombianos es mejor que el de las otras culturas, me parece pues a mí. En la mesa, en todo. Por ejemplo, de los dominicanos, comen con la boca abierta, hablan cuando están comiendo, no saluden, no se despiden. Los colombianos somos bien educados. Y allá en Colombia, esos modales vienen de Europa, de los españoles. Oiga, yo estoy trabajando con un señor colombiano en el real state. Qué señor tan educado, ese señor, yo me aterro, ese señor se le ve encima que es colombiano. Apenas el empezó a hablarme así tan educado tan pausado tan tranquilo pa’ hablar; yo me dije, este señor es Colombiano y era Colombiano.

(‘I feel proud to be Colombian. I don’t feel sorry. I tell everyone that I’m Colombian because independently of thinking that Colombians work with drugs, Colombians are very educated, very educated. For me, us Colombians are very educated, we have, there’s a difference with countries of other, the level of educ-... Not the level of education, the level of...good manners. Manners, of the Colombians is better than that of other cultures, it seems to me. At the table, in everything. For example, of the Dominicans, they eat with their mouth open, they talk when they’re eating, they don’t greet, and they don’t say goodbye. We Colombians are very educated. And over there in Colombia, those manners come from Europe, from the Spaniards. Listen, I’m working with a Colombian gentleman in real estate. What an educated man, that man, it terrifies me, that man you can just see that he is Colombian. As soon as he started talking to me, like that so educated, so unhurried, so calm to talk; I said to myself this man is Colombian and he was Colombian.’)

According to Alma, Colombian identity is communicated in the way of talking (independently of dialect or accent), in the way one carries himself, and in the way one treats others. They are set apart from other groups not only by their economic success but by their social graces. I often heard this perception from non-Colombians as well. Without extolling my own social graces, I was frequently confused for Colombian. Given my light skin, level of education and my measured, neutral (not obviously Puerto Rican) Spanish, I did not fit people’s
perception of a caribeña. Colombians see little need to invoke ethnicities other than Colombian; this identification is sufficiently advantageous outside of and within the Latino community.

5.1.6 Other Latinos

In addition to these five major groups, in my research I encountered or worked with Latinos from other countries. These included El Salvador, Argentina, and Venezuela. With such relatively smaller numbers represented by these countries, many of those who I talked from these countries identified strongly with the broader Latino collectivity. Esperanza, the Argentine woman I observed during my fieldwork, admitted that since coming to New York she associated only with other Latinos. “All my friends are Latinos,” she said, “I don’t have any American friends and I’m not interested either.” Esperanza’s social network was quite diverse; made up of people from various Latin American countries. A New School University lecture I attended on Argentinean immigration discussed the notion that there is no cohesive Argentine community in New York. Because of their tendency towards English proficiency, European looks, and high educational attainment, many quickly blend into mainstream American society.

Presence or absence of ethnic enclaves to receive migrants represents another important mode of incorporation. Ethnic enclaves, such as those found in Miami for Cubans and the US Southwest for Mexicans, allow immigrants to maintain a life style similar to what they left behind. In an ethnic enclave, members are encouraged to speak their native language. They can also develop and maintain social networks heavily represented by fellow ethnic group members. This environment would tend to strongly reinforce the EI shared with members of the enclave community. Not only that, but there are very clear incentives for maintaining and invoking the shared EI. Shared EI grants the migrant access to the economic and political benefits available within the enclave (e.g. jobs, votes).
In the cases where migrants do not enter into an established ethnic enclave, as with Argentines or Salvadorians, a strategy of ethnic inclusiveness may be the most ideal. The migrant is encouraged to develop and invoke the ethnic identification that represents a common ground with others in the community. For example, the pioneering Mexican immigrants who entered New York in the 1980s may have found that their adaptation and access to resources depended on forging ties with the Puerto Ricans and Dominicans they settled near to. Pan-Ethnicity forms as a result. Padilla (1984) reports this to be the case for the Puerto Ricans and Mexicans who share neighborhoods in Chicago. According to Padilla, Latinos in Chicago (especially community leaders) invoke the inclusive pan-ethnic Latino identity to gain political and economic advantage over other ethnic groups in Chicago. New York is an ideal location to test this hypothesis. While there are a number of well-established Latino enclaves in the city (Puerto Ricans in the Bronx and Spanish Harlem, Dominicans in Washington Heights, Colombians in Queens), many Latinos have also settled in ethnically mixed communities throughout New York’s five boroughs. These communities tend to attract Latinos from all over Latin America and encourage pan-ethnicity based on, as Ricourt and Danta (2003) point out, _convivencia diaria._

5.2 Ethnic, Regional and Linguistic Categories

Having reviewed the immigration histories of five of the largest Latino groups in New York City, I will now describe the ethnic, regional, and linguistic categories that specifically pertain to the focal participants of this study: Roberto and Abel. These descriptions draw on the socio-historical circumstances outlined above, as well as my own ethnographically-grounded insights about the NYC ethnic landscape. Starting with Roberto, I provide basic descriptions of each of the categories along with demonstrative quotes taken from Roberto’s and Abel’s discourse. The ethnic and regional categories invoked by Roberto were: Venezuelan, Spanish,
Puerto Rican / Nuyorican, Urban Latino, White New Yorker. During conversations, Roberto used one or more of the following languages or dialects: Puerto Rican Spanish (PRS), New York English (NYE), Venezuelan Spanish (VS), and African American Vernacular (AAVE). Abel’s ethnic and regional repertoire included Ecuadorian, *guayaquileño / costeño, indio, Latino / Hispano, and Colombian, et.al. In his interactions, he primarily alternated between Ecuadorian Spanish (ES) and Hispanized English (HE). At times he also used elements of Colombian, and Rioplatense Spanish.

5.2.1 Roberto’s Ethnic and Regional Identifications

Venezuelan – Makes claim to origins in Venezuela. In New York, there are distinct associations of Latinos born in South American and those born in the Caribbean. Common stereotypes attributed to South Americans are: racist, conservative, backwards, *indios*, drug-traffickers, well-off, fluent in Spanish, warm, always late. Caribbean Latinos on the other hand, which predominate among Latinos in New York, are cast as happy, extroverted, passionate, sexual, lazy, temperamental, Americanized, dark-skinned, and poor. People like Roberto, who have ethnic and linguistic flexibility, associate with or disassociate from these stereotypes as need be.

Examples:
- I’m from Venezuela.
- Yo soy Venezolano. (‘I’m Venezuelan’)

Spanish – Makes claim to origins in Spain and can be used to support claims to *whiteness* or *being white*, and conversely, can be downplayed to support claims to *blackness* or *being black*.

Examples:
- Well, if they ask me where my origins are from because my origins are from Spain.
- My father is from Spain. My father is that type of Spaniard that, he brought me up with values!

Puerto Rican or Nuyorican – Identifies with the island of Puerto Rico, and Puerto Ricans. Developed attachments to elements of Puerto Rican culture like the food (e.g. *arroz con*...
gandules, pasteles, cuchifito), music and dancing (e.g. salsa, bomba y plena) and language.

Lives in or around Puerto Rican neighborhoods (e.g. south Bronx, east Harlem, Sunset Park in Brooklyn). For decades, Puerto Ricans have been the largest Latino group in the city and have therefore influenced popular concepts of Latinos in the northeast. Many Latinos, Roberto being one of them, capitalize on the reputation and associations made of Puerto Ricans. Or just to get by and fit into predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhoods. At the same time, it has meant that for many non-Puerto Rican Latinos that can pass for Puerto Rican, assertions about their background are made in opposition to Puerto Rican identity: “I ain’t Puerto Rican”.

- Examples:
  - I know a lot about Puerto Rico. I know more about Puerto Rico than about my own country. You can drive me right now to Puerto Rico and I go boom! Give me the rental, I know where I’m going, I know what to do. Do that shit in Venezuela? No joda, me encuentran en una montaña, allá al la’ito ’e Colombia. Perdi’o! (‘No kidding, they’ll find me in a mountain, over there next to Colombia. Lost!’)
  - I don’t speak New York Spanish, like I said, I can roll into whatever. Usually we talk more Puerto Rican than anything.

Urban Latino – Often described as hood or ghetto, and frequently associated with African American culture, including music, language (AAVE), food, dress, and kinesics. Urban Latinos are strongly linked in people’s minds with socio-demographic trends among poor urban Latino and African American populations (and poor whites who live in predominantly Latino and black neighborhoods): mainly high crime and incarceration rates, rampant single motherhood, and dependence on public assistance. Beyond these negative generalizations, urban African American and Latino communities are also characterized by strength and resistance in the face of discriminatory pressures. In the hood, respect and loyalty to close kin and friends are important values. Churches remain important sources of neighborhood cohesion and many urban African Americans and Latinos live in communities where everybody knows everybody else. Finally, the African American and Latino communities of NYC have also been the source of artistic innovation with world-wide recognition. The music, dance, and other cultural forms to emerge
from the *hood* are a source of pride and means of ethnic expression for urban African Americans and Latinos.

Despite strong bases for unity and mutual support, some Latinos are antagonistic towards African Americans (and vice versa); even while they adopt elements of African American urban culture. Thus, it is not uncommon for Latinos to adopt discriminatory discourse grounded in simplistic, often contradictory stereotypes. Consider the following quotes from three urban Latino men:

*Anthony, Phase 1 participant, Puerto Rican and Cuban* -
Being in jail makes you racist against black people.

*Roberto, Phase 1 participant, Venezuelan*:
The blacks I didn’t really care about too tough, you know what I mean, I just knew that they were just not accepting of me and I had accepted that.

*Melvin, Phase 2 participant, Dominican*:
Como tu puede estar con un negro Jamaiquino? Lo que tu necesita’ es un negro clasico. (‘How can you be with a black Jamaican. What you need is a classic black.’)

Robert formed his opinion of incarcerated African Americans, while being incarcerated himself; Roberto rejected those that rejected him, with initial directionality impossible to determine; and Melvin, a dark-skinned Dominican identified himself as a *different kind* of black. The grouping of urban Latinos with urban African Americans in mainstream consciousness masks the ways that Latinos contribute to American racist ideologies.

Still, the strongest tendency in New York is for young urban Latinos to associate with black urban culture. I encountered powerful evidence for this trend in Phase 2 of my research. Clarissa, a young, fair-skinned Euro-Puerto Rican woman outright said to me, “I’m black” when I asked her how she identified herself. Clarissa supported this claim by showing how her social network was significantly African American. Finally, it is important to note that while the influence of African American culture on Latinos is most frequently described as unidirectional (black → Latino), Latinos also influence black urban culture: in language, as with the adoption
of *mami* by urban blacks to describe and sexualize Latinas and in music with the popularity of *reggaeton* among both African Americans and Latinos. Therefore, I prefer to use the more general term *urban*, than overemphasize the influence of black culture on New York City Latinos.

Examples:

- You know what time it is with this *nigger* right here, son!
- I like my rap, I like my Hip Hop.

White New Yorker – Emphasizes upbringing in New York City as a source of attitudinal and behavioral uniqueness: grittiness, street-smarts, universality, and directness. Embraces the city’s long history as a melting pot, while capitalizing on white privilege. Associates culturally and/or linguistically with white groups having a long history in New York (e.g. Italian, Irish).

Speaks the New York dialect of English (Labov 1982).

Examples:

- We grew up in Queens Village but I basically grew up in New York City because I would make my way all over New York.
- And the whites were just, they were more like me in the sense of, you know, the whole crew likes to play handball, you know, we all like to ride our bikes, everybody worked on their bikes.
- Like I could be a white boy. I’d listen to classic rock and wear them jackets and the jeans, and you know “hi dude, how are you doing dude” and you know.

### 5.2.2 Roberto’s Linguistic Repertoire (Gumperz 1964):

Puerto Rican Spanish – Zentella (1997) distinguishes between Standard (SPRS) and Non-Standard (NSPRS) varieties of Puerto Rican Spanish. The most significant feature setting apart SPRS and peninsular Spanish is the aspiration or elision of syllable final /s/. This feature is shared by other Caribbean Spanish dialects. SPRS is further distinguished from other Spanish dialects by the pronunciation of word initial \(<r>\) and medial \(<rr>\) as a velar /x/ or uvular trill /R/, rather than the more common apico-alveolar trill /r/. Cited by speakers as the most distinctly *Puerto Rican* of all the sounds in Puerto Rican Spanish (Lipski 2004), this feature renders words like *arroz* (‘rice’) and *rico* (‘rich’) with a raspy quality. Syntactic traits of SPRS include: lack of
inversion of the subject in questions where the subject is a pronoun (e.g. *Qué tu haces?* for *Qué haces tu?*, ‘What are you doing?’); conservation of subject pronouns, mainly *yo*, *tú*, and *usted*, where they would otherwise be implied in other Spanish dialects (Hochberg 1986, Lipski 2004), (e.g. *Yo tengo hambre* for *Tengo hambre*, ‘I am hungry’).

In her study of bilingual Puerto Rican children in New York City’s *El Barrio*, Zentella (1997) described two pronunciations used by participants in her research and particularly associated with nonstandard or popular Puerto Rican Spanish: syllable final /s/ aspiration or elision even in formal speech and substitution of /l/ for syllable final /r/ (e.g. *recuerda* for *recuerda*, ‘remember’). Zentella notes that these consistencies were found among those participants “who were born and raised in Puerto Rico in poor families, often those from rural areas who had little formal education (1994: 44).” Another common phonological feature of NSPRA is the weakening or elision of inter-vocalic /d/. This happens most frequently in words ending with –ado (e.g. *enojao* for *enojado*, ‘angry’). A syntactic characteristic of NSPRS relevant for some of the research participants in this study is the use of phrasal calques (Otheguy et. al. 1989) emerging from English syntactic influences. For example, *para atrás* (*patrás*), literally ‘for back’, as in *Te llamo patrá* from ‘I will call you back’, rather than *Te devuelvo la llamada*.

Examples:
((At a pre-Puerto Rican Day Parade festival in Brooklyn, Roberto passes out promotional materials)):

- **R:** Papo coje. (1.3) Vamo(-s) mami coje. (Ya
  ‘Man take this. Come on dear take this. Now’)
tel a) da do/h/.
  (‘I give two’)
- **W:** Que e/h/to?
  (‘What is this?’)
- **R:** No se? (.) Pero lo e/h/tan dando ahí grá?ti(-s).
  (‘I don’t know. But they’re giving it away free there’)
  ((Roberto laughs))
- **R:** Yo no se. Yo ( ). No me impo/l/ta.
  (‘I don’t know. I ( ). I don’t care)
((During pre-street fair preparation in Manhattan, Roberto instructs fellow street fair workers on proper set up)):

R: Right there! Put the pan right there, in the bottom, right there. A:::h! Pa(-ra) que vea.
   (‘That’s so you see’)  

R: Alright Annie, let me go. ((Talking to his wife on the phone))  
R: AJA! PA(-RA) ESO CORREN!
   (‘Aha! For that, run!’)  
AJA! PA(-RA) QUE VEAN!
   (‘Aha! That’s so you all see!’)  
Pa(-ra) eso co/x/en.
   (‘For that, run’)  

New York English (NYE) – Labov’s (1982) study of the New York dialect provides a comprehensive description of its phonological and syntactic attributes. An important expression of New York City’s distinguished immigration history and character, NYE evolved through contact between the various languages spoken by those who moved to New York beginning with the earliest Dutch settlements. Provided that NYC’s ethnic groups move further towards inter-ethnic contact and mixing, this would suggest that the dialect will continue to change, influenced by the relatively more recent and significant migrations from Latin American, Asia, and West Indies. Though not exclusively, today NYE is widely spoken by European Americans born and raised in New York City and neighboring areas.

The highly recognizable New York City accent is based on the following features analyzed by Labov. I will cover only those most relevant to the participants in this study:

Tensing and raising of the vowel sound /aw/ in words like more, coffee, long, and talk;  
tensing of the short <a> vowel in words like banana and bad, with /æ/ becoming /eə/; elision of syllable final and pre-consonant <r> in words like butter and park; dentalization of /d/ and /t/, and replacement of lingua-dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ with dentalized stops /d/ and /t/ (e.g. dis for this).

Examples:
((Calls a friend he had not talked to in a long time to ask for help))

R: No, and I got these ice cream carts Bobby?
(Though) I got these ice cream carts that are **ban/ea/nas**!
I got the **big Haggen Da/d/z ca(-r)ts**.

R: It **c/aw/st a dolla(-r) a piece**.

((Pitching his services to a potential client))

R: I can **organize stree:tfai(-r)$$s$$ for you, f- for your
people if they want. >If they need somebody w- /d/at,
/d/at, knows how to organize it they need
somebody that-< I can go out, I can get /d/e
vendo(-r)s.

Venezuelan Spanish – Venezuelan Spanish is classified under the broader category of
Caribbean Spanish. Therefore, while intonation patterns and lexicon differ from those of Cuban,
Dominican, and Puerto Rican Spanish, some important phonological features are shared.

According to Lipski (2004), these include: weakening of intervocalic /d/, and syllable and word
final /s/ elision or aspiration. Traits unique to Venezuelan Spanish include strong pronunciation
of /y/ and as an affricate in word / syntagma initial position, velarized word-final /n/, /rr/
pronounced as a slightly devoiced alveolar vibrant, and syllable final /r/ elision.

Example:
((Talks to a Venezuelan friend outside of his apartment about a Venezuelan
acquaintance)):
R: **Y le engañaron. O sea, un pe(d-)o- no:: esa vaina**
(‘And they fooled him. In other words, a problem- no that mess’)
lo tiene que pe?le:a:r,, (hue-viron. Porque aquí no ha
(‘he has to fight, dude. Because here no one has’)
llama- a- a- aquí no llamo na?die.
(‘call- h- h- here no one called’)

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) – A robust dialect of English, AAVE was
spoken to varying degrees by six of the eleven participants in phase 1 of this research. Of the
five who did not use AAVE, three are not native English speakers. This speaks to New York
Latinos’ identification with their African American peers, as discussed above. Some researchers
consider the use of AAVE by both African Americans and Latinos as resistance to dominant
disparaging discourses (Morgan 1994, Bailey 2001). In this study, a switch to AAVE worked like other code-switches having social functions. Spoken mostly in informal registers, AAVE code-switches were used as contextualization cues, for ethnic signaling, and generally to achieve acceptance by others. It was also used to provide emphasis to certain arguments or expressions, to be humorous (not in a way mocking to AAVE), and to imbue the speaker with a certain toughness or directness.

Among the AAVE features most used in this study were elision of postvocalic and intervocalic /r/ (e.g. car pronounced as /ka/), substitution of syllable final velar nasal <ng>, /ŋ/, with alveolar nasal <n> in two syllable words (e.g. notin’ for nothing), devoicing or elision of /b/, /d/, and /g/ (e.g. secon’ for second), elision of syllable final /s/ and /’s/ (e.g. 50 cent for 50 cents), copula deletion (e.g. You funny for You are funny), elision of subject-verb agreement marker <s> (e.g. He make me mad for He makes me mad), double negation (They don’t want none for They don’t want any), and replacement of am not, isn’t, aren’t, etc. with ain’t. As with New York English, there is also the tendency to pronounce lingua-dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ with dentalized stops /t/ and /d/. This can depend on the sound’s position in a word (Green 2002). Habitual be, part of the tense-aspect system (Labov 1972, Morgan 1994), and considered one of the most distinguishing features of AAVE, was also used by some participants. Habitual be expresses that an action is performed habitually or continually (e.g. She be trippin’, ‘She often acts crazy’). Another component of the tense-aspect marking is the use of stressed been or bin (e.g. I been done the work) to denote an action that occurred in the distant past and either was completed in the past or continues into the present. Thus, in the example above, the translation is ‘I did the work a long time ago’. Finally, there were numerous words and expressions popularly associated with AAVE, used by participants in this study. Some of those used by Roberto were: Yo (an interjection), bro (‘brother’ or ‘friend’), mad (‘a lot’), and son (‘friend’).
Example:

((Talking to me about a friend who he recruited to help him with a street fair))
R: He didn’t have to set up cans. He didn’t do not(-h)in(-g).
   He lazy. I’m putt- I’m put his ass to work today.

((Helping a friend to figure out how to get the recorder to work))
R: That shit is on, baby.
A: It wasn’t on before /d/ough.
R: That’s (be-)cause you ain’t lookin(-g), sonny boy.

((Talking to friend on the phone about an upcoming street fair))
R: I got mad shit to drop off!

5.2.3 Abel’s Ethnic and Regional Identifications

Ecuadorian- Makes claim to origins in Ecuador. Regionalism was an accepted theme among Ecuadorians I spoke to while in the field. Personal anecdotes revealed that Ecuador was divided right in half between *los costeños* (‘the coast people’) and *los serranos* (‘the mountain people’ or ‘*indios*’). According to the prevalent categorizations in Ecuador, *costeños* are at once fun-loving, superficial, untrustworthy, open-minded, *machistas*. *Serranos* on the other hand are characterized as conservative, hard-working, ignorant, humble and (also) untrustworthy. The alleged differences are so deep that Abel once claimed that he, as a *costeño*, could get along better with Latinos from any other country than with *serranos* from his own. Purportedly, these divisions are transported to American soil by Ecuadorian immigrants so that unity among all Ecuadorians in the US is a tenuous claim.

Examples:
- Soy ecuatoriano (‘I’m Ecuadorian’)
- Aquí somos todos ecuatorianos (‘Here we are all Ecuadorian’)

*Guayaquileño / Costeño* – Makes claim to origin in the coastal city of Guayaquil, Ecuador’s largest city. For Abel, who preferred not to tell people he was Ecuadorian, this was an important category to use. Pride in being *Guayaquileño* thrived on the sentiment that to be from Guayaquil was to be street-smart, confident, and ready (not unlike the value that comes from identifying as a “New Yorker”). According to Abel, to meet a *Guayaquileño* is to be greeted by
someone who will treat you like you’ve known each other for years. Most importantly for Abel, to be from Guayaquil was to disassociate from the negative associations made of indios or serranos.

Examples:
- Yo soy de Guayaquil (‘I’m from Guayaquil’)
- 100% guayaquileño!

Indio- Identification with a group of people regionally linked to the Sierras of Ecuador or the countryside. Identification as indio is inextricably connected to specific phenotypic characteristics; chiefly, brown skin, short stature, and Asiatic facial features. Abel also made frequent reference to his nose as an undesirable indio trait he inherited. Actually, he held a few contradictory views about his indigenous heritage. On the one hand, he acknowledged that in Ecuador he was considered indio. From his travels to Otovalo, he developed romanticized views about the “indio lifestyle”: warm, humble, hard-working. Yet, he identified so strongly as a costeño that he used derogatory labels like “tira flecha” (‘arrow thrower’) and “cholo” to describe indios and even himself.

Examples:
- Mi mamá es indiecita como ella. (‘My mother is a little indian like her’)
- Venimos de desendencia india. (‘We are descended from Indians’)
- Yo soy cholo. (‘I am Indian’)

Latino/Hispano – Identification with the broader pan-ethnic collectivity of people having roots in the Spanish-speaking countries of North and South America and the Caribbean. It is well documented that the Hispanic label has historically held negative connotations for many, particularly in its association with Spanish colonialism. Latino, on the other hand leans towards inclusiveness, empowerment and self-determination. Some participants in this research invoked

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13 In Ecuador, this derogatory term for people having indigenous heritage connotes backwardness, low educational attainment, and poor social graces. Abel referred to himself in this way to an acquaintance, as a way of jokingly explaining his difficulty with opening a particularly tricky car door.
the Hispanic label in contexts where they had to identify themselves to the state. Thus, in some cases this label represents the adoption of state language for categorizing ethnicity. Latino, on the other hand had connotations, of ethnic and cultural empowerment, arising out of awareness of being part of a socio-political whole. One interesting exception was suggested by a second phase survey respondent whom I also interviewed. For him the use of the term Hispanic or “hispanic” asserted a politically formidable pan-ethnic ideal. For more recent Latino immigrants the distinction between Hispano and Latino had fewer political connotations.

Corona, the community where Abel lived, was predominantly Latino and significantly foreign-born. Ricourt and Danta (2003), who conducted their study among women in this very neighborhood, argue that through convivencia diaria (‘daily co-existence’) a new pan-ethnic Latina community has emerged in Queens. The authors suggest that this web of informal alliances is mobilized to address pan-Latina concerns, without weakening particularistic ethnic group identity. During the time spent with Abel, my view into this community was very much a view into a man’s world. Still, my observations tend to agree with that of Ricourt and Danta. Abel, in particular, held a pluralistic personal philosophy encouraged by considerable time spent living with non-Ecuadorean Latinos:

Como he estado muchos años aquí, he vivido con muchas nacionalidades. Yo he vivido en un apartamento donde viven uruguayos, argentinos, dominicanos, brasileños. Me he ajuntado mucho con diferentes nacionalidades. Menos con Ecuatorianos.

