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Non-Hispanics with Latin American ancestry