(‘Since I’ve been here many years, I have lived with many nationalities. I have lived in an apartment where Uruguayans, Argentines, Dominicans, Brazilians live. I’ve gotten together with many different nationalities. Except Ecuadorians.’)

However, what he describes in this excerpt had changed considerably by the time of the research. His workplace was almost exclusively Ecuadorian. In my time with other participants in this
community, I observed similar clustering of ethnic groups. As a caveat to Ricourt and Danta’s findings, my observation from work in the Jackson Heights and Corona area is that in immigrant men’s work domains (e.g. business in general, sales, gypsy cab collectives, construction) there is still a strong tendency towards organizing along ethnic rather than pan-ethnic lines.

Examples:
• Siempre yo soy Latino. (‘I’m always Latino’)

Colombian, et al- Makes claim to origin in Colombia. Although Abel had no connection to Colombia, he was known to give people the impression that he was. As I will illustrate in this chapter, Abel was willing to go along with any assumption people made of his ethnic background.

Example:
• O sea a mi me daba vergüenza. (‘In other words, I was ashamed.’) “Where are you from?” “Ah, from Colombia! From Venezuela! From Brazil!”

5.2.4 Abel’s Linguistic Repertoire

Ecuadorian Spanish (ES) – Few studies have been conducted about Ecuadorian Spanish. Lipski (2004) cites a 1953 monograph by Humberto Mateus Toscano as the most comprehensive to date. According to Lipski, Quechua has made important contributions to the Spanish of Ecuador. While Quechua is more widely spoken in the highland regions, prolonged contact between the rural areas and the large cities has spread the influence of Quechua beyond the Sierras. Besides the indigenous connection, Afro-Ecuadorian populations both along the coastal region and in the highland Valle de Chota, have retained elements of ancestral African languages.

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14 Abel was a familiar with phonology and lexicon from a number of other dialects of Spanish, specifically Colombian, Dominican, and Rioplatense Spanish. Because his speech in the recordings was characteristically Ecuadorian a great majority of the time, these other dialects will not be considered as part of his linguistic repertoire. However, as I will discuss later in this chapter, depending on who he talked to he introduced key words, phrases or pronunciations from other dialects into his speech. I should add that the Spanish from the Caribbean coastal regions of Colombia shares features of Ecuadorian Spanish. Both languages tend towards elision or aspiration of syllable final /s/ and velarization of word final /n/. Therefore, it would not be a complete stretch, linguistically, for Abel to identify himself as a Colombian from the Caribbean coast.
in their Spanish. The Spanish of Ecuador is divided into three primary regions: coastal, Andean highlands, and Cuenca / Amazonian. Here I will outline the features of coastal ES only. These include: velarization of syntagma final /n/ and also in prevocalic words\(^\text{15}\); some tendency to neutralize preconsonant /l/ and /r/, frequent elision of syntagma final /r/; realization of /rr/ as an alveolar vibrant; weak intervocalic fricative /y/, at times elided in contact with /i/ and /e/; and aspirated or elided syllable and word final /s/. Voseo, the use of second person singular pronoun vos instead of tú, is common in the coastal area of Ecuador but stigmatized among the upper classes in Guayaquil (Toscano Mateus, 1953: 200). Therefore, while it is widespread in coastal communities, there’s a tendency away from this practice in Guayaquil. In fact, Abel did not use voseo except when addressing speakers of Rioplatense Spanish.

Examples:

((A co-worker asks if he received a call they were all expecting))

A: *A mi y a Marco >no(-s)=(*ha-)*n=llama(-d)o.< >A lo/h/

(‘They called Marco and I. To the
do/h/nomá(-s)= no(-s)=han=llama(-d)o/h.<
(‘two of us only they have called.’)

((Talks to Marco over the phone about political problems at work))

A: *A: claro (e-)so=si puch. Porq/h/- Porque así por así, meter

(‘Ah sure, that’s true pal. Because, like that, to put in
ordene/h/ y a quien reclamamos. A quien le hacemos(-s) pito.
orders and who do we complain to? Whose attention will we get?’)

((Standard information given to potential DTV clients))

A: *Activación y equipo totalmente gratis.

(‘Activation and equipment totally free’).

Hispanized English (HE) – Abel learned about my study while attending a community ESL class. He was not fully fluent in English, but among his fellow Ecuadorian salesmen, he had the most command. His English could best be described using Zentella’s (1997) classification, Hispanized English. This variety is marked by transfer of Spanish phonology and grammar.

\(^{15}\) Bold n in transcripts indicates velarized /n/.
Features cited by Zentella as common to HE are: tendency to reduce vowels to the five vowel sounds of Spanish; and tendency to reduce consonant clusters and replace English phonemes like the interdental voiced and voiceless fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. Grammatical transfers from Spanish can result in double negation. Forms that transfer the form and meaning of a Spanish lexical item to English also occur (e.g. “She puts me nervous” from Me pone nerviosa) (ibid.: 47).

Examples:

((After teasing him jokingly, requests that the manager of a DirectTV installation office address some concerns of Abel’s sales team))
A: >I know you were /eh/smokin(-g).< >I know you were /eh/smokin(-g).<
A: I /oo/nder investigation16. So be careful what you say. ((Laughs)).
M: Ah. Alright. That’s good.=
A: =We need to ta/t/ to you. We need to ta/t/ to you.
We wan(-t) a know wha(-t)’s goin(-g) on here.

((Apologizing to an English speaking-friend over the phone))
A: I promise. I promise. I’m feel really ba/h/ about /d/at. So sorry about that, I wan(-t) a do somet(-h)in(-g), to- to-. I wan(-t) say apology. I wan(-t) a say apology so ( ). I wan(-t) eh- I wan(-t) do somet(-h)in(-g) better…I’m feel really ba/h/ about /d/at.

5.3 Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter I painted contradictory pictures of the Latino experience in New York City. The immigration rallies of 2006 saw people from throughout Latin America take up under the broad Latino or Hispano categories: “Viva la hispanidad!” Yet these events exposed cleavages that exist within the pan-ethnicity: recall the defensive Puerto Rican emails and the Dominican respondent who was against amnesty for undocumented immigrants. In my view, it is not a question whether unity exists among Latinos, because it does. And neither is it a

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16 This was the subtle, humorous way Abel customarily used to let people know that he was wearing an audio recorder.
question of whether divisions exist, because they do. Rather, two things stand out to me as important factors: perceived racial difference and generation.

However diverse the racial categorization systems that exist in their native countries, Latinos bring with them negative associations with *negro* and *indio*. These cut across national origin so that a black Colombian or Panamanian may have better relations with a Dominican than with whites from their own home countries. Similarly, an Ecuadorian from the Quechua-speaking, indigenous areas of the Sierra, may have more *simpatia* with a highland Peruvian or a *poblano* of Mexico, than with an Ecuadorian *costeño*. It is not to say, however, that blacks and *indios* have much basis for bonds either. While close at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, these categories occupy very distinct spaces. In my view, any group that has an association with blackness, including Nuyoricans because of their historical and geographic proximity to African American communities, dwell within their own pan-ethnic umbrella. Similarly, the *campesinos* of Mexico, Central America and South America, those tending to have indigenous roots, have a strong basis for their own pan-ethnicity.

Cross-generationally, we find another important distinction. First, we can assume that most if not all second-and third-generation migrants will have learned English. This opens up opportunities to build out-group relationships and greater opportunities for developing ethnic self-identifications tied to these relationships (e.g. American or Latino). These later generations grow up in a cosmopolitan New York. Through school and work, they branch out beyond the ethnic enclave. In some cases, if out-group relationships dominate the social network over long periods of time, the person can come to identify primarily with this out-group. For example, I encountered one young, white Puerto Rican woman raised in predominantly black

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17 Considerable length-of-stay in the U.S. will be included as part of this generational distinction. So, an immigrant who arrived in the U.S. at a very early age and lived in the U.S. for most of their life is assumed to exhibit beliefs and behaviors consistent with a second-generation immigrant.
neighborhoods, with a largely black social network who claimed to be black. Roberto, the
Venezuelan participant mentioned earlier in this chapter grew up with Puerto Ricans and married
Puerto Rican women. He had expertly adopted Puerto Rican dialect, was familiar with Puerto
Rican idioms and popular culture, and identified strongly with his Puerto Rican friends. Each of
these two participants developed a repertoire of behaviors quite consistent with their adopted
ethnic groups. In overcoming the structural barriers that limit more recent migrants, later
generations tend to diverge economically, behaviorally and in identification, from their parents
and grandparents.

Of course, there are exceptions to these two trends. For example, first-generation Mexican
or Argentine professionals, say in the finance and information sectors, may experience similar
patterns of integration as second and third generation migrants. Proficient in English, they may
build diverse social networks that include members of other ethnic groups, including more
Americans. They could live in Manhattan, rather than immigrant Queens. In turn, these
immigrants would have little in common with undocumented migrant laborers. But these class-
based distinctions also tend to be co-related with race and generational variables.
CHAPTER 6
ROBERTO

6.0 Introduction

Roberto and I first met at a Starbucks in Astoria, where I conducted screening interviews for Phase 1 participants. Just as he said he would, Roberto entered the café wearing a blue jump suit, white sneakers and a New York Yankees baseball hat. We greeted each other in English as we would for most of our other interactions. From the beginning Roberto struck me as an energetic and enthusiastic man. I quickly recognized after meeting him that he used this energy and enthusiasm to sell a point. Though he did not need to convince me that he would be a fantastic participant for my research, he dominated much of the interview with lively affirmations of his flexible language skills. He even assured me that if I decided to write a book based on my research it would be “a hit”.

During our time together, Roberto shared freely and candidly his experiences with drug abuse, economic hardship, and family turmoil. He also shared with me his knowledge of running street businesses, being an entrepreneur himself. As we walked together in Manhattan and Queens, he explained to me how African street vendors make money on watches and wallets, why and how Chinese sellers peddle bootleg DVD’s and the best way to compete with them, and the workings of a few other illegal operations. He also put me to work in his canopy business, assembling canopy set-ups and moving tables and chairs for street fairs.

Even from our first meeting, Roberto’s broad linguistic and ethnic repertoire was clear. At Starbucks, I learned that he was 36 years old, worked part-time as a lifeguard, was Venezuelan-born, of Spanish-origin, and married to a Puerto Rican woman. To my excitement, I found frequent evidence of his flexible use of language and ethnicity throughout my observations. Next I will describe each of these categories in turn, including supporting quotes from my interviews of Roberto and samples of his naturally occurring speech.
6.1 A Brief History of Roberto

In Chapter 5, I described an incident in which Roberto used Puerto Rican identity to expedite a drug purchase. He shared this story with me as part of a longer explanation of why he felt so comfortable in Puerto Rican skin. At the age of nine, Roberto was sent by his mother from Venezuela to live with his father in the US. In New York, he grew up in a mixed Queens neighborhood: whites, blacks, and Latinos. Roberto recounted to me that he was often confused for Italian or Greek. In fact, in the initial screening interview he said he considered himself Spanish because his father’s roots were in Spain. As an adolescent, his close childhood friends were Puerto Rican, Colombian, and Italian, yet he lived near a neighborhood with a large African American and West Indian population and his stepmother is a black Haitian. With his father as his only real tie to Venezuela, Roberto learned to walk the walk and talk the talk of the other Latinos he came in regular contact with. For example, he recounts that the Puerto Rican mothers and grandmothers of his best friends were like second mothers to him. These women cooked for him and adopted him into their homes.

After high school, Roberto planned to enter the Marine Corp. He traveled back to Venezuela for four months to “clean up his system”. However, within two months of his return to the US, Roberto’s father died and he was thrown into a tailspin. Leaving his childhood community to wander the streets of New York City, he succumbed to substance abuse. For three years he lived in the homeless shelter system and was in-and-out of detox programs. During this period of his life he honed his urban survival skills, which undoubtedly included using ethnicity and language to avoid trouble and establish supportive bonds. One of the other things that Roberto became good at was making “fast money”. During my time with him, I observed him use his ethnic and linguistic flexibility to secure financial stability.
Despite periods in his life of considerable instability, Roberto developed a long-term relationship with Annie, a self-identified Puerto Rican woman of mixed parentage. While they were not legally married, they referred to each other as husband and wife, raised Annie’s 12 year old daughter together, and had been together for 6 years. Annie, who had been estranged from her African American father, was raised by her Puerto Rican mother in the Bedford-Stuyvesan neighborhood in Brooklyn. She identified strongly as Puerto Rican and expressed this identification in her occasional use of Spanish, love for Latin dancing, and Puerto Rican stickers and flags that adorned her car and home. Roberto admitted that they spoke mostly Puerto Rican Spanish in their home. However, during my observations of their interactions, Annie very rarely spoke Spanish; Roberto much more so. Her use of Spanish was limited to short utterances. In their relationship Spanish seemed to function as a way to *sweeten-up* the other, as in the following short exchanges:

**((ANNIE AND ROBERTO AT HOME ONE MORNING))**

E: I’LL BE BACK, YOU WANT ME TO MAIL THIS?

A: *POR FAVOR.*

(‘PLEASE’)

E: *POR FAVOR, UN BESITO!*?

(‘PLEASE, A LITTLE KISS!?’) ((THEY EXCHANGE KISSES))

A: _TAN BELLA, COÑO!_

(‘SO BEAUTIFUL, DAMN!’)

**((ANNIE AND ROBERTO IN THEIR CAR, TALKING ABOUT A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY))**

E: NOT ONLY THAT, WE ALSO HAVE THE VILLAGE VOICE.

OH MAN, I’M LIKING IT! I’M LIKING THIS BUSINESS. ((ROBERTO LAUGHS DEVILISHLY)).

_A: MAMA, MAMA!_

(‘IN AN ENDEARING VOICE')

**((ANNIE AND ROBERTO IN THEIR CAR, TALKING ABOUT A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY))**

E: NOT ONLY THAT, WE ALSO HAVE THE VILLAGE VOICE.

OH MAN, I’M LIKING IT! I’M LIKING THIS BUSINESS. ((ROBERTO LAUGHS DEVILISHLY)).

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_A: MAMA, MAMA!_

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**((ANNIE AND ROBERTO IN THEIR CAR, TALKING ABOUT A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY))**

_E: NOT ONLY THAT, WE ALSO HAVE THE VILLAGE VOICE._

_OH MAN, I’M LIKING IT! I’M LIKING THIS BUSINESS._ ((ROBERTO LAUGHS DEVILISHLY)).

_A: MAMA, MAMA!_

(‘IN AN ENDEARING VOICE')

Roberto saw his relationship with Annie as providing a strong basis for identification with Puerto Rican language and culture. It is not uncommon for a person to adopt the ethnic identity
of a spouse or partner (cf. Spickard & Fong 1995). In the past, the direction of such an adoption may have happened along gender-based power differences, through the woman’s adaptation to her mate’s culture. In Roberto and Annie’s case, his adoption of Puerto Rican dialect, food preferences, and frames of reference happened prior to the relationship and was perhaps a basis for their initial bond. When they had money, Roberto and Annie traveled regularly to visit Annie’s relatives in Puerto Rico.

I asked Roberto if he tried to pass as Puerto Rican when he visited the island and he energetically replied yes. “Why?” I asked and his immediate response was: “I don’t know. Pathological liar maybe?” But then, he provided the drug purchase example given in Chapter 3 in which he used Puerto Rican dialect to convince black drug dealers that he was not a white undercover cop. So, while Roberto attributes his switching to a character flaw, he unabashedly acknowledges his ethnic flexibility and the benefits that come from it. Of the eleven participants who were the focus of this study, Roberto was a model case. His diverse upbringing coupled with personal upheavals and economic scarcity, has made it possible for him to develop ethnicity as a survival tool. If variation means adaptation, then Roberto’s example shows that in the demanding ethnic landscape that is NYC, ethnic and linguistic variation has clear adaptive advantages.

The graphic below (Figure 1) depicts that Roberto was also diverse in his social relations. Growing up in middle-class Queens Village, Roberto lived among a mix of people and languages. His close childhood friends were European-, Colombian- and Puerto Rican-American. Queens Village is close to Jamaica, an established middle-class West Indian neighborhood and Roberto reports being one of the few white kids in a predominantly black school. Roberto affirms that he was more drawn to the “Spanish crowd” and “the whites;” the
Spanish guys because they “got all the pretty girls” and the white guys because he felt he had more in common with them.

In figure 1, refer to the legend for information about each network member’s (alter) ethnic background. The size of the nodes represents his closeness to each of the alters: the bigger the nodes, the closer he felt to them. Roberto’s network consists of four components. The largest component appears in the middle and includes work related, family and friendship ties. Next, at the bottom right of the graph, two nodes are connected to each other and no one else. These are women who are related to each other, and have been supportive to Roberto in his life. Finally, each of the two isolates are separate components. These are distant acquaintances (Roberto was unsure about the last name of one of them), who have no relation to each other or anyone else in the network.

Figure 1 – Roberto’s Personal Network

Roberto’s personal network is moderately dense. Some areas are more interconnected than others. His family and close friends more so than his work related contacts. The people he has known in his money-making ventures have not all been from one employer or organization. We
can see that most are spread out, several of which are only linked to Annie (Roberto’s main business partner). The largest component, represents 41 of the 45 alters Roberto listed. His wife, Annie, can be seen in the middle, the most central person in his network. Except for the isolates and dyad on the bottom right, Annie has contacts with all areas of Roberto’s network. I should add that in my week with Roberto (and in the other week he recorded on his own), he had contact with very few of the 45 people he listed. I personally met only his wife, step-daughter (large black node directly below Annie’s), and five or six of his work-related contacts. This brings to mind issues about the accuracy and reliability of network data (particularly, in terms of describing daily realities of social interaction); a topic addressed in several papers by Bernard, Killworth, and Sailer (Killworth and Bernard 1976, 1979; Bernard and Killworth 1977; Bernard, et. al. 1979, 1982). My impression was that Roberto himself was isolated.

The ethnic diversity of his upbringing and formative years is also portrayed in the graph. Roberto described half of his network as American (black nodes). Three of these he further described as Nuyorican or of Puerto Rican descent. His American alters are mostly white, but four were described as African American or mixed-race. Of the nodes that appear in blue (“other”), two were categorized as Russian, one as Jamaican, and another as Haitian (his step-mother who appears as the largest of the blue nodes). A number of his alters are Puerto Rican, more so than those who are Venezuelan. Finally, Roberto had weak ties to (based, in this case on closeness) to a Dominican man and a Colombian man. Thus, we can see that the two major network influences, both in terms of numbers and degree of closeness, were American and Puerto Rican. As we will see in his linguistic data, these influences are evident in his code choice and discourse.
6.2 Linguistic Data and Analysis

6.2.1 Why Don’t You Come in on this Man?

On my first day of observation with Roberto I accompanied him as he passed out promotional flyers for his business. At the time, Roberto and Annie were two years into their street fair equipment rental venture. Roberto had worked many years for an established street fair production company before deciding to go independent. A rather enterprising man, Roberto had significant experience with various informal sector businesses. According to Roberto, one of his previous ventures was a lucrative, but shady, donation collection setup in Manhattan. Roberto and his wife administered numerous street-side stands that asked for help-the-homeless donations from pedestrians. These donations were actually pocketed by the collectors who in turn paid Roberto a large percentage. Eventually, this and similar operations were shut down by then NYC District Attorney, Eliot Spitzer. Roberto’s assets were confiscated and he was left penniless.

Roberto was strongly committed to lift himself and his family from the financial hole. He jumped on any opportunity to make money, whether it was to sell colognes, bootleg DVD’s, and Italian ices in the streets or participate in research studies. Roberto also worked part-time as a lifeguard in an apartment building. The street fair rental business he promoted on our first day of observations was an attempt to legitimize his entrepreneurial aspirations. He was seriously focused on establishing connections with local businesses, to build his clientele.

The transcript that follows was from one of many encounters with sales clerks and store managers as he distributed flyers store to store. The stores were situated in close proximity to each other in a busy commercial zone in Rego Park, Queens. Roberto was informed about a street fair that was to take place in that area within a few weeks. The flyers he distributed promoted a special deal on canopies, tables, chairs and set-up for street fair participants. Upon
entering a cellular phone store to drop off a flyer, Roberto greeted James, the store’s supervisor.

In my observation notes I wrote that James, a stocky, fair-skinned man, was not immediately recognizable as Latino, which he happened to be. Also, his English was unaccented for Spanish. Since Roberto is also not immediately identifiable as Latino, I believe both men entered into the interaction unsure about the other’s ethnicity. The transcript reveals attempts on both their parts to test their assumptions and establish the appropriate linguistic and behavioral protocols. These were needed to create the rapport they both eagerly sought, each with their own businesses in mind.

1 R:    H’you doing.
2 J:    Alright.=
3 R:    =You guys ah participating in the street faiz?
4      (0.7)
5 J:    Yeah.
6 R:    You are? (0.5) ’K. Just in case you need, ah, in
7      case you need canopies tables and chai(-r)z,
8      (1.0)
9      j’s gimee a call.
10 J:   Yeah. I don’t know when the next one is I
11      haven’t got [any-]
12 R:    [May twenty-secon(-d).]
13 J:    Rea:.lly?
14 R:    That’s the one with the Chamber and <Clearvie::wz
15      is in deh:: fawl>.
16      (1.0)
17 J:    Mm, well I do the Clearview one over at at my
18      other store.
19 R:    Ah, which store is [that-
20 J:    [(By the), ah, Junction Boulevard.
21 R:    On Junction?, yeah?
22 J:    Yeah.
23 R:    Well, I got the canopies, tables and chairs. I
24      used to work for Clearview. I worked for Clearview
25      for 8 yea(-r)z.
26 J:    ["Ok."
27 R:    [An’ ] um I started a canopy company (0.5)
28      that’s (0.8) direct contact with dem, so whenever you
29      need one or if you need tables, chaiz whatever
30      you need,[ j’s give me a cawl ahead of time, let=
31 J:    ["Ok."
32 R:    =me know what event, give me your spot nuhmuh and

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Most prominent in these first few lines of Roberto’s exchange with James, is his use of pronunciation related to New York English. In lines 3, 7, 25, 29, and 32 he elides the syllable final /r/ in the words “fairs,” “chairs,” “years,” and “number”. Another feature of NYE used by Roberto is dentalization of /d/, which in most varieties of English is produced as an alveolar (with the tip of the tongue behind the teeth). He used dentalized /d/ in line 28 with “direct”. Lines 15, 28, and 33 suggest that he tends to replace the lingua-dental fricative /ð/ with dentalized stop /d/, so that the → “deh”, them → “dem,” and there → “der”. A final NYE feature to point out in this segment is the quintessentially New York tensing of vowel sound /aw/ in fall → “fawl”. Roberto introduced pronunciation from AAVE as well. In line 12 we see that he devoiced syllable final /d/, second → “secon’’.

If there is one linguistic influence in Enrique’s life that dominated over others, it was English. Throughout this entire transcript we will see reflections of Roberto’s diverse upbringing. However, without taking factors external to lines 1 through 37 into account, the speech of these men seems to be that of two working or middle class New Yorkers (possibly of European background) conversing. His choice of NYE also supports the interpretation that Roberto initially assumed James to be white and American. In other cases where Roberto met men and women who looked Latino, he approached them immediately in Spanish.

Pitching his canopy business had become a smooth and automatic process. He always began by asking potential clients if they planned to participate in the upcoming street fair. This opening functioned more as a way to legitimize his initial approach than a screening question, because regardless of whether they said “yes” or “no,” Roberto handed a flyer and described his
services quickly and concisely. Thus, the opening helped to distinguish him from just any solicitor, to a solicitor who might actually have something useful to offer. A common component of his pitches was name-dropping “Clearview”. In the street fair business, this company was large and reputable and Roberto seized any opportunities to make explicit his association with them. In line 17, James reveals knowledge of Clearview and in lines 23-27 Roberto capitalizes on it by stating his association with Clearview.

As we will see, James was also partial to name-dropping and stressing his status and qualifications. In line 17, he refers to a store in Junction Boulevard as “my other store”. It’s not clear whether this was a statement of actual ownership, or an implication. I do know, however, that in other declarations of his background and qualifications he never mentions ownership of any store or stores. The reference to Junction Boulevard may also have been a very subtle clue to his background, as most of the businesses on Junction Boulevard in Corona, Queens are either owned, manned, or frequented by Latinos. Next, James is ready to bring ethnicity into the interaction.

39  J:   Let me give you some information.
40 (5.0)
41  J:   Roberto?!
42  R:   Yeah.
43  J:   I had a couple of other customers that that(.) do fairs and stuff.
44  R:   O?k.
45 (2.0)
46  J:   “Try to give you some info.”
47 (2.0)
48  J:   ((James searches for business card))
49  R:   “(Ok)”
50  J:   ((James hands Roberto business card))

James reads Roberto’s name out loud (line 41), as it appears on the flyer given to him. He says the name using Spanish pronunciation, with monophthongized vowels and a very slight velarization of the medial /r/. In the context of the speech preceding and following line 41, this pronunciation of Roberto’s name is a code-switch. I believe it was intended to signal James’s
recognition of Roberto as a Latino and in turn signal his own identification (he recognized or at least assumed Roberto was Latino because of his name). This also set the stage for the business card that he was about to give. It is interesting that in turn 42, Roberto’s curt response does not reveal an inclination to communicate with James at that level. It was more of a “Yes, that’s my name” response than “Oh, you know Spanish?” I get the impression that he had accomplished his goal, dissiminated his information, and was ready to move on. James initiates a repair (lines 43-44) to line 41 by providing Roberto with more details to justify his getting and giving the business card.

51  (3.0)
52  ((Roberto reads business card))
53  R:  Cuchifrito for Thought\[18\].
      (‘Puerto Rican soul food’)
54  ((Roberto laughs))
55  R:  I like that!  [That’s hot.]
56  ((Roberto looking at business card))
57  J:  [(Yeah I,)] I own an online magazine
called Cuchifrito for Thought, it’s been around for 8
58  years.
59  R:  O?k.
60  J:  Ahm, (2.0) I’m working with a company called
61        Alianza Latina?
      (‘Latino/a Alliance’)  
62  (.5)
63  J:  They did something really big in, ah, Flushing
64        Meadow Park last year.
65  R:  No me diga/h/=  
      (‘You don’t say?’)
66  J:  =Yeah and >it’s all Latino(-s)< and [(and from 21 countries?,,]
67  R:  [O:h, coño, e(-s)ta (bien).]
      (‘Oh, damn, that’s good.’)
68  J:  >and they used a bunch [of canopies and stuff like that.]<=
69  R:  [ºMm:::h, o?k.º]

The business card works. Roberto, who reads “Cuchifrito” using Spanish pronunciation (monophtongized vowels and a vibrant medial /r/), is amused by the title and his interest is piqued. Notice that James did not explain the business card or mention his business as he handed

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18 Pseudonyms are used for names of companies and organizations that may reveal participants’ identities.
the card to him. Instead, he allowed time for Roberto to get the full effect of the name on his own, and perhaps to gauge his interest. Having confirmed Roberto’s interest, James enters immediately into his own pitch. He makes a connection between his ongoing projects and involvement with *Alianza Latina* (lines 61-62) and Roberto’s business (line 69). Thus offering the possibility for mutual support or collaboration. With his *Cuchifrito* magazine and link to a Latino organization, James is successful in communicating his affiliation with Latino ethnicity. Notice that more straightforward means of identification are not employed here. The subtle cues presented by both James and Roberto are up to this point based solely on presupposed cultural knowledge (the sort enclosed by schemas and models). At this point, Roberto recognizes the importance of confirming his own affiliation. This is accomplished by the code-switch in line 66. Although it is too early at this point to be certain what dialect of Spanish Roberto will use for the rest of the conversation, the word final /s/ in “*diga*” is aspirated, so that *diga* → “*diga/h/*”. This is a characteristic feature in Puerto Rican Spanish.

Roberto’s code-switch in line 66 is an important move to align himself with James, who prior to that point had made several attempts to bring their ethnicity into the interaction. Using Scotton & Ury’s (1977) classifications, Roberto has moved the conversation from a *transactional* arena to an *identity* arena. Still, James doesn’t actually switch himself. In my view, this supports the notion that Roberto’s code-switch was recognized as having an identification function rather than an invitation to continue the conversation in Spanish. It’s also not that James didn’t feel the need to identify himself as Latino. On the contrary, it is clear that he invoked Latino ethnicity at several points in their exchange (lines 41, 50, 62, and 67). He also subtly identifies himself as a Caribbean Latino, perhaps Puerto Rican, by the choice of *Cuchifrito* for his magazine. The talk sequence in lines 66 through 68 establishes their common identification as Latino men. First, Roberto switches (line 62), confirming his identification and
interest. Then, with his emphasis on “all Latino” (line 67), James assumes and appeals to
Roberto’s interest in working with other Latinos. Finally, Roberto acknowledges this appeal and
confirms his interest (line 68) with “Oh, coño, e’ta bien” (syllable final /s/ is deleted as is
common in NSPRS). At this point they have both established a common frame of reference.
One in which common identification as Latinos presupposes certain cooperative interests.

71 J: =They’re actually really big out there.=
72 R: =Who ah::, who whose, who organizes that. Who
73 sent (.). who? does [it.]
74 J: [=Ah] I can give you all the contact information,<
75 just hit me up at the website.=
76 R: =At this website?=  
77 J: =‘Let me give you my email address.‘=
78 R: =Yeah, give me your email man. I definitely,
79 what I’ll do is (.5) I’ll email you some’n’ like
80 dis?
81 ((Roberto holds out one of his flyers))
82 J: Mhm.
83 R: Remember, Celestial Canopy Rentals. That’s mine
84 *papa. Y yo hago, mira yo hago (1.3) el el show >puertorriqueño
85 (‘man. And I do, look I do the the Puerto Rican show’)
86 for the Bronx Borough President’s office in the Bronx?<
87 J: Mhm?
88 R: I’m doing that this year. (.6) That’s on June twenty-six.

Speaking exclusively in English, most of James’s utterances to this point do not share the NYE
features present in Roberto’s speech. In general his speech suggests a tendency towards Standard
American English. He does reveal some inclination for AAVE with the use of the idiomatic
phrase “hit me up” (‘contact me’). His switch to Spanish pronunciations with words
“Cuchifrito” and “Latino” may suggest familiarity with Puerto Rican (New York Latino) English
(Wolfram 1973, Zentella 1997). On the other hand, Roberto, who started out with a strong
tendency towards NYE, introduces more elements of standard and nonstandard Puerto Rican
Spanish and AAVE. For example, in line 79 and 80, something like this → “some’n’ like dis;”
with the substitution of syllable final velar nasal <ng>, in “something” with an alveolar nasal
<n> and the production of the lingua-dental fricative <th> as a dental stop /d/. This last feature is
also present in NYE. Roberto switches to NSPRS in line 84. I’m classifying this utterance as nonstandard rather than standard PRS because of the use of “papa”- a common word in colloquial PRS with a function similar to slang man in English – and the hispanized pronunciation of the word “show”. One other thing to note in line 84 is the short pause between “hago” and “el”. Here and with the false starts (“el, el”) before “show” it seems that Roberto was looking for the appropriate Spanish word to describe the event. He finally settled on an English word but with Spanish pronunciation.

For the first time in their exchange, Roberto makes a specific reference to a Latino group, namely Puerto Ricans. It is significant that he switches to Spanish to state his participation in a Puerto Rican event. In combination with his use of Puerto Rican pronunciation, this seems to locate him closer to a Puerto Rican identification than any other up this point. James, for his part, is consistent in his goal to promote himself and his website. In a move reminiscent of a typical sales tactic (lines 74-75), he directs Roberto to his website for information requested in lines 72-73, rather than give it to him upfront.

88    J:    Well [a::ctually]
89 R:    [Los salseros],[van, van estar/r/]
       ('The salsa players, will, will be-')
90    J:    [I don’t know if you guys are] doing anything on ah
91          (1.5) if you guys are doing anything on Saturday.
92    Actually my birthday party I’m having it in Park
93 Avenue on in the Helmsley Building (.5) at a little
94    lounge called Lea Lounge? (.5) I have a private one-
95          hour (.6) spot before the club actually opens up.
96    J:    [(                               )]
97 R:    [>Righ’, righ’, righ’<.]
98    J:    Like little cocktail hour networking type of thing.
99    Ah:: a lot of people from La Mega ((popular Latino music station))
100   are gonna be there, a lot of people from Amo/l/ ((a romantic Latino
101   music station)), all the radio stations and stuff.=
102   R:    =Really?
103    J:    And then uhm (.). ah (.). my good friend, who I manage,
104   ah Yaira Lopez she is a Latina comedian. She’s actually
105   performing some comedy there, (.). during that time.
106   R:    Wo[w!"
When the club opens up, it’s gonna be a regular club night, but if you guys wanna stop by just send me an email.

[At what time, at what time is this?]

From ten to eleven, that’s the hour.

[At night?]

Yeah.

Oh, that’s hot. I cou’do dat!

Yep [it’s right on] Park Avenue. It’s a really classy place.

‘Cause I got-

I know-

Mentioning his participation in the Bronx Borough President’s Puerto Rican celebration (lines 84 and 87), served to further signal a Puerto Rican connection with James. James in turn acknowledged this connection (line 90) by inviting Roberto and me to his birthday bash. According to James, not only was this private social networking event to take place at a classy Park Avenue club, but some of the biggest names in the New York Latino community were to attend. It is apparent in this transcript that James wished to create a grandiose impression on Roberto. His wish to come across as person actively involved in the Latino community is also clear. All of this makes sense, given that he was trying to secure Roberto’s business, as will become obvious in a moment. Like with his other switches, James reserved Spanish pronunciation for the names of people or organizations. In line 100 he pronounces the radio station name Amor in a way typical for many speakers of NSPRS; he substitutes word final /r/ with an /l/.

Turning now to Roberto, line 89 (“Los salseros, van, van estar/r,” ‘The salsa players, will, will be-‘) illustrates an attempt to appeal to James’s knowledge and appreciation of Puerto Rican music. Roberto expressed line 89 with knowing enthusiasm and emphasis. Roberto invokes a common schema among Puerto Ricans, one that I call the sensational-salsa-event schema. This schema generates images and sensations of the pulsating and energetic salsa performers and dancers; the kind of revelry valued in Puerto Rican culture. I believe he purposely invoked this schema as means of further aligning himself, particularly because his
enthusiasm contradicts his much more downplayed description of the event to a Venezuelan friend (see line 152 in section 6.4.2). It would suggest that he built up the event here (lines 84, 85, 89) to bolster the importance of his own business. In this section of the transcript Roberto once again uses AAVE phonological elements. “Oh, that’s hot. I cou’do dat!” he exclaims in response to James’s explanation. Roberto devoices word final /d/ in “could,” bridging with /d/ in “do”. He also dentalizes the alvelor fricative /ð/, <th> in “that”.

Something subtle is going on with the ethnic alignments made by these men. While Roberto seems to be consistently invoking Puerto Rican frames of reference, James consistently refers to a more pan-ethnic Latino orientation. We can return to the beginning of the transcript to find evidence of this (lines 62, 67, 99, 100, and 104). His mention of Puerto Rican comedian Yaira Lopez (line 104) would have been a good place to make this connection more explicit, but instead he opts for the general term Latina. Could it be that he is not fully convinced about Roberto’s background? Does Roberto conjure Puerto Rican associations because he is clear about James’s background? There are a number of factors that come into play when people make such judgements about the ethnic backgrounds of others. Appearance is key factor. In New York there are strong mental models for what a Puerto Rican, Mexican, Dominican, etc. looks like. Roberto, for his part, does not quite fit the mold of what a Puerto Rican is supposed to look like. Accent is another factor. Unless he consciously emphasizes one Spanish dialect or another in his speech, Roberto’s accent does not easily identify him either. He admits to stumping people regularly. As he says, leaving people thinking, “Damn, where the fuck is he from?” A person’s appearance can lead a curious spectator in one direction and their accent in another direction. I’m inclined to think this was the case for James. Assuming that people will tend to invoke the identity that most favorably aligns them with another (Barth 1969; Cohen 1969; Haaland 1969; Kaufert 1977; Nagata 1974; Padilla 1984; Patterson 1975, Banks 1987),
James opted for the more general, inclusive identification. Clearly, this only makes sense in situations where similarity rather than contrast is valued.

117  R:  I know exactly which one it is.=
118  J:  = They play, they play a mix of everything. (.5) Uhm, but yeah we can
definitely talk. And I [also build websites.]
120  R:  [Yo man? Listen man, if we can,
121  J:  I build websites.
122  R:  Yeah? You do websites!?  
123  J:  Under 500 [bucks ( )]
124  R:  [Dude, I don’t even] have, I don’t even
125  have a website for Celestial Canopies, man, so
126  we definitely need to sit down and tawk
127  [and try to kick some stuff around.]
128  J:  [Under 500 bucks], you, you won’t
even pay for hosting.
130  (.5)
131  R:  Rea::lly?=  
132  J:  =Everything’s included.=
133  R:  =Everything’s included?
134  J:  Every- We’re talking about a five hundred dollar
135  package, everything, (. ) your customers will be able
to put their order in right on the web.
137  (.7)
138  R:  “Oh, shit!”
139  J:  So, we’re talking about some nice stuff here,
140  a’right?

They begin to talk business in this section of the transcript. Almost simultaneously the two speakers attempt to promote their interests, overlapping in lines 119 and 120. Starting with the widely-used AAVE interjection “Yo,” Roberto asserts his interest in working with James, but cuts-off mid-utterance, probably to let James go ahead with what he was saying. Taking advantage of this break (line 121), James repeats the information overlapped in line 119. While James assumes a more formal, sales-oriented style during his pitch, Roberto contrasts with his informal, at one point, vulgar (line 138) approach. His talk is peppered with colloquialisms: “Yo,” “dude” (124), “man” (120, 124), “try to kick some stuff around”19 (127), and “shit” (138).

19 “Kick some stuff around” may be related to another construction attributed to urban African American communities: “Let’s kick it” (“hang out”). The term may have also emerged as a metaphoric reference to kickball or
Contributing to the informality of his speech, Roberto produces a nonstandard pronunciation of “definitely” (126), and NYE vowel tensing in the word “talk” (126). This contrast strengthens James’s position as the provider of important resources and Roberto as the receiver; a position that Roberto attempts to change later in their conversation.

141 R: Yeah but listen man I just started, you know
142 my company is only two years old. It’s only run
143 by me and my wife.
145 R: An’ uhm, you know that’s it, man, pero-
(‘but’)
146 J: When you have that website, you go [to anybody (for)]
147 R: [Yeah it’s cra?zy.]
148 J: events and just hand them out, like listen.
149 (.5)
150 J: La Mega does tons of streetfairs, you [(know )]
151 R: [Do they really?]
152 J: Ye.ah? They do all that stuff in the Heights.=
153 R: =Yo listen man, wh ‘n chu, wh’n chu=
154 J: =Sponsors.=
155 R: =Y.’know. Wh ‘n chu come in on this man?=  
156 J: =(I, I        )
157 R: [Look at my- [I’ll give you my -], listen, I’ll give=
158 J: [((               ))]
159 R: =you my prices (.). I got a ninedeeni:ne dolla’ special. Less
160 than a hundred dolla(-r)z you get the canopy (.). a
table (.). and two chai(-r)z.
161 J: Wawewewe [(wha’ we do:: -)]
162 R: [Everybody’s] charging over a hundred and
twenty five, a hundred and thirty, a hundred and forty.
163 J: If you do a website with us, we
164 (.)
165 J: >ºYeahº<.
166 R: >ºYeahº<.
167 J: usually (include) free advertising on Cuchifrito.
168 (.)
169 J: [ºOkº]
170 R: [ºOkº]
171 J: [That] sees 25,000 people a month.
172 (.6)
173 R: Wa::ow!=

soccer, and so conjures association with “team work”. Robert was inviting James to get together to talk, work together, or negotiate.
Spanish, AAVE, and NYE are used by Roberto in this segment. First he switches to the Spanish discourse marker “pero” (line 45) to contrast the startup nature of his business with an unrealized utterance. It’s likely that he intended to reassure James about interest in his website service, despite the fact that his canopy business was small. In fact, the qualifiers “just started” and “only” in lines 142 and 143 serve to cast Roberto’s business as a startup. In this way, he fished for the possibility that James might give him a break with the website deal. Possible interpretations for the use of “pero” instead of “but” include: a) it is habitual for Roberto to do this; b) it is a contextualization cue to guide James’s interpretation of Roberto’s previous utterance; and c) a reminder to James about common linguistic and ethnic identity. After consistent efforts on James’s part to sell himself and his services to Roberto, Roberto re-iniates his own pitch. He switches to a nonstandard or street English (most likely influenced by AAVE) to persuade James to contract his services (line 155). His use of street sales talk rather than formal sales talk suggests that he’s is now trying to appeal to James’s familiarity and comfort with urban culture. In other words, he’s trying to connect with James as a street mate (more intimate) rather than just a business contact. When this doesn’t quite work, given James’s false starts in line 156, Roberto returns to his old, more canned, salesman-like approach. Once again, this approach is marked with various NYE elements, mainly elided /r/ in “dollar” (159), “dollars” (160), and “chairs” (161). Not to be deterred, James counters with his own offer in lines 165 and 168.

174 J: =And a lot of people do adve- Like I said ah, I mean I have
175 R: stuff in Flo?rida. Like, [they have -
176 R: ]]>Yeah, yeah, yeah.<
177 (.)
178 J: They have something called >La Fiestas Patronales<
179 [in Florida.]
180 R: [Yeah.] I know, yeah.=
181 J: =Where they do all the patron saints in one day, it’s
182 like a big street fair, they see like eighty [thousand people-]
R: [La Calle Ocho?]
   (‘Eight Street’)

R: .
J: No. This is [ah-
R: [La Calle Ocho is something else?=
J: =It’s a different town. Yeah.
R: .
J: Different part of Florida. They do (this), they’ve
been doing it for four years and they basically
shut down the whole neighborhood or >whatever<.
J: [( )]
J: [Yeah, yeah, [yeah.
R: [(They see about) 80,000 people in about four day(.)span.
R: Mira que loquera, broder!=
   (‘That’s crazy, bro’)
J: =So, an’ I have all (the’) emails, I have all the contacts.
I can contact any Latino streetfair organization,=
R: =Yo lo que quiero hacer ahorita, broder () me quiero
   (‘What I want to do now, bro, I want to’)
   situar/f (0.8) con,(.) con >las feria/h/ aqui en Nueva Yor y los
   (‘situate myself with the fairs here in New York and the’)
   eventos aqui en Nueva Yor porque yo vivo en
   (‘events here in New York because I live in’)
   Nueva Yor ahora.<=
   (‘New York now’)
J: =Mhm.=
R: =O sea que () cuando me conviene::,
   (0.8) me conviene ºcoñoº.
   (‘I mean, when it serves me, damn, it serves me’)
J: ºYeah.º What’s? up? [(Tu eres) cubano, verdad.
   (‘You’re cuban, right’)
R: [( )]
R: No. Venezolano.
   (‘Venezuelan’)
J: Yeah? Oh, ok.
R: Venezolano.
   (‘Venezuelan’)
J: That’s cool. (.) So definitely, just get in touch with
me like I said I have a lot of networking events
and stuff like that [and like I s-]
R: [Alright.=
J: =A lot of what I do, has to do with −[(streetfairs.)
R: [(Bringing) outdoor events
J: ºYeah. º
Code-switching in this segment, particularly lines 199 – 202, fits quite well with Blom and Gumperz’s (1972; 1974) description of metaphorical code-switching. Without redefining the interactional situation, metaphorical switching signals a change in topic. This kind of switch adds emphasis to or enhances the interaction. In Roberto’s case it lends authenticity or a measure of sincerity to his statement. Like with his switch to street talk in the previous segment (line 155), this switch is another example of Roberto’s skill in creating an interactional space where they can relate as connected equals. This contrasts with James’s strategy, who consistently positions himself as the one with the upper hand. Ethnicity is important for this strategy to the extent that he can use it to illustrate his embeddedness in important Latino circles.

With his substitution of word final /r/ in “situar” → “situarl/,” and aspiration of word final /s/ in “ferias” → “feria/h/,” Roberto uses NSPR for his switch. Though we cannot determine whether James interpreted Roberto’s Spanish to be a Puerto Rican dialect, there’s reason to believe he at least classified it as Caribbean. This segment shows that James speculated, gathered clues, and tested assumptions about Roberto’s background. In line 174 he brought up Florida. Given that he assumed Roberto was Cuban (line 206), his mention of Florida expresses two assumptions: 1) about Roberto’s Cuban identity and; 2) that as a Cuban he would appreciate such a connection. What gave James this impression? One clue, of course, was Roberto’s pronunciation and intonational style. Another clue was Roberto’s appearance. Put together they suggest that James’s interpretations about Roberto’s ethnicity were guided by a schema in which white, blue-eyed Latinos with Caribbean accents are assumed to be Cuban. Further confirmations for James’s Cuban interpretation are evident in the following statements by Roberto: 1) “[Yeah.] I know, yeah.” (line 180), 2) “Calle Ocho?” (line 183), and most subtly 3) “porque yo vivo en Nueva Yor ahora (‘because now I live in New York’)” (lines 201-202).

I owe these insights to Chris McCarty.
Each of these three statements gave the impression that he was familiar with Florida and may have even lived there before coming to New York (‘I live in New York now’). This last statement might give anyone the impression that Roberto is not native to New York, which as we know, is not true. Roberto did spend some time in a detox residential program in Florida, so the statement is not an outright lie. However, he seems to bend the truth. But why? One possible interpretation is that Roberto recognized James’s Cuban assumption. He had plenty of precedent for this. As I witnessed myself on other occasions, Roberto is often confused for Cuban. Having recognized this, he “went along with it” and subtly lent credence to James’s assumptions. This mutual identification work is possible because of a schema shared among many Latinos and other groups: the all-Cubans-have-links-to-Miami schema. That his interpretations turned out to be false slightly surprised James, as his response in line 209 indicates.

The cell phone store exchange just discussed highlights Roberto’s fluid command of multiple languages, dialects, and registers. Compared to Roberto, James was much more consistent in his use of language. While Roberto jumped seamlessly from Spanish, to New York English, to AAVE, James employed standard, at times formal, American English, limiting most of his Spanish to proper nouns. Their respective linguistic strategies were compatible with each speaker’s interactional goal. Roberto, who entered the situation as a solicitor, automatically assumed a subordinate role. Once Latino ethnicity was brought into the interaction as an important point of reference by James, Roberto’s strategy was to linguistically invoke identifications that would best align him with James. James, on the other hand, made frequent references to extensive resources at his disposal, whether human, informational, or cultural. His identity was sufficiently implied in all of these references and language played a secondary role.
In the next and final example of his ethnic and linguistic flexibility, Roberto converses with a friend. Conversationally-situated power differences do not exist in this transcript, yet Roberto negotiates his multiple identifications just the same.

6.2.2 Lo devolvieron al loco (‘They sent the dude back’).

On our second day of observations I met Roberto around noontime to accompany him and his wife Annie to a dental appointment. When I arrived outside of his apartment in Astoria, Annie was still inside getting ready and Roberto waited outside for a friend, Omar. Omar, who lived near Roberto, was one of the few Venezuelans Roberto knew personally (see Figure 1). In preparation for a big street fair, Roberto needed a van to transport the canopies, tables and chairs he rented out to a local hospital. He planned to borrow Omar’s white van and waited to confirm this with his friend. The next transcript centers on an incident that happened to a mutual friend, Sergio. Apparently, Sergio entered the country from Venezuela on a visitor’s visa. However, he made the critical error of revealing to US immigration officials his intention to work while in the country. In a piece of their conversation not included here, Omar explained to Roberto that when Sergio was asked to provide a contact number in the US, he gave officials Omar’s phone number. Officials then called and heard that the answering machine announced the name of Omar’s business. This convinced authorities of Sergio’s illegal intentions. Having entered and stayed in the US under less than official circumstances themselves, Sergio’s plight resonated with both Roberto and Omar.

1 R: Mañana quiero- mañana quiero llenarlo,
   (‘Tomorrow I want – tomorrow I want to fill it,’)
2 >tu va/h/ trabajar mañana?<
   (‘are you going to work tomorrow?’)
3 (0.6)
4 O: A que hora?
   (‘At what time?’)
5 R: [En la tarde.]=
   (‘In the afternoon’)
6 O: [(          )]
O: =Si, yo ( )
(‘Yes, I’)

R: [En la tarde a eso de la(-s)=bueno
(‘In afternoon, like around, well’)
>vamos a decir como la(-s)< cinco, la(-s) seis:.
(‘let’s say like at five, at six’)

O: A no, esta bien, [no-]=Oye.
(Ah, no, that’s fine. Listen’)

R: [(és-)ta bien?] [(‘that’s alright?’)]

R: Dime.
(‘Tell me’)

O: ºLo devolvieron al loco. º
(‘They sent the dude back’)

R: >Como que lo< devolvieron?
(‘What do you mean that they sent him back?’)

O: ºEn el aeropuertoº.
(‘In the airport’)

R: De/h/ el aeropuerto? Mira esa vaina.=
(‘From the airport? Look at that mess’)

O: =Sí, no le dejaron entrar. =
(‘Yes, they didn’t let him enter’)

(0.6)

R: DEL AEROPUERTO DE AQUÍ?
(‘From the airport here?’)

O: De acá de la- Florida.
(‘From here - Florida’)

R: De Florida. (1.0) Pero porqué?
(‘From Florida. But why?’)

(1.3)

O: Que el tipo le habia dicho que pa(-ra)
(‘That they guy had told him that why’)

que venia pa(-ra a)-cá::?:, que venia trabajar?,
(‘was he coming here, that he was coming to work’)

(1.3) que no se cuan[to]?-
(‘that I don’t know what’)

R: [Pe(-ro) que pendejo!, >haber dicho
(But what a dummy, he should have said’)
que venia de< vacaciones:.
(‘that he was coming for vacation’)

O: Le han (>revocado<) la visa por cinco años.
(‘They (revoked) his visa for five years’)

(0.7)

R: Le qué?!
(‘They what?!’)

O: La visa que tenia se (>la=han=revocado<) por
(‘The visa that he had they (have revoked it) for’)

cinco años.
(‘five years.’)
(1.4)
34 R: Como que- s- s- no puede hacer nada en cinco
(‘What do you mean that he can’t do anything in five’)
35 años?
(‘years?’)
36 O: “Ya no ya. “
(‘Not now’)
37 R: Que CA:ga:?da! “huevon“.
(‘What a screw up, man’)
38 (2.6)
39 O: El me llamó. (.) Yo tambien, me llamó ayer. (0.7)
(‘He called me. Me too, he called me yesterday’)
40 En el trabajo, yo estaba trabajando allá.
(‘At work, I was working over there’)
41 (0.7)
42 R: Coño, que vaina (huev-)on. Enton(-ces) tiene c:inco
(‘Damn, what a mess, man. So then he’s got five’)
43 años >que no puede venir=pa(-ra) los< (Es-)ta(-dos)
(‘years that he cannot come to the US’)
44 Unidos:. (1.7) >Pero=(-e)so lo puede< pelear? o no.
(‘But can he fight it or no?’)
45 No puede pelearlo. =
(‘He can’t fight it?’)
46 O: =Yo creo que sí, claro porque [q q aquí-
(‘I think so, sure because here’)
47 R: [Que. bola(-s)?
(‘What balls’)

In contrast to the conversation in section 6.4.1, Roberto’s exchange with Omar is marked
by two unique paralinguistic elements. Speed is one and intonation is another. In terms of
speed, it seems that Roberto talks quickly more often when talking in Spanish, at least in
comparison to the conversation with James. There’s also more latching (denoted by =)
represented in this transcript. Most instructive, however, are Roberto’s intonational practices.
Since Venezuelan Spanish shares phonological characteristics with Puerto Rican Spanish,
intonation is one way to tell the two dialects apart. As a speaker, Roberto is conscious of this.
Compared to his conversations with James and other New York Puerto Ricans (including his
wife), Roberto’s performance of Venezuelan Spanish is marked by frequent rising intonation
(either as part of a syllable or in longer utterances). (See for example the intonation marked in
lines 36, 43, and 46.) Rising intonation is also notable in Omar’s speech (lines 24-25). Throughout the conversation Roberto attempts to pattern his Spanish to that of Omar (intonationally and lexically). Omar, who is less fluent in English than Roberto, has retained Venezuelan dialect and speaks much more fluidly than Roberto. In fact, some of the pauses evident before Roberto’s turns and mid-utterance may be due to L2 limitations. Further proof of Roberto’s constraints in Spanish-dominant conversations is his reliance on exclamatory phrases using lexicon common in Venezuela to complete his turns: “Que CA:ga:da! “huevon”’ (‘What a screw up, man’ (37)), “Co:ño, que vaina (huev-):on.” (Damn, what a mess, man’ (42)), “Que. bola(-:s)” (‘What balls’ (47)). Notice also the verb conjugation error, “haber,” rather than “hubiese” or “hubiera,” in line 26.

Therefore, Roberto, who had not been to Venezuela in many years and who did not have regular contact with other Venezuelans in the US, produced his own approximation to Venezuelan speech. I believe he did this in contrast to Puerto Rican dialect which he used more frequently. For example, where a Puerto Rican might aspirate syllable final /s/, he not only preserved it but also lengthened the sound, even though this is not a feature of Venezuelan Spanish (“seis:,” 9 and “Unidos:,” 44; see also lines 53, 73, 138 below). This is not to say that Roberto did not drop or aspirate syllable final /s/, he did this consistent with either Venezuelan or Puerto Rican Spanish (lines 2, 8, 9, and 16). Roberto also produced strong apico-alveolar trills, particularly in word initial and word final /r/ (lines 63 and 144 below) and in cases where a Puerto Rican might use a velar or uvular trill (for example “arrechera (‘irritation’ or ‘infuriation’),” lines 55, 62 below). I propose that Roberto uses these features (lengthened /s/ and strong trill), to both differentiate from PRS and to authenticate his Spanish. Both of these features lend a careful, well-pronounced quality to his delivery. It might be his way to

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21 While Roberto’s first language was Spanish, he admitted that he had more command over English.
compensate for Spanish language limitations that could call his claim to Venezuelan identification into question. These phonological elements also add emphasis to his statements, as with “supe:r/r/” in line 63 (see also line 89 in the previous section).

I mentioned earlier another rather noticeable characteristic of his speech when talking to a Venezuelan: frequent (even exaggerated) use of lexicon and exclamatory phrases associated with Venezuela or in cases syntactically and semantically distinct from PRS. So far in this segment of the transcript he uses “vaina” (‘nuisance’ or ‘mess’), “vale” (‘alright’ or ‘OK’), “pe(-d)o” (‘problem’), “coño” (‘damn’ or ‘fuck’), “que bolas” ‘what balls’, and “huevon” (‘dude’ or ‘man’); much more so, even, than Omar. These lexical insertions serve to further differentiate his Venezuelan Spanish from any other dialect.

48 R: Coño que caga(-da) que le hizieron esa vai?na.  
(‘Damn, they shit on him with that mess’)  
49 (0.6)  
50 O: Si va:le.=  
(‘Yes, right’)  
51 R: =Co/n:::/ño que bolas:.  
(‘Damn, what balls’)  
52 (1.6)  
53 O: Lo devolvieron del aeropuerto, no lo dejaron pa?sar.  
(‘They sent him back from the airport, they didn’t let him pass’)  
54 (3.7)  
55 R: Coño que arrechera.  
(‘Damn, how madening’)  
56 O: Sí; se regreso pa(-ra) allá, y (1.4) >yo le habia  
(‘Yes, he went back, and I had’)  
57 pedido una botella de< aguardiente y viste=toda la  
(‘asked him for a bottle of liquor and look, all my’)  
58 vaina me la devolvio.  
(‘stuff they sent back’)  
59 (1.9)  
60 R: .tsh  
61 (1.0)  
62 R: Que arrechera, pana. (2.5) Esa vaina debe estar  
(‘How madening, bud. That mess should be’)  
63 supe:r/r/ (0.9) coño el tipo ts una depresión debe
(‘super, damn that guy, should have a depression’)  

tener el tipo encima? ahorita, coño madre.  
(‘on him right now, motherfuck.’)  

65 O: Si (>yo no fuera a la calle=yo me iba a la casa?><).  
(Yes, (I would not have gone out to the street, I  
would have gone to my house’)  

66 (1.6)  

67 R: (º                         [                 º)  

68 R:                             [Oye, vamo/h/=a ver, el tiene que  
(‘Listen, let’s see, he has to’)  

69 O: Porque el no puede hacer e?so.  
(‘Because he can’t do that’)  

70 (.)  

72 R: No vale. Por cuanto tiempo se venía a toda(-s)  
(‘That’s not right. How long was he coming for’)  

73 maneras:?  
(‘any ways?’)  

74 O: El se venía por uno(-s) tres o cuatro meses que le  
(‘He was coming for three, four months that’)  

75 habian dado la visa cuatro mese(-s) permiso?  
(‘they had given him a four month visa’)  

76 (3.7)  

77 O: Pe:ro ya esta, lis?to.  
(‘But it’s all settled’)  

78 (1.1)  

79 R: En Florida lo devolvieron. Que coños de madre!  
(‘In Florida they turned him back. What motherfuckers’)  

80 (1.2)  

81 O: Uno/h/ cubanos que lo, los tipos de la  
(‘Some Cubans that, the guys from’)  

82 inmigración lo/h/ cubanos, lo lo pararon. (1.7) >Y  
(‘immigration, the cubans, stopped him. And’)  

83 como yo cuando vine aquí< año(-s) atra(-s) vale,  
(‘like me when I came here years back, right,’)  

84 >mira<,  
(‘look’)  

85 ((Coughs))  

86 era un cubano tambien. Y tu te va(-s) quedar? Y  
(‘he was a Cuban too. And you are staying? And’)  

87 a ti=que te importa >chico?><. (1.0) Cua(-l)?  
(‘what do you care man? What is’)  

88 e(-s e-)l problema.  
(‘the problem?’)  

89 R: ((Laughing)) [A ti que te importa.]  
(‘What do you care?’)  

90 O:  
[(            )]  

139
In this section, Roberto’s use of Venezuelan exclamatory phrases as fillers becomes more pronounced. He does this at almost every turn between line 48 and 62. Additional to Venezuelan lexicon, Roberto produces other phonological elements of VS, eliding /d/ in “broder,” a Spanglishized word, and aspirates and deletes word final /s/ in “vamos” (line 68) and “todas” (line 72), respectively. Omar demonstrates a preference for deleting word final /s/ altogether (lines 74, 75, 83, and 86) than aspirating it as Roberto does. Multiple pauses in this same sequence suggest that the topic of Sergio’s unfortunate return to Venezuela is close to becoming exhausted. Roberto attempts to revive the discussion by fleshing out his laments in lines 62 – 64. But eventually he finds further fodder for the discussion by suggesting that he and Omar find a way to help Sergio’s situation (lines 68 – 69). “Vamo’ a ver...tiene gente aquí,” is Roberto’s way to confirm their mutual interest in their friend’s dilemma, uniting them under a common cause, so to speak. This “we” statement figures well into the “they” discourse Omar offers in lines 81 – 88. In this case “they” are Cubans and it is not inconsequential that Omar chooses to invoke this distinction.

*We*/they distinctions were common among the Latinos in this study (including the 252 survey participants in phase 2). Some familiar we/they distinctions recorded include: we-“Hispanics”/they-“Americans,” we-“Latinos”/they-“blanquitos,” we-“Latinos”/they-“negros,” we-“citizens”/they-“illegals”, we-“everyone”/they-“Chinese,” we-“Latinos”/they-“judios”. But equally compelling were the *we*/they distinctions made by Latinos about other Latinos. Often, statements that began like Omar’s “Uno’ cubanos,” (“Un Colombiano, ahí,” “El Dominicano, ese,” “Una Boricua”), functioned as neat vehicles for a great deal of cultural, stereotyped associations. The stereotyped association that Omar invoked about Cubans, or more specifically Miami Cubans, is a view commonly held among other Latinos encountered in this study: “Cubans rule Miami and they only look out for their own.” My intention here is not to lend
weight to these associations, but to make a point about the important role played by these
categories, models, stereotypes, associations for categorizing people, guiding interpretation, aligning
affiliations, and encouraging \textit{disassociation} from certain groups. As we will see in chapter 7,
\textit{disassociation} from stereotypes was a key motivation for switching.

91 R: Coño que ma:lo:? (. ) pobresito vale. 
(‘Damn, that’s bad. Poor guy, right.’)
92 R: [Debe estar] 
(‘He should be’)
93 O: [Que \textbf{no te vayas}], no \underline{te vayas} ( . ) \underline{no te va:yas}, 
(That, don’t go, don’t go, don’t go’)
94 dije yo. (Que no puedo hacer y que no venia 
(‘I said. (That I can’t and that he wasn’t coming’)
95 tan malo. El no 
(‘too bad. He doesn’t’))
96 Ahora (es-)ta ma(-s) luco. 
(‘Now he’s worse off’)
97 R: Va estar bien mal a/y/i? (huev-)on. Ahí s- no se 
(‘He’s going to be real bad there man. Over there 
you can’t’)
98 puede hacer un cara?jo. 
(‘do a damn thing’)
99 (2.0)
100 R: (E-)sa vai?na. (1.0) No se, chao. 
(‘That mess. I don’t know, man’)
101 (1.5)
102 R: Coño pero el tiene que ir a inmigracion allá 
(‘Damn but he’s got to go to immigration over there’)
103 pelea:r?lo. 
(‘fight it’)
104 O: A lo mejor voy ahora en Junio. 
(‘I may be going in June’)
105 R: En Junio va/h/ pa(-ra a-)llá? 
(‘In June you’re going over there?’)
106 O: Sí. ( ) 
(‘Yes’)
107 R: ((Coughs)) Yo no voy pa(-ra) ningun lado hasta que 
(‘I’m not going anywhere until I’)
108 arregle mi pa- mi mi: (1.1) mi vaina americana. 
(‘fix my pa- my, my, my American mess’)
109 >Yo no salgo (d-)el paí(-s) ni pendejo \{que fuera= 
(‘I don’t leave the country even if I were stupid’)

141
((J laughs))

R: =coño madre y si no me deja entrar yo los mato
(‘motherfuck and if they don’t let me in I’ll kill them’)

ahí mi/mo?,< me vuelvo loco!
(‘right there. I’ll go crazy’)

O: ((Continues to laughs))

R: >B’like Wha’nigga’? You fuckin’ crazy? Me van a
(‘They’re goint to’)

mandar a mi a un paí/h/ donde yo no cono/h/co un
(‘send me to a country where I don’t know’)

coño. Pa(-ra) quedarme? No joda. M- me ven- me
(‘a damn thing. To stay? No shit. I- I’ll co- I’ll’)

vengo nadando.
(‘come back swimming’)

O: ((Laughs))

R: ((Starts to laugh himself)) Caigo en Puerto Rico.
(‘I’ll end up in Puerto Rico’)

This passage is an illustration of three of Roberto’s identifications at work. First, considerable use of intonation to mark his speech as VS is evident (lines 91, 97, 98, 100, 103, and 112). His narrative in lines 107 – 119 juxtaposes the fact of his immigration status with the reality that he has little social or economic links to Venezuela. Having lived in the US for most of his life, Roberto leads a life materially independent from his past in Venezuela. He feels more comfortable speaking in English and has few social network members who are Venezuelan. In fact, he has more ties to Puerto Ricans than to Venezuelans and his statement in line 119 provides proof of this connection. Yet, he shares uncertainties similar to immigrants who enter the country without documentation, limited English language skills, and close ties to kin and friendship networks in their native countries. Thus we see two identification discourses at work: Roberto as the “undocumented immigrant” and “Americanized Roberto” who has known little else but New York for most of his life. Finally, Roberto seamlessly switches language and register to emphasize the absurdity of a potential deportation (lines 114). It’s fitting that he uses English to deliver these utterances. His statements clearly evoke an image of Roberto in this
situation; a situation in which all connection to anything but “American” would be emphasized to avoid a deportation. It certainly would not be a scenario in which a bilingual would speak Spanish. Like Roberto, several participants in this study used AAVE and urban slang to provide emphasis, force, and/or humor to otherwise standard American English or formal speech. This jocular, emphatic presentation is consistent with one of the features of code-crossing described by Rampton (2000).

120 O: Oye. > Quedamos así entonces, nos vemos
(‘Listen. It’s settled then, we’ll see each other’)
121 mañana.<
(‘tomorrow’)
122 R: Ahng?
123 O: Yo voy (es-)tar mañana- (. ) > a partir de la(-s) do(-s)
(‘Tomorrow I’m going to be- after two’)
124 de la tarde estoy aquí ya.<
(‘in the afternoon I’m here’)
125 R: A partir de la(-s) do/h/?
(‘After two?’)
126 O: Sí, yo ( ) ha parquear la [guagua.
(‘Yes, I’m ( ) to park the van’)
127 R: [Lo unico que tengo que hacer es llenar la camioneta. Tengo que meter die-
(‘The only thing I have to do is fill the van. I have to load ten-’)
128 =tengo que meter die/h/ canopias(-s), doc- doce
(‘I have to load ten canopies, twe- twelve’)
129 canopias. (1.0) Ok? Tengo que meter como veinte
(‘canopies. Ok? I have to load like twenty’)
130 mesa(-s). Vente- veinte y- tre(-s) mesa(-)s
(‘tables. Twenty- twenty-three tables’)
131 por ahí, quiero meter.
(around there, I want to load’)
132 O: Aha.
133 R: Las- los sandbags, y las sillas, y se acabó.
(‘The- the sandbags, and the chairs, and that’ it’)
134 ((E gestures as if cleaning his hands of something))
135 O: Nada, nada, casi nada.
(‘Nothing, nothing, that’s almost nothing’)
136 R: Eso no es nada. Compara(-d)o con lo que no/h/
(‘That’s nothing. Compared to what’)
137 viene Junio treinta? No, Junio veinte y seis?:
(coming to us June thirtieth. No, June twenty-six’)
138 O: Hay que comprar [ostra-
(‘You have to buy another’) 

140 R: [El garage completo huevo(-n).= (‘The entire garage man’) 
141 O: =Hay que comprar otra guagua (en-)tonce=- (‘You have to buy another van, then’) 
142 R: =No::!, que coño comprar otra guagua! Ese ya rento (‘No, fuck buy another van. For that I’ll just rent’). 
143 un camión? Mira no la vaina e(-s) e/h/ta, (0.8) (‘a truck. No look, the things is this,’) 
144 r/r/ento un camión para Pride Fes (0.7) y la guagua (‘I’ll rent a truck for Pride Fest and your van’) 
145 tuya va conmigo pa(-ra) el Bronx. (‘goes with me to the Bronx’) 
146 O: Y que tu va (ha-)cer en el Bronx. (‘And what are you doing in the Bronx?’) 
147 R: En el Bronx tengo una vaina::: un:- el el Bronx (In the Bronx I have this mess, a- the the Bronx’) 
148 Borough President. 
149 (0.5) 
150 O: O::= 
151 R: =Que tiene una feria, una para(d-)ita chiquitita de (‘That’s having a fair, a tiny parade, those’) 
152 esa:(-s) (;) chimbas. (0.7) Pero no joda(-s) huevon, (‘cheap ones. But no kidding, man’) 
153 <porque::/h/tra salsa live to(d-)a mie:rda:> no joda (‘because live salsa to the fullest. No kidding’) 
154 ahí bailando todo el día? (;) Gozando? un pe(d-)o y (‘over there dancing all day. Having a blast and a ’) 
155 medio?= (‘half’) 
156 O: =A ti te gusta esa vaina. (‘You like that mess?’) 

I would like to point out a few subtle examples of the ways that Omar and Roberto diverge in their speech in this segment. It’s possible that after his mention of how disruptive a deportation would be, the differences between himself and Omar were brought to the surface. In this section of the transcription he reduces his use of exaggerated VS intonation. While Omar drops /s/ in “dos” (line 123), in his repetition of Omar’s statement Roberto aspirates word final /s/ in “dos” (line 125). In line 126 Omar uses “guagua” to refer to his white van and Roberto uses “camioneta” (line 128). In other words the obvious convergence to Omar’s speech is no

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22 Apparently Omar does not share the sensational-salsa-event schema.
longer evident. It’s not possible to say whether these changes were made consciously by Roberto. But it cannot be ruled out that a subconscious adjustment occurred in the face of a contradiction between his identification as a Venezuelan and the overstated use of VS on the one hand, and his American, New Yorker, and even Puerto Rican orientation on the other.

Finally, recall in section 6.4.1 Roberto’s enthusiastic declaration of his participation in the Bronx Borough president’s Puerto Rican festival. Here he describes the parade as “chimba” (152). I was unfamiliar with the word and did a search for it in a language forum (http://forum.wordreference.com). According to one of the participants of the forum: “en Venezuela es una palabra ampliamente utilizada para calificar a personas o cosas de manera despectiva o para decir que algo es falso o de mala calidad.” (‘in Venezuela it is a word broadly use to qualify persons or things in a derogatory manner or to say that something is false or of bad quality’). Roberto also does not use “Puerto Rican” or “puertorriqueño” to describe the event like he did in his conversation with James. As I mentioned in section 6.4.1, his diminishment of the event here likely means that he wished to make a favorable impression on James and presented the event as something more significant than what it really was. The two conversations considered together point to the usefulness of intertexuality, or the use one text to guide the interpretation of another, as applied to discourse analysis.

6.3 Discussion

Roberto is quite flexible in his use of ethnicity for achieving a number of interactive and material goals. He accomplished the three types of switching I outlined in Chapter 2. In terms of passing or crossing, he especially aligned himself to Puerto Rican categorization. In his conversation with James, this is clear. However, this fact represented a gray area for me. As seen in his network and discussed in his life history, Roberto had little contact with Venezuelans and Venezuelan culture. Puerto Rican influences were more present in his life. Major sources of
Puerto Rican cultural knowledge came from his current wife and past wife who both identify as Puerto Rican. Additionally, influential neighborhood relationships during his adolescence were with Puerto Ricans. Finally, Roberto confirmed that he was much more familiar with the island of Puerto Rico than with his birth country.

These experiences have played important roles in shaping Roberto’s ethnic self-understandings. Roberto occupies a gray zone, vacillating between the fact of his kin and birth ties to Venezuela and his experiential and interactional ties to Puerto Rican identification. His discourse suggests this. If he has no choice but to identify himself by a label, he will choose Venezuelan. But if he has room to manage his ethnic self-presentation he draws readily upon his knowledge of Puerto Rican culture and behavior. This raises important questions about the use of ethnic labels in socio-demographic surveys.

These elements of Roberto’s ethnicity shed a new light on his conversations with Omar. Yes, Roberto was born in Venezuela. He uses this category as his primary identification. In his interactions with Omar, Venezuelan frames of reference figure prominently. Yet, his exaggerated used of Venezuelan Spanish features were accommodations or convergences to Omar’s speech. They suggest a certain insecurity about, or overcompensation for, his tenuous ties to Venezuela.

In the data analysis section I mentioned a number of schemas that directed areas of Roberto’s interactions. One which was activated in both conversations is the ethnic cooperation schema. As worded in section 6.4.1, this schema fixes common ethnic identification as presupposing certain cooperative interests. As an abstract representation it positions social actors sharing a common ethnicity as also sharing common interests. This schema has a great deal of directive force and may help explain why Latino pan-ethnicity is persistent despite all the factors that complicate a common identification.
Evidence of this schema in Roberto’s conversation is found, for example, in James’s ready invocation of Latino connections: his relationship with various Latino organizations and his statement “Yeah, and it’s all Latinos” in line 67. Roberto for his part, used code-switching to highlight his willingness to play according to the rules set forth by the ethnic (Latino) cooperation schema. Similarly, in his conversation with Omar, Roberto said: “Oye, vamo’ a ver, el tiene que pelear esa vaina, broder. Tiene gente aquí (‘Listen, let’s see, he has to fight that mess, bro. He has people here for him’).” Appealing for their mutual friend, Roberto is basically saying “Let’s do something.” He is assuming there’s a common cooperative interest. However, the ethnic cooperation schema was not as salient between Roberto and Omar, as it was between Roberto and James. This may be because with Omar he has a pre-established relationship upon which to base mutual support and cooperation.

6.4 Conclusion

The two transcripts discussed here are presented as evidence of ethnic identification switching, or the use of multiple ethnic identifications across contexts. Roberto’s ethnic and linguistic repertoires are quite broad, making him an ideal participant for this research. In his conversation with a Puerto Rican store manager with access to promising business contacts, he alternated between languages and dialects, invoking multiple frames of reference. With a fellow Venezuelan, his use of VS became more pronounced, but still aspects of his multiple identifications were present throughout. Thus, Roberto’s case demonstrates not only that people ethnically invoke multiple frames of reference across contexts, but also within the same context.

This last point is one of the unique insights from Roberto’s data. Past research on contextual phenomena like code-switching and situational ethnicity has established that identification shifts according to social context are the norm. But few studies have documented how and why these shifts occur in a span of minutes, within the same context and with the same
interlocutor. For example, in the conversation between Roberto and James, there was enough ambiguity about each other’s primary identification that both had to play an open field. To accomplish this, both men, but especially Roberto, tried identifications that suited each’s intentions and fit each’s continually-tested assumptions about the other. Roberto’s conversation with James is a good example of how ethnicity can be instrumental and yet remain implicit in an interaction. Except for James’ direct question at the very end about Roberto’s background, never was self-identification accomplished by naming categories named out loud. This subtle navigation makes it possible for both participants to test the waters interactively customizing their responses according to what is appropriate. It also points to the ways that presupposed worlds drive an interaction, since so many things were left unspoken.

Finally, Roberto’s case further suggests that ethnic and national labels can be misleading. Labels in social scientific research draw boundaries around populations assumed to share attributes and outcomes. But Roberto’s daily practice reveals just how arbitrary these boundaries can be. US Census conventions would categorize him as a white, Hispanic from South America. Yet his linguistic preferences, social network and cultural knowledge align him well with New York Puerto Ricans. Scientists have called attention to the inadequacy of race and ethnicity as explanatory variables, when what they actually capture is socio-economic variation (Rivara & Finberg 2001; Collins 2001; Schwartz 2001). Promising alternatives or supplements to ethnic categories can be found in social network measures (e.g. distribution of ethnicities among network members) and in questions about language use.
CHAPTER 7
ABEL

7.0 Introduction

After seeing a flyer about my study posted in their ESL school, Abel and his friends called me to find out more. We agreed to meet at a Colombian restaurant, “Cositas Ricas” in Jackson Heights, Queens. A June weekday, I waited for them outside the always-packed restaurant on the all-important immigrant thoroughfare Roosevelt Avenue. This particular section of Roosevelt Avenue cuts through what is known as the Latino section of Jackson Heights. Abel and his friends greeted me dressed in casual business clothes and carrying messenger-style bags. Stifling a chuckle, I couldn’t shake the sensation that I was meeting them to discuss some very important business proposal. Rather than the interview of potential participants I was accustomed to doing, I readied myself to deliver a sales pitch.

As I later found is customary for this group, we sat down to eat before talking business. Abel and his friends generously treated me to Colombian beef stew and papaya shake. We casually talked in Spanish about my project, which inspired lively comments about immigrants in New York City. During our group conversation I was able to ask each of them about their background and daily routines. Abel, Marco, and Luis, were Ecuadorians working as salesmen for DirectTV installation companies in Queens. Throughout our lunch, Abel took regular breaks to make and answer phone calls to clients. His close friend Marco urged him to relax from work and enjoy the meal, which he finally did. Knowing that I could not recruit the three of them I paid particular attention to what they said about their daily routines. In the end I asked Abel to participate. It turned out that Abel and Marco worked so closely together that my observations of Abel regularly included Marco. Happily, Marco provided a number of keen insights into immigrant and ethnicity issues, as well as to Abel’s behavior.
Abel described himself as a 37-year old married, church-going satellited TV salesman. I was interested in experiencing how ethnicity came into play at church, having not attended religions services with other participants up to that point. So this was a key factor for asking him to participate. I was also intrigued by his relationship with his Mexican wife, who like him, entered the country without documents and spoke little English. Abel’s participation promised an inside view into number of dynamics I had not yet explored in the research. In the end, however, most of my observations with Abel were at work. It was in the work context that he made the fullest use of his ethnic and linguistic repertoire.

7.1 A Brief History of Abel

Much of Abel’s time was spent working in the streets. Especially in the warm months of the year, he set up his DirectTV display on the busiest sidewalks in all NYC boroughs except for Staten Island. We set up our first interview in a small public park not far from his office in Corona. Sitting on a bench, Abel narrated an economic, personal, and spiritual passage that led him from Guayaquil to New Jersey to New York. He described his life as a series of ascents and precipitous descents, with his state at the time of our meeting the most stable. Born to a family of clothes and electronics vendors, since the age of eleven he learned how to make a living selling in the streets. “I worked, worked, and worked, always working,” he said, and lived in a neighborhood where all his childhood friends eventually died violently or succumbed to drugs.

At the age of twenty-seven he decided to try for the US. While his two sisters would eventually decide to move to Spain, where entry was easier, Abel opted for the Mexican frontera. Ten years ago, when he paid for someone to arrange for the cross-over, the trip cost $5000. Travel took him through the Ecuadorian Sierras into Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico and eventually New Jersey. Upon his arrival he began working in construction with Portuguese contractors. Working alongside him were other Ecuadorians, many of them
serranos. In construction Abel developed a set of beliefs that to this day influence his ethnic self-presentation. First, he described the Portuguese foreman he worked under as exploitative and callous. “When I lived in New Jersey, I was ashamed to say I was Ecuadorian,” he admitted. Mistreatment he received while working in construction lead him to cease telling people he was Ecuadorian. His reasoning was that those looking to exploit, used his Ecuadorian identification to categorize him and debase him. “They catalogue you,” he said, “and then they put you in a group and they treat that group with kicks.” Not only did he build resentment for the Portuguese bosses, who he perceived as racist, but also for the Ecuadorians around him who were complacent about their conditions. Additionally, since many of the Ecuadorians he worked with were not costeño like him, he also grew to distrust and disassociate from them. Thus, up to when I worked with him in Queens, Abel used the “guayaquileño” label before using “Ecuadorian”.

Looking for independence more along the lines of previous work, he became a taxi driver. During this time he was determined to learn English. One incident in particularly urged him to learn. A fellow Ecuadorian, who happened to be in better economic standing, refused to speak to him in Spanish. Nonplussed, he determined for language not to be another source of ridicule. He also wanted to be accepted by Americans, to move beyond the immigrant community where it was all Latinos and all spoke only Spanish. While a taxi driver, Abel became involved in New Jersey’s underground sex industry, catering to the immigrant community where he lived. As a líder de mujeres (‘pimp’), he made frequent trips into Queens to find women, mostly Colombian, Mexican, and Dominican, to bring back to New Jersey. The money he made as a pimp helped him towards the purchase of his own taxi and livery license. With this new level of independence he was able to amass considerable savings. But as he relates, his involvement in
this scene was not purely business. “My problem has always been women,” Abel declares. And so began another descent. After a night of heavy drinking, he drove while intoxicated and was arrested by the police. Not unlike Roberto in the previous chapter, Abel lost his taxi and his savings.

Queens was familiar to him, and so he moved there to look for work. Actually, he moved with his girlfriend, now wife, Monica. Monica was a source of stability for him and it was upon her urging, and the encouragement of a neighbor, that they began to attend an evangelical church. The church catered exclusively to the Latino community in Corona. All services were conducted in Spanish, with the exception of one fledgling and unpopular English Sunday service. Abel found the church to be a source of redemption. He and Monica became born-again-Christians and married at the church. It also happened to be the source of his first significant work opportunity in Queens. A fellow church member recommended Abel to Marco, an Ecuadorian working in DirectTV sales. Guayaquileño himself, Marco found instant chemistry with Abel and helped him get established as a satellite television salesman. For the most part, Abel liked the work and spent a significant amount of his seven-day work week on it. Because of this, most of the observations and recordings were of Abel at work or with co-workers.

Abel’s personal network reflects the important relationship areas suggested in his life history. His network comprises ten components, but nine of these are isolates. The main network depicted in the center of the graph includes his work contacts, fellow church members (including pastors) and his family. Similar to Roberto, for Abel the most central person is his wife, Monica.

The main network component is moderately dense, although more dense than Roberto’s. Notice for example, more clustering than shown in Figure 1. Each of the sub-areas of his
network is quite interconnected. Abel’s network also spans international boundaries. Several of his family members live abroad; in either Ecuador or Spain. You may recall that Roberto’s network was varied in the degree of closeness that he felt towards members of his network. Abel’s standard for determining closeness was different, however. He used only two categories to describe his relationship with alters: “very close” or “close”. Thus, he reported not feeling “extremely close” to anyone (one of the category options) but “close” to many. His wife Monica was his closest relationship.

Abel spent most of his waking hours at work. But this work tended to be an independent endeavor. Marco was the only other person who regularly accompanied Abel during his day. They often worked together to sell satellite TV subscription, and had developed a system of sharing profits. Although his church was an important facet of his life, he spent very little time in church activities while I was with him. Of all the participants with whom I worked, Abel was most apt to include me in his interactions with work colleagues and friends. Therefore, with the exception of his blood relatives, who do not live in the US, I met several of the people depicted in Figure 2.

It is clear from the list of nationalities that Abel interacted with a diverse range of people. Although many of his alters were Ecuadorian, if we take out the family component it becomes clear that his actual interactions in the US were quite mixed. What is also clear is that he had few close contacts who were American. While diverse, Abel’s personal network was entirely composed of Latinos. This fact was evident in my week of observations of him. The non-Latinos he encountered on a daily basis were potential clients in his sales forays. As will be demonstrated in his linguistic data below, most of his interactions were in Spanish.
7.2 Linguistic Data and Analysis

Talking over the background sounds of a televised futbol match, Abel announces, “Guys, guys, quiero hacer un brindis (‘I want to make a toast’).” Abel, the English-speaker of the group, four other men and one woman gathered at the Jaramillo Ecuadorian Restaurant in Jackson Heights to welcome a new business prospect. The hopeful chatter centered around an upcoming change in management and new alliances, leading Abel to proclaim: “The sky’s the limit.” When the futbol match was over, the music began. One particularly lively song led Abel to exclaim proudly, “Esa e’ la musica de mi tierra (‘that’s the music of my land’).” Finally, one hour into the gathering, long-awaited guests arrived. The group of Ecuadorian sellers greeted a
Colombian manager and her colleague. Exchanging kisses, Abel introduced himself to her, “Quiubo, soy Abel (‘What’s up, I’m Abel’).”

This brief sketch of a one and half hour dinner among friends and co-workers illustrates the ways in which Abel slipped easily into multiple presupposed worlds.

“Guys, guys” is familiar and playful and helps Abel begin a warm, but often formal gesture with a casual tone. Bilinguals often interject such words in to mostly Spanish speech to affirm their connection with the majority society (Jacobson 1982). Few expressions capture the promise of the American dream like “The sky’s the limit.” Like all metaphoric phrases, there is considerable cultural knowledge behind it. One thing is clear; Abel’s code-switches are effective to the extent that the interlocutors share his knowledge. With his public show of Ecuadorian pride, Abel revealed an ethnic attachment not expressed in most of his recordings. Instead, his data revealed a drive for accommodating or orienting himself to the practices of other groups, as with his use of the Colombian greeting “quiubo”.

The data presented here illustrate three main patterns of ethnic self-presentation: a) tendency towards disassociating himself from Ecuadorian identification; b) tendency towards accommodating or converging to the speech of others; and c) tendency to invoke Ecuadorian identification only when among other Ecuadorians.

7.2.1 Todos Menos Ecuatorianos (Everyone but Ecuadorians)

On a Jackson Heights sidewalk, with the 7 train passing above us every five minutes, Abel, Marco and I touched on the topic of “ethnic pride.” Abel stood by calling out his usual DirectTV announcement, “Venga, señor, instale DirectTV en casa! Pa’ que vea los partidos de su país.”

23 Without making too strong a connection between the phrase’s metaphoric meaning and the sentiment of this immigrant group, Abel’s use of the word is symbolic of the acculturation process. Because the expression is imbued with cultural knowledge, knowing English is not sufficient to understanding it. Likewise, some participants in this study have said, “To make it in America you have to think like an American.” It is not enough to know the language.
(‘Come, sir, install DirectTV at home. So that you can watch your country’s soccer matches’).

Marco, meanwhile, sat with me and shared his perspective on the topic. People switch, he argued, because they are ashamed of who they are. He suggested that Ecuadorians in particular have no national pride. Marco added that Ecuadorians who switch don’t want to be treated like poor, ignorant indios. “What about you,” I asked, “do you switch?” “No,” he said. Marco described one occasion when he and a colleague went to a restaurant frequented by other Ecuadorians and “mexicanos del campo (Mexicans from the countryside).” One of them asked him where he was from and he promptly told them he was Ecuadorian. “They didn’t believe,” he told me, “they insisted that I wasn’t.” Marco is euro-Ecuadorian. He provided this story as an example of how strongly he sticks to his identification. That he would never try to pass himself off as anything else and prefers to assert himself, to show people “what he is” and “what he can do.” The truth is that in Ecuador, like in most of Latin America, fair-skinned people like Marco have a sufficiently advantageous identification option. In a country where 70% of the population is either mestizo or indio (CIA World Factbook, 2007), whites are a privileged minority. Transplanted on New York ground, particularly New York’s Latino immigrant society, Marco enjoys the same status and distinction. It could be argued that as a white Ecuadorian, “a rare breed,” so much so that fellow Ecuadorians and Latinos don’t believe he is, his identification is even more distinctive and uniquely advantageous.

Abel on the other hand, admits to feeling ashamed. Listening in to our conversation, he added:

Interview 1
A: Yo no decia que era ecuatoriano, me tienen que tratar
   (‘I didn’t say that I was Ecuadorian, they have to treat’)
   igual que a ellos, igual que a otra gente.

---

24 I should also add that Marco spoke very little English and so did not have English as a tool for ethnic self-presentation. He was, however, extremely eager to learn and often insisted on speaking English with me.
Yo decía que era colombiano.
‘I said I was Colombian’

RN: Y te creíen? La gente te creía?
‘And they believed you? People believed you?’

A: Porque yo cambiaba el acento.
‘Because I changed my accent’

Contrasting Marco’s experience, to be indio and Ecuadorian is exactly what’s expected. These expectations made Abel wary. To minimize the effect of his phenotypic traits, Abel opted for the group who popularly seem to be considered blanquitos (‘whites’). Colombians in Queens also tend to have middle-class standing and high educational attainment relative to other Latino groups. The visibility of numerous successful Colombian businesses throughout Jackson Heights adds to their prestige. In the interview excerpt above the “ellos” refers to the stereotyped poor, dark-skinned indios of Ecuador, Mexico, Central America, etc. Tellingly, despite his insistent aversion to being “catalogued,” “categorized,” “grouped,” he did not mind it as long as it was a group with a positive association. Recognizing that Colombian identification required a certain performance, Abel had learned and occasionally used the Colombian accent and picked up on common Colombian words and colloquialisms.

There were times, however, when identification as a Colombian required very little performance. Abel explained that in this frequent scenario people guessed his background (incorrectly) and he went along with it. During one of his trips to sell DirectTV in the Bronx, Abel encountered this with a potential Puerto Rican client. Unsure whether he’s allowed to install DirectTV where he lives, the client (J) agrees to call Abel back at a later time. The conversation is about ready to close, but the client seems reluctant to end it. As we will see, at least one of Abel’s reasons for not correcting people’s wrong assumptions is to not disrupt conversational flow:
Excerpt 1

1 A: Me puede llamar.
   (‘You can call me’)
2 J: Ok, esta bien. Yo te llamo.
   (Ok, alright. I’ll call you)
3 Van a /Eh/taten Island tambien?
   (‘You go to Staten Island as well?’)
4 A: Staten Island, Long Island, Brooklyn, Manhattan,.
   (0.7)
5 E:m, Florida, Miami.
   (1.2)
6 J: Tu ere/h/ colombiano.
   (You’re Colombian)
7 A: ((Abel silently nods his head yes))
   (3.4)
8 J: Je je. ((C laughs)) Yo soy boricua.
   (‘I’m Puerto Rican’)
9 A: (Es-)Ta bien pápa.
   (‘Alright, pop’)
10 J: Tengo, tengo gente colombiana.
    (‘I have Colombian people’)
11 A: (En-)Tonce cualquier cosa (. me e/h/ta- una
    (‘So then, anything you give me a’)
12 llamadita.
    (‘call’)
13 J: Sí, yo ahora, (viste), estoy en Staten Island. Me le
    (Yes, right now I (look), am in Staten Island. I’)
14 escapé a mi hermana. Tú me entiende?
    (‘escaped from my sister. You know what I mean?’)
15 A: A: te (es-)capaste.
    (‘you escaped’)
16 J: Sí porque, imaginate, le digo, vamo a Manhattan.
    (Yes because, imagine this, I say, let’s go to Manhattan’)
17 Me dice que no.
    (‘She tells me no’)

J spends the next three minutes venting about domestic troubles he is having with his
sister, whom he lives with. Responding mostly with, “Ta bien (‘Ok’),” Abel listens patiently
without giving much feedback. When it becomes clear that J depends on his sister and likely
cannot make a decision about DirectTV without her, Abel’s “Ok’s” begin to take a tone of
finality, urging the client to close the conversation. Turning to the excerpt, the first thing to
notice is that J’s turn in line 8 is an attempt to move the conversation from the transactional arena to the identity arena. In light of the rest of their conversation, this move is meant to open up conversational possibilities. Lines 16 – 20 suggest that J has an isolated living arrangement, hence the use of “me le escapé a mi hermana (‘I escaped from my sister’).” In other parts of the conversation he lamented that he felt misunderstood by his sister and other family members. This was a man in the mood to interact and vent. He found a situation in which Abel, as a salesman was, in a word, obligated to engage him in a conversation. Although Abel did not wish to spend too much time on J and miss other, perhaps more promising prospects, he recognized the need to keep him happy as a potential client. In line 9 he acknowledges to J that he is Colombian but his technique is revealing. Abel’s nod in line 9 allowed him to “keep the client happy” without over-committing himself to Colombian identification. In this case, actions do not speak louder than words. I was present when Abel did this, and observed a certain reluctance in his gesture. The nod would best be described as the bodily equivalent of a whisper. His turns in lines 12 and 14 showed his reluctance for the conversation to turn to the topic of ethnic background, perhaps out of concern that his “cover” would be blown.

Naturally, after their conversation ended Abel and I talked about what had just happened. Here is part of our exchange:

Interview 2

A: See? Y así encuentra gente, que no tiene quien le escuche. (‘And like that you find people with no one to’)
RN: Pero le dijiste que eres colombiano. Explicame eso. (‘But you told him you are Colombian. Explain that’)
A: Me hace sentirme a mi bien feliz viendolo a él feliz. (‘It makes me happy to see him happy’)
Si el dice que soy colombiano, soy colombiano. (‘If he says I’m Colombian, I’m Colombian’)
Me gusta ver feliz a la gente. ((Spoken in a sweet, but slightly sarcastic tone.))
RN: ¿Porqué crees que le hace feliz a él?
(‘Why do you think that makes him happy?’)
A: Porque- dice (si ) colombiano. Ok.
(‘Because he says that ( ) Colombian.’)
Porque ahí tuve la confianza de conversar.
(Because then I had the trust to talk’)
RN: ¿Tú no dices que eres de Ecuador?
(‘You don’t say you are Ecuadorian’)
A: Eh:- No se, quiza’, porque todo el mundo conoce a
(‘I don’t know, maybe because everyone encounters’)
la gente, simplemente mira, y conversa su’ cosa’.
(‘people, simply look, and shares theirs things’)
Pero si ni se de donde eres, ¿Brasiler? Si, soy
(‘But if I don’t even know where you’re from? Brazilian?
Yes, I’m’)
brasiler. ¿De donde eres? ¿De Paraguay? Si
(Brazilian. Where are you from? From Paraguay? Yes’)
soy paraguayo.
(‘I’m Paraguayan’)
RN: Entonces no estas apegado a decirle a la gente que
(‘So you are not attached to telling people that’)
eres de Ecuador.
(‘you are from Ecuador’)
A: Si la gente que me saca el acento, o a menos que
(‘If people recognize my accent, or unless’)
sea un cliente que vive aquí. Que era de DirectTV.
(‘it’s a client that lives here. That was from DirectTV’)
Disculpe, ¿de donde usted? Ecuatoriano. Si!, yo
(‘Excuse me, where are you from. Ecuadorian. Yes! I’m’)
también soy ecuatoriano, mucho gusto. Solo
(‘Ecuadorian too, a pleasure. Just’)
para que me hagan la compra.
(‘so they buy from me’)

There are no plainer words. Abel chooses the ethnic option he believes will satisfy the
potential buyer. In an extension of “The customer’s always right,” he takes the interlocutor’s
lead. Referring to Lakoff’s (1973) work on politeness rules and Goffman’s (1974) work on
frame semantics, Sweetser (1987: 44-45) notes that “conversation often has its primary purposes
at the level of social interaction; making someone happy, or negotiating the interaction – frame,
may be a more important goal than informativeness.”
Inherent to Abel’s reasoning (and reminiscent of the ethnic cooperation schema described in Chapter 6) is the assumption that people ask ethnic identification questions to connect and once connected the conversation can flow more smoothly. Because of the potential presented by ethnicity for connecting with others, the next guiding rule is that in fleeting in counters, “if I don’t even know where the person is from,” ethnicity should be used flexibly. There is no notion of ethnic attachment here. As my question to him shows (“…no estas apegado…”), my original thinking was in terms of “attachment”. Where’s the attachment? Is there no cognitive dissonance? Isn’t this deception? I don’t think Abel views this as outright deception. Perhaps in his own way he is living the notion that our identifications are just as dependent on the ascriptions of other’s as on our self-ascriptions. His experiences with rejection for being Ecuadorian have encouraged him to develop flexibility, allowing people to make positive ascriptions for him.

As the above example suggests, non-Ecuadorian identification is a strategy used only in fleeting encounters or in situations where people deal with each other at surface level. It’s clear that Abel’s Colombian identification carries the risk of exposure. Therefore, Abel opted for another approach also designed to lessen the impact of his indio identity, opting for guayaquileño as his primary identification. Using this label had two key results: it allowed some distance from the serrano/indio association, and it was ambiguous enough to lead people away from “Ecuador.” The short transcript that follows is an example of when and how Abel used this label to achieve the latter goal. In it, he has a conversation with a DirectTV sales office operator. These operators work locally in Queens providing support for sales people and technicians. Abel called to get a credit report on a potential client. While he waited for the results, Abel talked casually with the operator:
Excerpt 2

1  A: >Tu ere(-s) colombiana? verdad.< Me diji(-s)te.  
    (‘You’re Colombian, right. You told me.’)
2    (3.2)  Yo- yo soy de, Guayaquil.  (2.0) Si. Soy  
    (‘I’m from Guayaquil. Yes. I’m’)
3    guayaquileño. (1.8) (A-)donde queda, adonde  
    (‘Guayaquilean. Where is it, where’)
4    queda e/h/tara pensando. A(-d)onde queda  
    (‘is it, you must be thinking. Where is’)
5    Guayaquil. (3.7) Queda- (0.8). (Es-)ta (es-) ta  
    (‘It’s- it’s, it’s’)
6    cerquita de Colombia. (5.6) A::::! Por eso,  
    (‘really close to Colombia. Ah…that’s why’)
7    porque (es-)ta cerca de Peru. (1.5) Yo soy  
    (‘because it’s close to Peru. I’m’)
8    calla(-d)o, de d- Santa Marina.  
    (‘quiet, from Santa Marina’)

A familiar conversation starter is to ask about the background of others, as Abel has done here. This is often done to establish areas of commonality, break the ice, or signal interest in having a conversation. Consistent through Abel’s recordings is his use of guayaquileño to identify himself; except in situations where he wishes to disassociate from Ecuadorian identification altogether. Wishing to make a positive impression on her, he very subtle takes her away from Ecuador. Without actually appropriating the Colombian label as he has done in other scenarios, he leads her in the direction of Colombia. The use of diminutive “cerquita” in line 6, serves to reduce the spatial distance and thus the similarity between the two. Abel avoids using the “Ecuadorian” label all together. In fact, it appears that he implied that he was from Peru. Notice the last sentence, “Yo soy calla(-d)o, de Santa Marina, (‘I’m quiet, from Santa Marina’).” This is a word play on the Peruvian port city Callao and one of its urban zones, Santa Marina.

Abel foretold such a scenario during the life history interview:

Interview 3
RN:  Me estabas explicando que a veces le dices
‘You were explaining to me that at times you tell’
a la gente que eres de Colombia o eres de-
(‘people that you are from Colombian or you’re from-’)
A: Si para que no me traten- me traten con respeto.
(‘Yes, so that they’ll treat me- treat me with respect’)
RN: Todavia no la-
(‘You still-’)
A: No ahora no-
(‘No, not now-’)
RN: Ahora no, era solo en-
(Not now, that was only in-’)
A: En Nueva Jersey- porque es la gente que hay allá, la
(‘In New Jersey- because of the people that are over there,’)
gente-
(‘the people’)
RN: Allá aja, ¿pero aquí es diferente?
(‘Over there, yeah. But here is different?’)
A: Aquí es diferente, claro.
(‘Here is different, of course.’)
RN: ¿Como?
(‘How’)
A: Que tú le dices que eres de Guayaquil, ya, ya saben que
(‘That you tell them you are from Guayaquil, and they know that’)
eres de Guayaquil! Y dice,
¿Guayaquil donde queda?
(‘you’re from Guayaquil. And he says, where is Guaya-
quil?’)

Guayaquil queda allá por, por Argentina. Entre
(‘Guayaquil is over there by, by Argentian. Between’)
Argentina y Brasil, le digo! ¿De verdad? Van a buscar
(‘Argentina and Brazil, I tell them! Really? They go and find’)
un mapa a buscar Guayaquil.
(‘a map to look for Guayaquil’)

The conversation between Abel and the Colombian woman on the other line suggests an
intriguing notion warranting further exploration. Perhaps the relative positions of countries on a
map correspond with people’s own mental maps about these locations. However, this mental
map carries cultural information along with geographical information. This is why Abel’s
description of Guayaquil as “cerquita” to Colombia is possible as a way to highlight
interpersonal similarities between them. He places the ostensible nation of Guayaquil on the
map between two of South America’s largest countries. It appears that for Abel, Guayaquil

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exists cognitively outside of Ecuadorian borders. In Excerpt 2 he placed it closer to Colombia, and so “closer to home” for the Colombian operator. Abel is using proximity as a proxy for similarity. Using Colombia, Argentina, or Brazil as the reference point, he’s able invoke the salient positive and impressive associations people have of these countries.

One final point about Abel’s linguistic behavior. Referring back to Abel’s samples of Ecuadorian dialect in section 7.1, it is evident that when talking to other Ecuadorians phonological and lexical features linked to ES are easy to pick out. In the preceding examples he does alter his speech slightly. He does not switch dialects but does soften certain traits. Mainly, he slows down the speed of his utterances, so that there is little blurring of boundaries within words. When talking to non-Ecuadorian there is also less velarization of /n/. The main reason for doing this, of course, was to be understood. He did this with clients, me, even his non-Ecuadorian wife.

7.2.2 Quiero que estén feliz (I want them to be happy)

In the preceding section Abel mentioned that he “likes to see people happy” and goes along with the ethnic option of least resistance. This is a central theme in his use of his ethnic and linguistic repertoire, even when it doesn’t entail him feigning or emphasizing this or that identity. Like many New Yorkers, he has become keenly aware of clues into people’s background: physical features, accents, dress, mannerisms, etc. It is not unusual to hear a New Yorkers complain that “in the city the first thing people want to know is where you’re from,” it’s a natural consequence of a) exposure to incredible diversity and b) the inherent human need to categorize in order to simplify our environment25. This skill comes especially handy for salesmen, who attempt to improve their chances of making a sale by tailoring their approach

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25 Citing Killworth and Bernard (1978), Chris McCarty (personal communication) notes that location is a primary way that people know each other, and is not special to New York.
according to customer attributes. For example, one of Abel’s tried and tested techniques when approached by a customer is to mention the channel he thinks will most appeal to them. Usually, this happens without the potential customer actually stating their background. A sidewalk salesman has only so much time to make an impression. Quick decisions about people’s background are standard practice. If Abel believes a potential customer is Puerto Rican, he will tell them about WAPA-TV, one of Puerto Rico’s large national channels. Mexican? He will be sure to mention Azteca and perhaps all the international channels where one might have access to futbol matches. For the Ecuadorian there’s Ecuavisa. Abel may also opt for the more general approach, “Tenemos canales de Argentina (‘We have channels from Argentina’),” etc. This is good sales practice. But Abel is an expert accommodator. A charismatic man with a genuine interest (whether practical or affective) in the comfort of his interlocutors, to varying degrees he’ll adapt himself to their speech. In this section I will illustrate how Abel used phonological, lexical, and language accommodation to invoke frames of reference familiar for his listeners, reducing the distance between them and him.

As Abel’s case will clearly show, everyday examples of speech accommodation can be found in sales encounters, where salespersons converge to customers’ speech much more than customers converge to the salesperson (ibid.). Thus, the power element is among the most crucial determinants of the direction of the convergence. As a case in point, Wolfram (1973) found that Puerto Ricans were much more likely to assimilate the dialect of Blacks; relative to Puerto Ricans, Blacks in New York City hold more power and prestige.

Phonological accommodation
In this first example, Abel adjusts his pronunciation to match that of an African American client. For much of their conversation, the client and a friend accompanying her showed a strong preference for AAVE:

Excerpt 3
1 L: But wha(-t) I gotta put up when the ma:n come to
2 /d/e house?
3 A: E::, nothin(-g)
   / nahtheen/
4 L: No(th-)i
   /nuh-i
5 A: /Nahtin/, /nahrin/.

In line 3 Abel’s Hispanized English is marked by pronunciation of the vowel sounds /uh/ → /ah/ and /i/ → /ee/. He does take care to pronounce the voiceless fricative /th/. Abel adds stress to “nothin’,” reassuring her that there is no money up front. In line 4, L repeats Abel’s answer as a reassurance-seeking interrogative. She drops the voiceless fricative /th/ and produces a stressed, distinctly velarized and nasalized last syllable /in/. Rather than reproduce his pronunciation in line 3, in line 5 Abel attempts an approximation at L’s pronunciation of “nothing”. One key feature of his phonological convergence is the use of /i/ rather than the Spanish vowel sound /ee/. L’s stressed, nasalized and velarization pronunciation of /in/ is trickier to reproduce. In his first attempt he devoices using /t/ rather than /d/. This did not quite result in his desired effect and self-corrects once more with a /r/ and a velarized /n/. Especially because he makes that second attempt to better approximate her pronunciation, I interpret his turn in line 5 as an accommodation.

Lexical accommodation

Excerpt 4 is of a conversation between Abel and an African American woman who approached him for DirectTV information. She was unsure whether the satellite dishes would be
allowed in her apartment complex and asked for Abel’s opinion. Unsure himself, he offers the
option of having a technician go to her home:

Excerpt 4

1 A: You-/dZ/ou wan- wan(-t)a try?, oh no. We can
go to the house and we try. (0.8) Is no- is no(-t)
go(-ing)na be a problem, wi- for you. No?
4 (.)
5 S: I don’t kno:w that’s my problem. I’m a ask for it.
6 So, y(-ou)all cou- y(-ou)all cou(-ld) put like on top
7 of the roof?
8 A: Mm, sometime(-s) on top of the roof. Sometime(-s) 9
on the window. Si- in the side. In the right side.=
10 S: =If I can it si- If I can’t have it on the window,
11 A: No?
12 S: I cou(-ld) have it on the roof?
13 A: Yeah. Gotta be on the roof. Is- Find out le(-t) me
know. I’m gonna give you my phone number, and 15
call me. /D/is my phone number, my cell phone, c- 16
call me. Gim- me- gimme holla when you,
17 you find out. (Be-)cause I don(-’t) wan(-t) a
18 problem wi(-th), you know, you guys have a
19 problem.

In line 16 Abel uses “gimme holla” for “give me a holla’” (‘give me a call’”). Though not
exclusively, this expression is associated with African American speech and used in informal
contexts. Twice in lines 15 and 16, Abel uses the standard “call me,” therefore his use of “holla”
is redundant as a request. However, as an accommodating gesture, it is indexically rich. By
showing his familiarity with an African American expression at best, and American slang at
least, he signals his multi-cultural savvy. During my time teaching ESL classes in Queens I
observed that students first focus on the basics of English before they understand or use popular
expressions. Besides, their limited language skills constrain the quantity and quality of contacts
they can have with English-speakers from a variety of backgrounds. Abel’s knowledge and use
of these and other popular American words and expression, distinguishes him from an immigrant
with limited language abilities to an immigrant with awareness of the world beyond the enclave. In this way, he reduces the linguistic and cultural distance that exists between himself and S.

In the preceding example, Abel demonstrated knowledge of popular American culture and language. The next example shows that his multi-cultural awareness extends beyond the US. Abel calls a Colombian DirectTV technician over the phone and leaves a short message. The way it works is that once a client decides to purchase the DirectTV subscription, Abel refers their case to an installation office where a technician will be found for the case. These technicians tend to work independently and on a case by case basis. Maintaining positive relationships with them is important because if they do not make the installation Abel does not get paid:

Excerpt 5
A: ¿Quiubo paisa? (0.5) >ºUngº¬<(0.7)Llame patrá, le (‘What’s up countryman. Call back, it’s’) salida Abel. Para saber de=sobre la instalación (‘Abel calling. To know about the installation’) del señor Mal=Mateo Carrion. Me llama. Bye. (‘for Mr. Mate Carrion. Call me.’)

Just as he did when greeting the Colombian manager earlier in this chapter, he greets the technician with the familiar Colombian greeting, quiubo. Here he uses another familiar Colombian term, “paisa”. Short for paisano, this characteristically Colombian form is used among “countrymen,” in other words between Colombians.

Language accommodation

In Excerpt 6 Abel calls a Puerto Rican client to confirm that an installation was made at his home. This example illustrates both the use of code-switching and lexical items familiar to Puerto Rican Spanish speakers26:

Excerpt 6

26 The expressions used in this excerpt are found in other Spanish Caribbean dialects.
Baybo/

2 From Direct TV. (12.0) Mr. Martínez, cuénteme, (‘tell me’) que pasó.=le le hicieron la instalación. (4.0) Está (‘what happened did they do the installation. You’re’) poniendo ahora? (4.0)(És-)ta todo bien (right?) De (‘putting it now? Everything’s good) nada, pápa. You got somebody else to- yo le (‘You’re welcome, man.’) puedo ayudar hacer la instalación, let me know. (‘can help do the installation,’) (4.0) Yeah. Exactamente. Alright. (.) Alright, (‘Exactly.’) papá. Chévere. Ok, bye. (‘man. Cool.’)

First thing to notice is that he is calling a household where English is spoken. He pronounces Mr. Martínez’s first name, Bebo, using English pronunciation but changes to a more hispanized pronunciation when the listener on the other line did not understand who he referred to initially. Once Mr. Martínez is on the phone, he addresses him with the formal English title “Mr.” using Spanish pronunciation (line 2). Abel uses Spanish to confirm that the installation was made and that Mr. Martínez was satisfied with the service. But he briefly switches to English to ask for a referral (line 5). Using Gumperz’s (1982) terminology, Abel’s uses Spanish as the “we-code,” particularly given his use of the informal, familiar, “pápa” (lines 5 and 8) and “chévere”. Both of these enhance the familiarity with which Abel addresses Mr. Martínez because they are commonly used by Puerto Ricans. However, it is not easy to classify his use of English as a “they-code,” or an attempt to formalize the request. In line 6 he switches to English to close the request with “let me know,” an English closing frequently used in informal contexts. Other examples of informal English usage included “Yeah” (7), “Alright” (7) and “Ok” (8). His use of both languages is a cogent example of accommodation. Recognizing

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27 I base this interpretation on the fact that after a short pause, he repeated the name again.
that Mr. Martínez is a bilingual, Abel uses both languages. Even when it is clear that Abel is more comfortable in Spanish (see for example his switch back to Spanish in line 5). The two languages in combination achieve a greater level of familiarity than either do alone. Given his request for referrals, a positive evaluation by Mr. Martínez is exactly what he needs.

A special case of accommodation

I am including Excerpt 7 below even though it is not a straightforward act of ethnic self-presentation on Abel’s part. Rather, the behavior of Abel’s interlocutor (U) is of special interest. Their exchange took place while Abel waited for Marco to meet up with him, Abel talks casually with a Uruguayan man (U). U’s attempts to have Abel acknowledge his ethnicity, results in a brief accommodation on Abel’s part. This interaction does not fit neatly with some of the conditions set forth by speech accommodation theory (Giles, et. al. 1987) and my own extension of the concept. For example, it is not clear what benefit Abel gains from an accommodation and there are no evident power differences between the two, so there is little need to accommodate. Actually, Abel seems slightly disinterested in the conversation and it is U that initiates and encourages the conversation to move further.

Excerpt 7
1  U:  No tengo gana ni de hablar.  
   (‘I don’t even have the desire to talk’)  
2   A:  ((Laughs)). Porque no?  
   (‘Why not?’)  
3   (1.0)  
4  U:  (No tengo gana, no.)  
   (‘I don’t have the desire, no’)  
5   A:  Ah::::::.  
   (1.8)  
6   (0.8)  
7  U:  Hoy estoy si tomando café.  
   (‘Today I’m really drinking coffee’)  
8   (2.4)  
9  A:  ºAh:: yeah. º  
10   (2.4)  
11 U:  (Es-)ta malo? o (es-)ta bueno este (sitio).
‘Is it bad or is it good here, this place’

12 A: E:- si se da m.: (0.5) Nosotros vamos a otro la(-d)o a
(‘Yes, it’s ok. We go to another place to’)

13 trabajar. Nosotros vamos a Bro::nx, a Brooklyn por
(‘work. We go to the Bronx, to Brooklyn over’)

14 alla a trabajar. (1.3) Porque por aqui mucho- (2.3)
(‘there to work. Because around here there’s a lot’)

15 mucha compe- mucha- mu- mucha competencia.
(‘a lot of comp- a lot- a- a lot of competition’)

16 Mucho-
(‘A lot-’)

17 (11.7)

18 U: Es que Uruguay es mi pais pero es muy lejo.
(‘It’s that my country is Uruguay, but its very far’)

19 A: Si verdad.
(‘Yes, true’)

20 U: Yo vivia alla y conozco mucha gente.
(‘I lived over there and I know a lot of people’)

21 A: >Vo(-s) so(-s) uruguayo.<=
(‘You are Uruguayan?’)

22 U: (=
(‘I invite’)

23 A: (‘lombi’)

24 (1.8)

25 A: Vo(-s) so(-s) uruguayo?:
(‘You are Uruguayan?’)

26 U: ((Silent response))

27 A: Vos sos urugua/sh/o::? ((with a surprised tone))
(‘You are Uruguayan?’)

The above excerpt is of a very light conversation between two acquaintances with not much to talk about. Despite the fact that U starts out by saying that he is not in a talking mood (line 1), he makes repeated attempts to engage Abel in a conversation. In line 1 he makes a subtle turn-yielding cue, which Abel responds to appropriately with an interrogative (line 2). Abel’s question encourages U to elaborate, but he seems, at first blush, reluctant to speak, yielding once again to Abel. With a backchannel cue in line 5, Abel signals his wish to take no further turns.Contrary to his previous comments, in line 7, U demonstrates his interest in continuing the conversation. However, he once again provides a turn-yielding cue so open-
ended in its options that Abel opts for a minimal response. Recognizing that previous attempts to engage Abel in a conversation were not effective, U changes his technique and asks a direct, turn-yielding question about the selling location he chose that day. While this successfully encourages a more detailed response from Abel, a lapse in their conversation occurs (line 17) when neither speaker opts for to continue (in Abel’s case) or take over the conversation (in U’s case). Yet, U’s turn in line 8 makes it clear that he is indeed interested in continuing a conversation. Perhaps because of timidity he is insecure or unsure about how to best proceed and chooses a comment that seems obvious. However obvious (“yes, Uruguay is far way from New York”), U’s statement in line 18 is lucidly an invocation of his ethnic or national identification. Abel does not at first recognize it as such; perhaps during the conversation lapse in line 17 his mind had wandered to other thoughts and did not fully hear or register U’s invocation. In line 19 he gives an automatic response. But U seems to communicate his wish to elaborate on this topic. His interest piqued, Abel shows his willingness to play U at his subtle game28 in line 21. What’s interesting is that he chooses to confirm U’s ethnic invocation by switching to a hybrid between Rioplatense Spanish and his Ecuadorian Spanish. In his first “vo(-s) so(-s) Uruguayo (‘you are Uruguayan’),” he employs Rioplatense morphology but retains Ecuadorian phonology (word final /s/ deletion in both “vos” and “sos”) and intonation. U passes over the question, latching with an inaudible comment (line 22) and Abel quietly echos the comment (line 23). But Abel really is interested in confirming U’s original statement about his Uruguayan identification. Once again he asks U if he’s Uruguayan, this time employing Rioplatense intonation, and retaining Rioplatense morphology and Ecuadorian phonology. Finally, U confirms his original statement in line 18 with a silent response. To this, Abel reacts

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28 My use of the word “game” here does not suggest a manipulation, but rather refers to the game-like quality of all conversations.
enthusiastically with a reply that reads like, “Are you really?!” In line 27 his “vos sos Uruguayo” takes on all characteristics of Rioplatense Spanish, including the distinctive intonation and lengthening of vowels associated with the dialect\textsuperscript{29}. Adding authenticity to his pronunciation is the use of the fricative /ʃ/ (\textit{sh}) instead of /y/ in “uruguayo”.

In his understated transition from Ecuadorian to Rioplatense dialect, Abel demonstrates his sensitivity to inter-dialectal subtleties. Such subtleties are often learned through direct contact with a dialect, as was Abel’s case. In this way he communicates a mutual connection to some sort of Uruguayan association. In U’s case his association to Uruguay was through birth and time spent in the country. For Abel, the Uruguayan association came through his relationship with Uruguayan housemates. What is puzzling is U’s passive response (or lack or response) to Abel’s invitation to connect at this level. After Abel’s statement in line 27 there is a considerable gap before U initiates the conversation again using a whole other topic (see below). Perhaps U was sufficiently satisfied that a recognition of his identification as Uruguayan was made by Abel. Like many such invocations, the goal may have been positive distinctiveness. The intentions behind Abel’s use of Rioplatense are also not clear. Was he accommodating to U’s dialect, or invoking a distant connection to Uruguay, or both, or none? Clues from the structure of their conversation suggest that Abel was attempting to create a positive space for their interaction to continue based on a commonality. This is an encouragement that U seemed to require in other parts of the conversation. But like in other parts of their conversation, U’s hesitation to elaborate ended that exchange.

\textsuperscript{29} This intonational pattern originated and is most pronounced in Buenos Aires. Due to the prestige given porteño Spanish, the melodic qualities of this speech have spread beyond the city into other parts of Argentina and Uruguay (Lipski 2004).
U and Abel did not speak much for the remaining time that Abel waited for Marco to meet
with him. When Marco and other fellow Ecuadorian salesmen approach the spot where U and
Abel wait, U initiates the following exchange:

Excerpt 8
1  U:   Ahí (tiene) uno, o dos más.
   (‘There you have one, or two more’)
2  A:  No lo(-s) viste.
   (‘You see them’)
3  U:  (Se juntan )=
   (‘They get together’)
4  A:  Se juntan los naños ahí.
   (‘They get together, those Ecuadorians’)
5  A:  Se juntan=( (directs comment to approaching co-workers))
   (‘They get together’)
6  M:  =(      )= ((talking from a distance))
7  A:  =Se juntan los naños se jode todo.
   (‘When Ecuadorians get together, everything goes to hell’)

In line 3, U jokingly refers to the ethnic-based cliquiness of the approaching salesmen.

Excerpt 7 demonstrated that ethnic-based distinctions were salient for U. Hence his apparent
goal to have his ethnic identification recognized by Abel. Excerpt 8 provides further evidence of
this. In my view, U is guided by a model of inter-ethnic distinctiveness. Recall that one of the
characteristics of cultural models and other schemas is that they fill in what is left unsaid during
interactions. Line 1 of excerpt 8, (“Ahí (tiene) uno, o dos más,” “there you have one of two
more”) is not a mere observation. It’s a discursive trace of how he has interpreted the situation.
While an ethnic cooperation schema assumes similarity-based cooperation, the type I refer to
here orients a person towards points of difference. As such, U frames himself an outsider in the
scene.

Abel adopts U’s frame and refers to the group as “naños”. This often disparaging term for
Ecuadorians, is used in a familiar register by Abel, akin to the use of “nigga” by African
Americans. As Marco moves closer, Abel attempts to repeat this comment aloud so that the
group will hear. Finally in line 7, Abel fleshes out his original comment by jokingly suggesting that when Ecuadorians get together “everything goes to hell.” Abel’s use of irony, humor, and familiar register is a sleek way to metaphorically distance himself from (his) group in the presence of a non-Ecuadorian. Yet what he is really doing is identifying with them. In the preceding sections I illustrated how Abel disassociated from Ecuadorian identification. Next, I will provide two examples of when and how Abel typically affiliated with “his group.”

7.2.3 Somos de Ecuador (We are from Ecuador)

Abel is ambivalent towards his Ecuadorian heritage. At times he expressed strong sentiments of ethnic pride; as in the comment about Ecuadorian music described in the beginning of the analysis section. Because of the void he perceived between serranos and costeños he was especially apt to invoke guayaquileño identification. In cases where he interacted with other guayaquileños, he positively invoked this identification to lessen the distance between himself and his listener. In the following excerpt, for example, he subtly refers to A as an in-group member in line 13:

Excerpt 9
1 A: Toni! (0.8) Di::melo bro/d/er. (0.5) Que hay?  
   (‘Tell me, bro. What’s up?’)
2 (0.5)
3 ((Abel and Toni greet each other with a hug))
4 T: Todo bien.  
   (‘Everything’s good’)
5 A: Cuenta me. Que hay?  
   (‘Tell me. What’s up?’)
6 T: A: ya, aquí. (.) Todo el día:- (.) caliente, tu  
   (‘Here. Every day- hot, you’)
7 ve=dejame sentarme=  
   (‘know. Let me sit’)
8 A: =Si, no si- E:- este el clima de Guayaquil.  
   (‘Yes, yes- this is the climate of Guayaquil’)
9 T: (Tú te va ir a Guayaquil.)  
   (‘You’re going to Guayaquil’)
10 A: Este el [clima de Guayaquil.  
   (‘This is the climate of Guayaquil’)

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Often Abel expressed shame and an aversion to being categorized as an Ecuadorian. One thing is clear, when it serves him to invoke Ecuadorian identity, he does. In the next, during one of his sales trips to the Bronx he encounters an Ecuadorian woman:

Excerpt 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>E: Cuánto valen estas banderitas?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A: Son grati(s)=señora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>E: O, sí?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A: Sí. (Es-)tamo(-s) dando todo grati(-s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>E: O, sí?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>A: Claro, pue(-s)!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>E: A:::::!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>A: ((to someone on phone)) Diga, paso? No le piden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ya, haga el appointment con el para mañana. Tú le puede llamar al señor? Ok, yo lo llamo ahorita, ok?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ok, bye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>E: O:, son gratis pero si es que cogen esto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>A: ((now talking to W)) DirecTV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>E: O:, DirecTV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>A: Para que vea Ecuavisa de Ecuad/or.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>E: O:::::::</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>A: Para- por que vea como votamo(-s) lo(-s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | 17 | (‘So you can watch how we vote for the’)
|   | 18 | presidente(-s).                 |
E: A, sí. Yo ya se. ((laughs as she walks away))
(‘Oh, yes. I know.’)

When E approaches Abel’s display he is on the phone on hold. E is curious about the flags of several Latin American countries that Abel has on display. She specifically inspects the Ecuadorian flag, and Abel assumes that she is Ecuadorian. Likely he considered other aspects of her appearance and speech to support his assumption. In line 6 he uses the exclamatory construction “claro, pues” a colloquial form of “pues, claro (‘well, of course’). As a colloquialism, it may be specific to Ecuador but similar constructions (e.g. “orale, pues,” “bueno, pues,” “andale, pues”), exist in other Latin American countries. While E stands by, the person on the other line returns to the call with Abel. Abel does not want to miss the opportunity to talk further with E, who continues to stand by, and he quickly attends to the call (lines 8 – 10). Notice his repeated use of “Ok” in lines 10 and 11, which serve to expedite the conversation. Back with E, the older woman asks about the DirectTV display and he takes the opportunity to mention a channel he thinks will interest her: Ecuavisa (line 15). Throughout this interaction, no direct mention has been made about either of their ethnic identifications, but remains an undercurrent of the conversation. Abel attempts to make this connection more explicit in line 15, using “votamos (‘we vote’)” in a context similarly to “nos gusta (‘we like’)” in Excerpt 9 above. The first person plural form functions to identify both himself and E as Ecuadorian. Nevertheless, at this point E begins to walk away, apparently not interested in DirectTV, and delivers line 19 from some distance.

Less than five minutes later, E returns to the spot where Abel sells subscriptions. She cannot find a store she believed was on that block and approaches Abel once more to see if he
knows where it might be located. After approximately a one minute exchange about the location of the store and other buildings on that block, E initiates a topic change:

Excerpt 11

1 E: Ustedes por si acaso, son paisanos mio/h/, verdad? ('You by chance, are countrymen of mine, right?')
2 A: De: Guayaquil. ('From Guayaquil')
3 E: (A pue(-s).) Viva Guayaquil! ('Oh, well. Long live Guayaquil!')
4 A: Eso e/h/. ('That’s it')
5 E: Yo soy de Duran. [Pero ahora (estoy aqui.)] ('I’m from Duran. But now I’m here')
6 A: [De Duran? Si ](a (es-)[ta bien.]) ('From Duran? Yes, alright')
7 E: [Si,]si aja. ('Yes')
8 A: [°Claro que si.] ('Of course')
9 E: Somo/h/ de Ecuador. (We’re from Ecuador')
10 A: Si. (Es-)tamo(-s)- ('Yes. We are-')
11 E: A ya ya ya. ('right, right, right')
12 A: Eso lo que le explicaba a ella sobre el regionalismo ('That’s what I was explaining to her about the regionalism')
13 que hay en nue/h/tro pais. ('that exists in our country')
14 E: Aja. 15 A: Hay mucho regiona[lismo. ('There’s a lot of regionalism')
16 E: [Ay! no, mire yo hace do/s/ ('Oh, no, look, about two')
17 año(-s) fui a la sie/rr/a. Mis padres son de la sie/rr/a, ('years ago I went to the mountains. My parents are from the mountains,')
18 mi madre de la costa. Pero amo tanto a lo/s/ ('my mother is from the coast. But I love so much')
19 indicie...
‘(the little Indians from over there, like the rural people from here)"

21 porque de ahí? soy yo?
(‘because that’s where I’m from’)

22 (1.0)

23 Y mire, como me regocije, para mi fue una terapia
(And look, how I rejoiced, for me it was a beautiful’)

24 hermosa de ver a esto/s/ indiecitos en la/h/
(‘therapy to see those little Indians in the’)

25 montañas? Pero que bello, dije Dios mio, que lindo
(‘mountains. But how beautiful, I said my God, what’)

26 paisaje veo. Mira a esos indiecito(-s). De ahí soy
(‘a beautiful scenery I see. Look at those little Indians. That’s where I am’)

27 yo?! Porque mi padre era serrano. Por eso somo/s/
(‘from. Because my father was from the mountains. That’s why we are’)

28 mestizo(-s)?

29 A: Claro, somo(-s) mestizo(-s).
(‘Of course, we’re mestizo’)

30 E: Por eso somo(-s) mestizo(-s). No somo(-s) blanco,
(‘That’s why we’re mestizo. We are not white’)

31 ni negro, ni ( ), ni amarillo, ni chino. Somo/s/
(‘nor black, nor ( ), nor yellow, nor Chinese. We’re mestizo(-s).

32 (laughs)).

33 Y a toda honra.
(‘And with all honor’)

34 A: Sí, verdad?
(‘Yes, right?’)

35 E: Mi hijo. Tengo un hijo que me dice- que vino
(‘My son. I have a son that tells me- that came’)

36 chiquito de Ecuador de tre(-s) año(-s). Le digo,
(‘small from Ecuador at the age of three. I say to him, you’)

37 tiene/h/ que comer mucho mote, mucho deso,
(‘have to eat your corn, lots of that’)

38 porque lo/s/ indio/h/ allá ni cana/h/ tenian. Y-
(‘because the Indians over there don’t even have grey hair. And’)

39 [le dije ]
(‘I told him’)

40 A: [>De=verda(-d)?<
(‘Really?’)

41 E: Y- Sí es verdad. Y enton(-ce) me dice, Si yo naci
(‘And- Yes it’s true. And so he tells me, But I was born’)

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en Manhattan. [Yo le dije, Quèn te parió!  
(‘in Manhattan. I said to him, and who gave birth to you?!’)

A: [((laughs))]

E: Yo naci en Manhattan. Le digo y quien te parió.  
(‘I was born in Manhattan. I tell him and who gave birth to you?’)

[((W laughs))]

A: [Y ahora que tiene ya- que edad tiene él ahora?  
(‘And now what does he have- what is his age now?’)

E: No, ya tiene cuarenta- es por molestarme.  
(‘No, he’s already forty- it’s to tease me’)

Early in this exchange we can see the contrast between their two approaches. In line 1, E asks if Abel and I (who was sitting close by), are her “paisanos”. This inquiry into ethnic background does not suggest any inclination towards regional specificity (e.g. “Where in Ecuador are you from”); in fact it does not even specify Ecuador as the country in question. Instead, mutual recognition of ethnic background is implied, and only verbal confirmation of this in the most general sense is required to complete the request (e.g. “Yes” or “Yes, I’m from Ecuador”). As is customary for him, Abel replies immediately with “De Guayaquil (‘from Guayaquil”).’ E for her part enthusiastically acknowledges his city of origin (line 3). As her next turns suggest, this enthusiasm fits neatly with her general approach: inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. In line 5 she states her own city Duran, (also a coastal city), but adds “pero estoy aquí ahora (‘but I’m here now’).” In conjunction with her statement in line 10 (“Somos de Ecuador (‘we’re from Ecuador’),” this demonstrates her wish to focus on what they had in common: a) “we’re are both here now” and b) “we’re both from Ecuador”. It’s revealing that Abel raises the topic of regionalism, which, as he suggests in lines 13 and 14, he had raised as an issue in our own conversations. This statement at this moment illustrates just how salient this

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Consistent with his preference for not interrupting conversational flow and “keeping people happy” he also gives a response that does not exclude me from her inquiry. Rather than clarify that he was from Guayaquil and I was from Puerto Rico, he provided a response that allowed her to believe I was also from Ecuador.
dichotomy is for him. Diverging from Abel’s view, E overlaps with him in line 17 and delivers a touching description of her own encounter with her *indio* heritage. Her proud narratives in lines 17-28 and lines 30-32 lead Abel to make statements of agreement. However, the content and delivery of his statement does not match the enthusiasm expressed by E. Finally, the rest of the conversation confirms E’s romanticized views of *indios*. Abel’s question in line 41, on the other hand, reveals a gap in his knowledge about the *indio* lifestyle C describes. In this endearing exchange between Abel and E, Abel is confronted with that part of his background that causes him shame. Here, however, E encourages him to make a positive evaluation of *indio* heritage.

7.3 Discussion

Social Identity Theory asserts that group membership leads to self-categorization in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group. Turner and Tajfel (1986) showed that just categorizing themselves as group members led people to display in-group favoritism. Thus, individuals seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from others. However, as Abel’s case makes clear, this is not always true. Often, Abel sought positive differentiation from his putative in-group. Basing his actions and interpretations on the negative stereotypes about *serranos* or *indios*, he preferred a regional category (*guayaquileño*). In some cases, he identified with the Colombian category. And he did so in a way that did not over-commit him to Colombian identification: by keeping silent or my invoking cognitive representations that did some of the talking for him (recall the map where Guayaquil was near Colombia).

Abel differed from Roberto in that he did not have ambiguous physical features that might have allowed him greater control over his ethnic self-presentation. I believe Abel valued this sort of control, at the very least, because it smoothened sales transactions. He quite explicitly admitted the instrumental / material interests he had in ethnic identification. To compensate for
this he frequently accommodated or *adequated* (applying Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) term), to non-Ecuadorians. Abel used whatever linguistic resources were available to him. But again, unlike Roberto, he lacked the proficiency in English that might have afforded him more flexibility. Furthermore, his phenotypic features further eliminated certain ethnic options (see Waters 1990). Because of the negative stereotypes shared in Ecuador (and throughout Latin American) about *indios*, his options to use this identification as an instrumental tool are considerably limited.

His conversation with E in Excerpt 11 suggests that *indio* identification is an ambivalent area for him. It is not that Abel and E do not share the *serrano* / *costeño* cultural model so frequently expressed by Abel and other Ecuadorians I encountered. E’s romanticized descriptions of the “*indiecitos en las montañas* (‘Indians in the mountains’) and her characterization of them as “closer to nature” are consistent with the model. This is suggestive of the point made by Quinn and Holland (1987: 12): “Socialization experiences may differ sharply in the degree to which they endow a given cultural model with directive force for an individual.” While I cannot assume much about E’s background, known points about Abel’s life history are clear. Attributing, certain obstacles and mistreatment to his *indio* heritage, Abel tends to view *indio* in a negative light. Slotted into the model, this information guides Abel’s interpretations and behavior differently from E.

### 7.4 Conclusion

Abel’s case highlights key points about ethnic identification. While Abel expressed some symbolic attachment (e.g. music, Ecuador’s weather) to his Ecuadorian heritage, these were most salient in his interactions with other Ecuadorians. Although his identification as Ecuadorian likely helped him land the job as a DirectTV salesman, most prominent was a tendency to disassociate from the Ecuadorian category. But to say that he disassociated from the Ecuadorian
category should not be taken to mean that he rejected his heritage or possessed some
dysfunctional psychological complex. He was firm in his insistence to control how others
treated him as best he could. But he also portrayed earnest moments of ethnic pride. Abel’s
example undergirds a central argument of this research: that ethnic identification (instrumental)
often works independently of ethnic self-understanding (non-instrumental).
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

8.0 Introduction

This concluding chapter summarizes findings of my research. The implications of these findings for theory and practice are also discussed. I conclude this thesis by suggesting directions for future research.

The guiding question was: under what conditions do New York City Latinos switch their ethnic identification. To answer this question, I approached the research with five guiding objectives: 1) to document the incidence of multiple ethnic identifications among research participants; 2) to determine the contexts under which people use ethnic identifications; 3) to determine the resources acquired by using various ethnic identifications; 4) to determine behaviors involved in switching; and 5) to identify some basic rules for invoking one ethnic identification over another. These objectives required a methodologically rich design, incorporating ethnographic, survey, linguistic, and discourse analytic techniques.

8.1 Findings

Objective 1: to document the incidence of multiple ethnic identifications among research participants. This research documents what may become a prevailing trend in America: using multiple ethnic identifications. In chapter 1 I cited findings from the US Census suggesting that multiple race and ethnicity reporting is common among the youngest members of the American population. Increases in reporting multiple race/ethnic categories reflect a general trend over the past 30 years towards ethnic and racial diversity in the US. This trend has been spurred by immigration, inter-ethnic relationships, and global communication. Undoubtedly, government structuring of economic and political opportunities along ethnic and racial lines has also encouraged the adoption and use of multiple categories of identification. Responding to the unique problems of counting a diverse population, in 1993 the White House Office of
Management and Budget changed federal regulation to allow multiple race / ethnicity reporting in the US Census. My work substantiates that in people’s daily interactions, as in socio-demographic questionnaires, multiple categories are necessary and used to navigate a complex and diverse ethnic landscape. Some, like Abel and Roberto, have quite broad ethnic identification repertoires.

From my conversations with hundreds of Latinos in New York, and in-depth work with a select few, I find that among New York Latinos, multiple ethnic identifications are common and for the most part, uncontroversial. All of the participants I interviewed or observed, including Roberto and Abel, reported using more than one label to identify themselves to others. Most common is the use of “Latino” along with a specific national label. These two ethnic options comprise the standard toolkit for ethnic identification among New York Latinos. Both the national and pan-ethnic labels are expressed situationally, but Latino identification functions as a base or a canvas onto which further detail is added as need be. For example, in Roberto’s interaction with James, shared Latino ethnicity was assumed early on. Uncertain about each others’ ethnicity, both adopted a strategy that opened up interactional possibilities. Roberto kept it open by switching between multiple frames of reference, using Spanish as an anchor to Latino identification. James, who code-switched very little, opted for the more inclusive Latino identification throughout, making no references to a specific ethnic or national group. Abel, for his part, identified strongly with other Latinos, having roomed and worked with men from several Latin American countries. Furthermore, his wife, Monica, is Mexican. Abel adopted elements of other Spanish dialects, namely Colombian and Rioplatense Spanish, and to some extent, Caribbean Spanish. He used these dialects with Colombians, Uruguayans, Argentineans, and Puerto Ricans, as a way to lessen any communicative or cultural distance. In general, both Roberto and Abel employed Latino identification when encountering other Latinos whose
national origins were unknown. Compared to the nationality-based ethnic categories, inclusion in the Latino label is somewhat lax, and characteristically inclusive. Often, ascription of Latino identification by person A onto person B is based on surface assessments of person B’s appearance or stereotyped interpretations of behavior. A person’s selection of Latino identification for himself is encouraged by frequent interaction with Latinos from throughout Latin America, as was the case with Abel and other participants in this study.

In contexts where Latino identification is in some way obvious or implicit, and specificity required, national labels like “Venezuelan” and “Ecuadorian” are used. The use of these labels represents a commitment to one or few categories. Therefore, those wishing ethnic flexibility will tend to avoid using a specific label. Roberto’s case illustrates this. Banking on the ambiguity of his physical appearance, he rarely uses Venezuelan identification with non-Venezuelans unless asked directly. Venezuelan identification and cognate behaviors are employed in his interactions with other Venezuelans. Similarly, Abel used “ecuatoriano” with other Ecuadorians, or when interacting with others on a long-term basis. In fleeting encounters, he admitted to using whichever identification was most advantageous, especially “colombiano”.

Further ethnic specificity, as with Abel’s “guayaquileño,” serves at least two purposes. One is to package information about socio-economic background, cultural preferences, disposition, and/or status, for presentation to compatriots. This information could serve to positively differentiate oneself from others, or as a basis for further interactions and mutual support. Another function of a specific ethnic or regional label is to disassociate from a more inclusive, negatively evaluated category. It’s the “yes, but” move in ethnic self-presentation: “Yes, I’m Ecuadorian, but from Guayaquil”. This was clearly evinced by Abel. Wishing to

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31 In at least one case not analyzed here, Roberto used a more Venezuelan presentation (dialectally) when talking to a South American (non-Venezuelan) man. This led to the only instance I recorded in which someone correctly identified him as Venezuelan.
distance himself from negative associations made of Ecuadorians and *indios*, he used *guayaquileño* as a way to draw attention from negative generalizations, taking more control over how others viewed and categorized him.

Objective 2: to determine the contexts under which people use ethnic identifications. In Chapter 4 I included an excerpt from field notes I took during my fieldwork in Astoria, Queens. The notes described an urban environment in which ethnicity was both ubiquitous (as with the numerous stores selling targeted ethnic goods) yet, on the surface, a non-issue. Similarly, for the participants in this study, in some contexts ethnicity guided interactions and in others it was irrelevant. Contexts in which ethnicity was made relevant by participants and their interlocutors included sales encounters, social gatherings dominated by one or another ethnic group, and in scenarios where a person wished to make themselves ethnically distinct. In some cases, ethnicity was mostly unimportant to an interaction but was introduced early on as a way to understand how to proceed with an exchange or to help a conversation proceed smoothly. From my observations in New York City I gather that ethnicity has saturated so many dimensions of daily life that it is a taken for granted backdrop. Based on evidence from Roberto’s and Abel’s cases, and other participants, my research suggests that ethnicity is most relevant when crucial resources and opportunities are at stake. Only after I completed the analysis for both participants did I fully realize the parallels in Roberto and Abel’s experiences. The life histories of both men revealed significant periods of economic hardship, childhood traumas, legal troubles, and emotional instabilities. Basing my selection *only* on the frequency of switching, I did not intend for such experiences to be the only view into Latino realities. Yet, these honest stories may reveal something unique about EI switching. Perhaps the periods of hardship and scarcity experienced by these men encouraged their ethnic and linguistic flexibility as a survival tool.
An important distinction in the matter of context and ethnic identification is whether the context entails a long-term or short-term encounter. Short-term encounters, ones in which actors are unlikely to come in contact again, allow more possibilities for ethnic self-presentation. Indeed, risky ventures like passing are most effective in contexts where exposure or challenges are improbable. Recall Abel’s claim to being Colombian to a Puerto Rican potential client. Abel had never met the Puerto Rican man before and their relationship was limited to a short sales exchange. Roberto, who felt at home with Puerto Rican identification, could easily back up a Puerto Rican claim; mainly, through his use of Puerto Rican dialect and knowledge about the island and Puerto Rican culture. Thus, Roberto reported letting people assume he was Puerto Rican (or Nuyorican) when he traveled to Puerto Rico with his wife. To help people’s interpretations along (people he encountered in passing), he highlighted Puerto Rican dialect in his speech. This points to another helpful feature of short term encounters: people can create more ethnic possibilities for themselves by letting others’ assumptions take the lead. At the intersections of context, physical appearance, and behavior, a number of assumptions can be made. As I said in Chapter 1, aspects of my appearance that led Chasidic women to assume I was also Jewish would have been interpreted differently had I been in a mosque. Along the same lines, Roberto, who was often mistaken for Cuban or Italian because of his appearance and aspects of his speech, did not often contradict these assumptions. Instead, like Abel, he subtly went along with people’s presuppositions. Both Roberto and Abel have unsteady nationalistic attachments to their places of origins. Still, they use these affiliations to mobilize a number of economic and practical resources (e.g. jobs, sales, transportation).

Ethnic identification in long-term encounters or relationships tended to conform to the normative influences of relationship histories, habit, and group dynamics. Roberto was consistent in his language use and expressions of his ethnicity when with his wife. In fact,
ethnicity was not an explicit factor driving their interactions. That being said, their initial relationship was enhanced by Roberto’s knowledge of Puerto Rican culture and language, and his attraction to Puerto Rican women. Abel worked daily with a group of Ecuadorian salesmen and women. Thus, he was free to use Ecuadorian dialect and often engaged in banter steeped in references to Ecuadorian politics, people, and places (often I was lost in these conversations). In Abel’s case, it was during time spent with other Ecuadorians that he expressed a positive evaluation of and connection to Ecuadorian identification.

The cognitive perspective employed in this research revealed a broad schema of ethnic cooperation which guides both long-term and short-term interactions. This schema served to set interactive (and instrumental) goals that hinged on the presupposition that common ethnic identification is one condition of cooperation.

Objective 3: to determine the resources acquired by using various ethnic identifications. In the previous discussion on the contexts of ethnic identification I named some of the resources acquired by participants. I should note that in focusing on Roberto and Abel, this research has paid particular attention to the use of ethnicity in workplace or commercial encounters. Thus, the resources documented here are mostly economic. These include forging business contacts and selling and buying products/services. Interviews with Roberto revealed that ethnic flexibility also helped him avoid trouble in thorny situations (e.g. buying drugs). Abel shared that using labels other than “Ecuadorian” helped him control how others categorized and treated him. Contingent uses of ethnicity described by other participants resulted in better service or less scrutiny when entering the country from a trip abroad.

Following with the distinction outlined above between short- and long-term exchanges, in long-term relationships, (shared) ethnicity was a way to strengthen and maintain already existing bonds. These bonds were key components of participants’ social support networks. For Abel,
his relationship with Marco was decisive for his financial stability. When they were originally introduced by a mutual acquaintance, the introduction was framed as one Ecuadorian (Marco) helping another (Abel). Not only were they both from Ecuador, but they were also *guayaquileños*. This fact was significant for Abel and Marco. They each described their relationship comfortable and familiar. Both felt that their chemistry was due to their shared background. In Roberto’s case, Venezuelan identification provided a basis from which his relationship with Omar emerged, making mutual support possible.

My research adds to the literature on ethnic networks, which has found that fruitful business arrangements emerge from ethnically homogenous interactions (Bonacich 1973; Patterson 1975; Sanders & Nee 1987; Ooka & Wellman 2003). My own contribution is nuanced in two respects. First, while true that shared ethnicity is a strong basis for business cooperation, the literature tends to focus on the advantages of *one* shared ethnicity. Both Roberto and Abel demonstrated ways in which multiple ethnic identifications (albeit within the Latino pan-ethnicity) are adapted to forge varied ethnic ties. How multi-ethnic people build economic or political networks corresponding to each of their identifications is an under-studied area. This research provides some insights about how such a differentiated mobilization of resources works. It is clear, for example, that bilingualism and bi-dialectism are crucial tools for such mobilizing.

Second, the literature on economic ethnic networks has also focused on the established and lasting connections that sustain ethnic enclaves. A web of weaker, but nonetheless effective, inter-ethnic ties is formed by the types of multi-ethnic negotiations Roberto and Abel made everyday. Immigrant New York, with all of its well-established ethnic enclaves, also thrives from the fleeting cross-ethnic encounters. Neighborhoods like Astoria and Jackson Heights / Corona in Queens are good examples of immigrant communities that have been transformed by the daily, small, social and economic exchanges of its diverse people.
Objective 4: to determine behaviors involved in switching. Previous research on ethnic identity switching did not detail the process of switching in daily life. Many of these studies were particularly concerned with group-wide shifts in identification (cf. Barth 1969; Haaland 1969; Patterson 1975; Nagel 1994). Of the ones that focused on individual switching, self-reports (Kaufert 1977, Waters 1994), surveys (Eschbach and Gomez 1998), and field notes (Nagata 1974) were used to document switches. In this study I have taken a mixed-method approach to EI switching. A key strength of the research is the use of digital audio recording to capture instances of switching. These recordings have revealed that switching is accomplished through a range of linguistic feats. The data presented here consistently show that linguistic flexibility opens up possibilities for ethnic self-presentation. To varying degrees, both Roberto and Abel had access to two languages and multiple dialects. As a result, code-switching (including dialect switching), style shifting, and lexical insertions were employed as ways to varyingly align themselves to interlocutors.

Besides these linguistic acts, Roberto’s and Abel’s discursive work also lent support to their switching. As mentioned above, in some cases, Roberto and Abel straightforwardly used ethnic labels to identify themselves to others. Often, switching was achieved through references that signaled their (in-group) knowledge of categories like Puerto Rican, Colombian or African American (c.f. Plotnicov and Silverman (1978) on ethnic signaling). Making references to in-group knowledge was a subtle means of negotiating multiple ethnicities. It was a way to imply affiliation without necessarily committing to an identification. In this way, ethnically flexible people like Abel and Roberto declare “I am like_________” rather than “I am________.”

Objective 5: to identify some basic rules for invoking one ethnic identification over another. While further data is needed to arrive at reliable rules (see Directions for Future Research section below), I’d like to revisit the rubric mentioned in Chapter 1: image, context,
knowledge, and performance. I argue that ethnic options are either constrained or facilitated by each of these dimensions and that they work in combination to direct choices.

As I stated in Chapter 1, *image* includes both self-image (perception of ourselves) and outward image (physical and material aspects of ourselves that influence the perception of others). In my visit to the Chasidic temple described in Chapter 1, I never perceived myself as “looking Jewish” and therefore I had no expectation that I could blend in or pass. Roberto’s outward image was both ambiguous and positively evaluated (in the sense that white phenotype has been privileged in society). This afforded him the option to present himself as a white American, Cuban, Puerto Rican, or Venezuelan. Aspects of Abel’s looks that are distinctly *indio* affords him less flexibility. Still, he benefited from the fact that mestizo heritage is common throughout Latin America. At times he disassociated from Ecuadorian categorization by invoking other nationalities (e.g. Colombian).

*Context* is a broad dimension spanning multiple (hierarchical) levels. At the micro-level of interaction, it includes social setting and attributes of others in the social setting (see *domain* (Fishman 1972)). Roberto’s conversation with James took place in a store where James was manager. His exchange with Omar took place on the street, where Roberto met him to borrow his van. All of Abel’s conversations analyzed here, took place as he worked to sell DirectTV subscriptions. Context tends to come “prepackaged” with a set of interactional rules that encourage certain behaviors while discouraging others. Wider socio-historical conditions can limit identification (e.g. the one drop rule of the Jim Crow era) and therefore figure into the definition of context.

Using Goodenough’s (1957: 167) definition, the sort of *knowledge* I refer to is “whatever it is one has to know…in order to operate in a manner acceptable to” others. Related concepts include *communicative competence* (Gumperz 1972) and *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). Knowledge
of the rules governing particular contexts is necessary for determining the appropriateness of an identification. Furthermore, knowledge (represented by schemas, models, and other knowledge structures) guides interpretations and makes it possible to “pick up on” subtle cues. Knowledge and *performance* are closely linked. Thus, successful performance is grounded in knowledge.

### 8.2 Implications and Applications

In this research I set out to examine an important, but under-studied phenomenon: people switching their ethnic identification across multiple spheres of interaction. My review of the literature suggests that this is the only study to have analyzed EI switching from so many different angles: linguistic, ethnographic, through social network analysis and surveys. Yet, the topic of EI switching is not merely an intellectual or methodological exercise. I believe that the growing diversity of our cities and countries foretells a future where multi-ethnicity will be the order of the day. There is a certain empowerment that comes from knowledge about our ethnic flexibility. However, we must also be conscious that ethnic options are still constrained for many: those with limited English proficiency, those with dark skin, and the socially isolated. All in all, this research makes clear that important issues like resource distribution, ethnic conflict, or social and political movements cannot be understood in terms of neatly packaged identities in competition.

In the 18 months of research I worked closely with eleven Latino men and women and spoke candidly with more than two hundred other Latinos who represented a range of backgrounds and experiences. Many of those who shared their experiences have been in the US for most of their lives and have developed an awareness of their Latino ethnicity as potentially politically and economically advantageous. They view Latino identification as a commodity to be highlighted when applying for work or developing new relationships. Then there were those—particularly the more recent migrants—who have little choice over their ethnic self-
presentation. This was often the consequence of limited English language skills or undocumented immigrant status.

My research has shown that there is no one-to-one relationship between biographical ethnicity and the use of ethnic markers. Often, flexible identification spans multiple levels of inclusiveness (e.g. Latino, Ecuadorian, serrano, Quechua). Intriguingly, these repertoires also cross seemingly distinct boundaries (e.g. American, Ecuadorian, Colombian). Ethnic markers, particularly language-related ones, are manipulated in a number of creative ways by members and non-members alike, pushing the limits of what constitutes ethnic group membership and challenging notions of ethnic authenticity. People tended to switch ethnic identifications by changing to or emphasizing a certain language or dialect (including accents), or simply by keeping quiet and letting others’ assumptions take the lead. The reasons for switching ranged from the relatively minor (getting free drinks), to the quotidian (connecting with friends or landing better dates), to the vital (avoiding problems with immigration, making a sale, or in a job interview). When unpacked, these subtle and routine acts of flexibility reveal a number of compelling features about ethnicity. Ethnicity cannot be said to be who a person is, but rather a way of seeing (Brubaker, 2004) and doing.

Additionally, by analyzing which ethnicities are invoked and for what purposes, as this research has done, divisions within the Latino pan-ethnic group (or even within just one national group) are revealed. For example, it was not uncommon to observe or hear about people who feigned Puerto Rican or Colombian ethnicity because these are groups with a measure of recognizability and respectability in New York City’s ethnic landscape. However, no one ever feigned Mexican identity. Some argue that the differences between various Latino subgroups are too significant for Latinos to be grouped together for analysis or policy treatment. In fact, this makes Latinos an ideal group for examining the salience and negotiation of multiple ethnic
identities, including the pan-ethnic Latino identity. Ethnographic evidence from this study shows that the resonance of Latino pan-ethnicity differs from context to context and is mediated by influences of generation, immigrant status, and class. With several issues related to Latinos playing prominently in the national stage (e.g. immigration legislation and bilingualism), my research documents intimately how these themes play out in people’s everyday lives.

Finally, by elaborating ethnographically how people choose among multiple ethnic identities in day-to-day contexts, the research informs how and why people decide what to say when they are confronted by questions about ethnicity in the US Census. Understanding what is captured by these categories is important given the reliance on these categories for prioritizing needs and distributing resources. Many respondents in this study, particularly second and third generation Latinos, perceived the “Hispanic” label to be relevant only within the context of the socio-demographic survey. Within this context, the “Hispanic” response is “automatic” and limited in its ability to capture meaningful, everyday realities. Even the more specific nationality-based labels are misleading, as the data from participants in this study revealed. Therefore, I argue that social scientist would be better served by relinquishing their reliance on self-reported accounts of ethnic identification. Abel’s case illustrates how conflicting these self-reported internal states can be. Having developed negative associations of his indio heritage, he altered his behavior to disassociate during interactions. To be sure, there are strong emotional and psycho-social attachments to identifying with a group. Yet in everyday lived experience, people like Abel and Roberto behave according to what is most advantageous for them. The sum of these actions translates to predictable patterns of behavior that may not correlate with emotional or symbolic attachments.

Alternatives based on social interaction measures (based on languages spoken and / or social networks) are promising. For example, social networks may serve as proxies for ethnic
identification because they often reflect the major ethnic influences on people’s daily life and interactions. A person’s social network that is heavily represented by one ethnicity will exert unique pressures on that person to identify according to the dominant ethnicity. Furthermore, people with ethnically heterogeneous social networks have more opportunity (and need) to learn and use multiple ethnic identifications. As normative influences on behavior, networks may be more reliable predictors of social, economic, and health outcomes than the context-bound labels used in socio-demographic questionnaires.

8.3 Directions for Future Research

Having analyzed here but a fraction of the data collected, a number of questions remain unanswered. This dissertation represents the first step in research program tasked with the in-depth study of multi-ethnicity and the negotiation of these in daily life. The central concern of this agenda is to understand the consequences of ethnic flexibility for economic livelihood, political organizing, and health. Below I outline at least three areas that need further attention: 1) the relationship between social network structure and composition and EI switching; 2) consideration of factors that limit ethnic flexibility, including monolingualism and ascription by others; 3) analysis of the cognitive structures underlying ethnicity.

Two key pieces of data yet to be analyzed are the results of the social network surveys and the vignette surveys. The vignette surveys asked ethnic identification questions about scenarios not encountered in the ethnographic phase of the research. These include identification in a job interview, during community protests, and in international airports. Thus, the results from the vignettes surveys will be used to determine the rules for choosing one identification over another. Additionally, these surveys will be analyzed to determine the reported frequency of EI switching and how a number of factors are related to switching. Chief among the factors to be analyzed are social network composition and structure. As I have already argued, network
diversity encourages the development of multiple ethnic identifications. Abel and Roberto did have heterogeneous networks but clearly no conclusive inferences can be made about the relationship between this and their tendency to switch. My analysis of the vignette and social network surveys may achieve this end statistically.

I have argued that linguistic flexibility is crucial to ethnic self-presentation. But what about monolingual or monodialectal people? Do they switch? How? Some of the participants in this study were almost exclusively English-dominant speakers. The broader question of why and how people switch would benefit from examining the behavior of those who fall at the other end of the spectrum; those who unlike Abel and Roberto tend to use one, primary identification. Abel’s behavior provides one clue about what switching may look like for monolinguals with fixed identifications. He reported “going along with” the ascriptions of others. It was common to hear participants say that if people wanted to think that they were X identification, then they were not going to challenge them. This is another dimension to ethnic identification that needs to be further explored. For example, one participant reported that he, despite considering himself to be Puerto Rican, identified as Black. His reasoning for this was that if that’s the way people will see and treat him it does not make sense to counter their assumptions. Therefore, it’s likely that ascribed identification plays an important role in self-identification.

Finally, people’s discourse on why they invoke this or that ethnicity highlighted two key themes. First, ethnic stereotypes framed their responses to a number of my interview questions. Participants tended to describe and interpret the attributes and behaviors of others in essentialized, generalized ways. The Portuguese are merciless exploiters, blacks don’t like whites, whites don’t want anything to do with blacks, Dominicans are dark, Ecuadorians are looked down on, Puerto Ricans don’t like Mexicans, gay Mexicans are undesirable, etc. These associations guided their own ethnic self-presentation. For some it meant disassociating from
stereotypes for others it meant activating stereotypes or associations to their advantage. In future research I will explore more explicitly how these cognitive processes can help further untangle our understandings of ethnicity.
APPENDIX A
PHASE 1 LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW

I. Childhood:

1. Where were you born?
2. Where were your parents born?
3. What did your parents do for a living when you were a child?
4. Do you have siblings?
5. How would you describe your relationship with your parents?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your siblings?
7. Did you grow up with extended family near to you? Where did your relatives live when you were growing up?
8. Describe the neighborhood where you grew up.
9. Describe the first time you had an awareness of your ethnicity or race?
10. What was your earliest experience with race?
11. What was your earliest experience with ethnicity?
12. What did your parents teach you about race or ethnicity?
13. Describe one or two family traditions you enjoyed as a child?
14. What were your favorite pastimes as a child?
15. Did you attend church as a child?
16. Describe your school?
17. Was your school racially or ethnically diverse?
18. Were your school friends from the same or different ethnic background as you?
19. What did you learn in school about people from different national, racial or ethnic backgrounds?
20. Did you ever experience any racial or ethnic discrimination as a child?
21. What were some of your most memorable moments as a child?

II. Adolescence and Early Adulthood:

1. When did you have your first job?
2. Describe your first jobs?
3. Was your workplace ethnically or racially diverse?
4. Did you spend time with your co-workers outside of work?
5. Did your work provide the opportunity to meet people from a different racial or ethnic background than you?
6. What were your early career or occupational goals?
7. Did you go to college? If yes, where did you go? What did you study?
8. Did you join any clubs or organizations in college or elsewhere?
9. Did you attend religious services as a teenager or young adult?
10. What was your favorite music when you were a teenager?
11. Who did you look up to as a teenager or young adult?
12. What was your favorite pastime?
13. What were some of your most memorable moments as a teenager or young adult?
14. When did you start dating?
15. Did you date anyone from a different racial or ethnic background as you?
16. How did your parents or family feel about this?
17. What were some experiences you had with race or ethnicity at this time in your life?
18. Did you have friends who were from a different national, racial, or ethnic background as you?
19. Were you interested in learning more about your family’s background as a young adult? If so, what kinds of things did you do to learn more about your family’s heritage?
20. Try to recall some of the earliest times when someone asked you where you were from or what your ethnicity was. What did you tell them?
21. Explain why you gave this response.
22. Did you experience any racial or ethnic discrimination as a young adult?

III. Present:

1. For immigrants: Describe your immigration experience. Why did you migrate? How did you (and/or your family) decide where to migrate to?
2. How were you treated when you arrived in this country?
3. What were some of your most negative immigration experiences?
4. What were some of your most positive immigration experiences?
5. Did you know English? If not, how long did it take you to learn?
6. Do you have family back home?
7. How often do you keep in contact with them?
8. How often do you return home to visit?
9. What do you currently do for a living?
10. How long have you had this job?
11. Describe your workplace.
12. Do you have co-workers who are from the same ethnic background as you? Different?
13. Are you married? Have you ever been married? Are you in a long-term relationship?
14. How / where did you meet your spouse / ex- / partner?
15. What is your partner’s ethnic background?
16. How is your relationship to your partner’s family?
17. How often do you spend time with your partner’s family?
18. Do you have children?
19. What do you teach your children about race or ethnicity?
20. How would you describe your children’s race or ethnicity?
21. Describe one or two family traditions you enjoy now?
22. Describe your neighborhood?
23. Describe the meals you serve most regularly?
24. Where / how did you learn to prepare these meals?
25. When people ask you where you are from or what your ethnicity is, what do you tell them?
26. Do you have friends who are from a different national, racial, or ethnic background than you?
27. Have you traveled?
28. Where did you go?
29. Describe your experiences meeting people abroad.
30. Do you belong to any community organizations? Describe this organization?
31. Do you attend religious services?
32. Do you attend ethnically oriented events?
33. Do you speak Spanish in your household? English?
34. Have you had any experiences with racial or ethnic discrimination?
35. Do you teach your children your native language?
36. What do you like the most about your ethnic or cultural heritage?
37. What do you like least about your ethnic or cultural heritage?
38. Are there people from certain ethnic or racial backgrounds that you have no or little contact with? Why do you think this is so?
39. Have you ever been involved in demonstrations or protests? Describe some of these experiences.
APPENDIX B
PHASE 1 SOCIAL NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Ego Questions (questions about respondent):

1. How would you describe your ethnicity?
2. How would you describe your race?

II. Name Generator:

Please list the name of 45 people that you know. Knowing means that you know the person by face and name, that you could contact them if you had to and that you have had some contact in the last two years. Please list the name of those you are closest to first then continue with the names of those you are less close to.

III. Alter Questions (questions about network members):

1. What is this person’s gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male
2. What is this person’s nationality?
   a. American
   b. Argentinean
   c. Bolivian
   d. Brazilian
   e. Chilean
   f. Colombian
   g. Costa Rican
   h. Cuban
   i. Dominican
   j. Ecuadorian
   k. Guatemalan
   l. Honduran
   m. Mexican
   n. Nicaraguan
   o. Panamanian
   p. Paraguayan
   q. Peruvian
   r. Puerto Rican
   s. Salvadorian
   t. Uruguayan
   u. Venezuelan
   v. Other
3. How would you describe this person’s nationality?
4. What is this person’s race?
   a. Black or African American
   b. Asian or Pacific Islander
c. Native American or Alaskan Native
d. Mixed-Race
e. Other

5. How would you describe this person’s race?
6. Please rate on a scale from one to five your closeness with this person?
   a. 5 = Extremely Close
   b. 4 = Very Close
   c. 3 = Close
   d. 2 = Minimally Close
   e. 1 = Not At All Close

IV. Alter Pair Question (relationship between network members):

1. What is the likelihood that person A and person B would talk to each other if you were not around?
APPENDIX C

PHASE 2 SOCIAL NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE (ALTER QUESTIONS)

Sex - ¿Cuál es su sexo?

Age - ¿Cuál es su edad (en años)?

RACE - ¿Qué categoría piensa que describe mejor el color de su piel?

Racm - ¿Qué tan a menudo a pasado por experiencias racistas en los Estados Unidos?

Rdes - Describa un ejemplo.

Born - ¿En qué país nació?

Relg - ¿Cual respuesta que mejor describe su religión?

Reas - ¿Cual respuesta que mejor describe su razon para venir a los Estados Unidos?

Dad - ¿Dónde nació su padre?

Mom - ¿Dónde nació su madre?

Marr - ¿Cuál es su estado civil?

Spous - ¿Dónde nació su esposo/a o pareja?

Child - ¿Cuántos hijos tiene?

Cyear - ¿En qué año (YYYY) nació su primer hijo/a?

Cborn - ¿Cuántos de sus hijos nacieron en este país?

Cmom - Incluyéndole a Ud. ¿cuántos hijos/as tuvo su madre?

Emp - ¿Es Ud. asalariado a tiempo completo, a tiempo parcial, está parado, jubilado?
Pep - Tiene su situación regularizada en los Estados Unidos ("papeles")?

WTYP - ¿Qué tipo de trabajo hace?

Edu - ¿Qué categoría describe mejor su nivel de estudios?

Fmig - ¿En qué año (YYYY) vino por primera vez a los Estados Unidos?

Lvis - ¿En qué año (YYYY) visitó por última vez a la República Dominicana?

TVIS - ¿Cuántas veces en los dos últimos años ha visitado a la República Dominicana?

VEU - Ha vivido en otros países?

Span - Escoga por favor la respuesta más adecuada a su caso: Yo hablo español...

Nlan - Yo hablo inglés...

Spen - Me gusta hablar en español...

Sass - Me asocio con americanos...

Hoss - Me asocio con dominicanos...

Hmus - Me gusta la música dominicana (música en idioma español).

Smus - Me gusta la música de idioma inglés...

Htv - Me gusta ver programas en la televisión que sean en Espanol...

Stv - Me gusta ver programas en la televisión que sean en Ingles...

Smov - Me gustan las películas en inglés...

Hmov - Me gustan las películas en Español...

Nrea - Me gusta leer (por ejemplo libros) en español...

Rspa - Me gusta leer (por ejemplo libros) en inglés...

Wnet - Escribo (por ejemplo cartas) en español...

Wspa - Escribo (por ejemplo cartas) en inglés...

Tspa - Piensó en inglés...

Tnat - Piensó en español...

Chom - Mi contacto con la República Dominicana ha sido...

Casa - Mi contacto con los Estados Unidos ha sido...

Fid - Mi madre se identifica (o se identificaba) como dominicana...

Mid - Mi madre se identifica (o se identificaba) como dominicana...

fgro - Me amigos de la infancia son de origen dominicano...

Fapa - Mis amigos/as de la infancia son de origen americano...

Hcoo - Mi familia cocina comidas dominicanas...

Napa - Mis amigos/as recientes son americanos/as...
Phom - Mis amigos(as) recientes son dominicanos/as...

Icom - Me gusta identificarme como americano...

Ieth - Me gusta identificarme como dominicano-americano/a...

Ispa - Me gusta identificar como dominicano...

wor 1 - Escoja por favor tres palabras o frases que mejor describan su identidad. Escriba

wor 2 - Por favor describa la segunda palabra o frase que mejor describa su identidad

wor 3 - Por favor escriba la tercera palabra o frase que mejor describa su identidad

Chng - ¿Diría que han cambiado su sentimiento de identidad desde que está en los Estados?

Smon - ¿Envía dinero a su país la República Dominicana?

Bnew - ¿Está usando parte de este dinero para construir una casa o poner un negocio en?

Dep - Su familia en su país de origen depende de sus envíos de dinero para vivir?

Hmon - ¿Cómo envía el dinero?

Wrec - ¿Quién recibe el dinero que envía?

Sgoo - ¿Cuántas veces envía bienes a la República Dominicana?

Gspe - Aproximadamente ¿cuántos dólares gasta cada mes en bienes para mandar a la familia?

Hea - Ahora algunas preguntas relacionadas con su salud. En términos generales, ¿cómo...

Exer - ¿Con qué frecuencia hace ejercicio físico?
Smok - ¿Cuánto fuma?
Tell - ¿Cuál es su estatura (en centímetros)?
Kilo - ¿Cuánto pesa (en kilos)?
Vdoc - ¿En qué año (YYYY) visitó un médico aquí en España por última vez? (Para nunca)
Idoc - ¿Cómo de importante es para Usted que su médico le hable en su lengua materna?
Omed - ¿Ha utilizado los servicios de alguien que no sea médico, dentista, enfermero/a,
Heal - ¿Esta persona era un curandero/a tradicional?
Dep1 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Dep2 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Dep3 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Dep4 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Dep5 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Dep6 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Dep7 - Escoja la frase que mejor le describa
Nei1 - Por favor, indique hasta qué punto está de acuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones
Nei2 - La gente de mi barrio no comparte mis valores
Nei3 - Mis vecinos y yo queremos lo mismo para mi barrio
Nei4 - Puedo reconocer la mayor parte de la gente que vive en mi barrio
Nei5 - En mi barrio me siento en casa
Nei6 - Muy a menudo mis vecinos me conocen
Nei7 - Me preocupa lo que mis vecinos piensen de mí
Nei8 - No puedo cambiar mi barrio de cómo es
Nei9 - Si hubiese un problema en mi barrio mis vecinos lo resolverían
Nei10 - Es muy importante para mí vivir en este barrio
Nei11 - La gente en mi barrio normalmente no pasan su tiempo juntos
Nei12 - Espero vivir en mi barrio mucho tiempo
APPENDIX D
PHASE 2 SOCIAL NETWORK VISUALIZATION INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS ARE IN CAPS. TEXT NOT IN CAPS CAN BE READ TO RESPONDENTS.

CHOOSE VISUALIZATION FOR FIRST QUESTION. DO ALTERS TALK TO EACH OTHER. SELECT “VERY PROBABLE” AND CLICK SPRING EMBEDEDEDE BUTTON TO REDRAW IT.

On the screen you see dots and lines. The dots have names by them representing the people you said you know. A line between the dots means that those two people would talk to each other independently of you. Notice the groupings of dots. If there are a lot of dots clumped together it usually means they form some sort of group.

1. Does the visualization appear to represent the people you know and how they know each other? Do the groupings make sense to you?
2. Please describe the groups you see on the screen. Please tell me how each group has either helped you or hindered you in your efforts to get live here in Spain. MAKE SURE THE RESPONDENT SAYS AT LEAST ONE NAME IN EACH GROUP THEY DESCRIBE SO WE CAN IDENTIFY IT FROM THE INTERVIEW.
3. IDENTIFY ISOLATES IN THE UPPER LEFT OF THE SCREEN IF THERE ARE ANY. The people in the upper left of the screen are people who you said don’t know anybody. Who are they and why don’t they know anybody?
4. CHOOSE ANALYSIS->NODE CENTRALITY->COLORING NODES->BETWEENNESS CENTRALITY. Now you can see that we have used the program to color some of the dots. The darker the dots represent people that bridge the groups in your network. I want to talk about each one of the darker dots, which groups they bridge, that is what are the groups, and why they bridge them.
5. PICK A COUPLE OF NODES RANDOMLY FROM THE GROUPS THEY BRIDGE. Why don’t these people bridge the groups?
6. CLICK THE DEFAULT BUTTON TO RETURN THE VISUALIZATION TO ITS ORIGINAL COLORS. SELECT ANALYSIS->PARTITIONS AND CLUSTERS->HIERARCHICAL CLUSTERING.
7. Now you can see that the program has drawn some circles around the dots, and put a number by each circle. This is what the program thinks are groups. Do these groups make sense to you? What are they? MAKE SURE YOU MENTION THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP FOR THE RECORDING.
8. CLOSE THE CLUSTERING BOX. CHOOSE THE COLOR BY ATTRIBUTE ICON. COLOR THE NODES USING THE VARIABLE “ALIV”. Now you see that I have colored the dots again. This time the colors represent where the person lives now. LOOK FOR GROUPINGS THAT ARE ALL THE SAME COLOR. All these dots that are the same color, where do they live?
9. LOOK FOR GROUPINGS THAT THE RESPONDENT IDENTIFIED THAT HAVE LOTS OF DIFFERENT COLORS. THESE ARE GROUPS OF PEOPLE THAT KNOW EACH OTHER, BUT LIVE IN DIFFERENT PLACES. Let’s talk about groups where the colors are mixed. This means the people know each other but
don’t live together. Why don’t they live together? How does this affect you and your interaction with them? Does it make it difficult for you to maintain your relations with them?

10. CHOOSE COLOR BY ATTRIBUTE AND SELECT THE VARIABLE “AFRM” AND CHOOSE SHAPE. TRY TO IDENTIFY PEOPLE WHO DONOT LIVE WHERE THEY ARE ORIGINALLY FROM. These people appear to have moved from their home country. Can you tell me a little about each one? Do these people help you while you are here?

11. SET THE GRAPH TO DEFAULT AGAIN. CHOOSE COLOR BY ATTRIBUTE AND AGAIN COLOR BY ALIV. CHOOSE THE VARIABLE “CLOS” AND SELECT SIZE. CHANGE THE SIZE SO THAT VERY CLOSE IS THE LARGEST AND NOT CLOSE IS THE SMALLEST WITH THEOTHER TWO IN BETWEEN. DISCUSS THE RELATION WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE VERY CLOSE AND IN SPAIN VERSUS NOT. Now you can see that I have colored the dots by where people live and changed the size. The big dots are people you say you are very close to and the smaller ones less so. Can we talk a little about your relations with those with big dots versus small ones? Are there people that live here in Spain with large dots? Who are these people and how do they help you?

12. CLICK THE DEFAULT BUTTON. COLOR ATTRIBUTES BY “ASEX”. LOOK FOR OBVIOUS GROUPINGS. NOTE THE SEX OF THE RESPONDENT FOR THE RECORDING WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THIS. Now I have colored the dots by whether the person is a man or a woman. Given that you are a FILL IN THEIR SEX, do you feel you have enough people of your own sex to help you adapt to life in Spain? Do you have enough people to do the things you only feel comfortable doing with people of your own sex?

13. OVERLAY VARIABLE AFRM TO SEE IF THEY ARE ASSOCIATING WITH PEOPLE OF THEIR SEX THAT ARE FROM SPAIN. I see that you know some people from Spain that are the same sex as you. What sorts of things do you do together?

14. CLICK THE DEFAULT AND REPEAT STEPS 12 AND 13 WITH “AOL2”. USE SIZE TO REPRESENT THE AGE, MAKING SURE TO CHANGE IT SO THE OLDER PEOPLE HAVE THE LARGEST SIZE AND THE YOUNGER PEOPLE THE SMALLEST SIZE. Let’s talk about age groups now. What sorts of things do you do with each group?

15. CLICK THE DEFAULT. COLOR THE NODES BY THE VARIABLE “AFRQ”. USE SIZE, SELECTING THE LARGEST SIZE FOR THE MOST FREQUENT CONTACT. BE CAREFUL TO NOTE THE FREQUENCY OF THE CHOICES. Now I have colored the graph by how frequently you have contact with the people you know. Let’s first talk about your frequency of contact with each group. Then let’s see of there are people within each group that are different than the others. Why is that?

16. OVERLAY THE VARIABLE “ACON” USING SHAPE OR COLOR. Now I have also colored the dots by the type of contact you have, whether it is in person, by phone, etc. Let’s talk about how that affects you. Does this influence the way you think about yourself, as someone from INSERT THEIR COUNTRY or as a Spaniard?
17. CLICK THE DEFAULT. COLOR THE NODES BY THE VARIABLE “APRO”.  
Now I have colored the nodes by whether you talk to this person about personal problems. How does that affect you? What sorts of problems might you talk about? Can you give me some examples? Do any of them help you with problems concerning the way you get along with people from Spain?

18. OVERLAY THE VARIABLE “AHLP”. LOOK FOR ALTERS THAT DON’T PROVIDE EITHER TYPE OF SUPPORT AND OTHERS THAT PROVIDE ONLY ONE. EXPLORE THOSE DIFFERENCES. Now we have added the question whether they would help you in an emergency. Let’s talk about how these people do or do not help you.

CLICK THE DEFAULT. COLOR THE NODES BY THE VARIABLE “ASMO”. Let’s talk about the people you know that smoke. Do you find it easy or difficult to be around smokers, or does it matter to you at all? Have they influenced your decision to smoke or not?
APPENDIX E
TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

(.) brief pause (below half a second)
(0.5) longer pauses in seconds
xxx strongly accentuated syllable or word / spoken with more emphasis
than surrounding talk
. falling or final intonation
, continuing intonation
? rising intonation
"xxx" spoken more quietly than surrounding talk
= connects utterances with no intervening delay / latching
:: lengthened sound
> < spoken more quickly
<> spoken more slowly
x- talk cut off in mid-production
[ overlapping talk
( xxx) unclear talk
( ) unintelligible talk
(( )) transcriber’s descriptions
bien text in itallic is in Spanish
‘good’ English translation of Spanish text
xxx register change: quoting self or other from another conversation
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Zentella, A. C.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rosalyn Negrón was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and moved with her family to Upstate New York in 1987. In 1996 she attended the State University of New York at Albany, where she majored in anthropology and trained in high school social studies education. Before coming to the University of Florida in 2000, she was a bilingual high school social studies teacher in Middletown, NY. While at the University of Florida she conducted fieldwork in Jamaica, rural North Florida, and New York City.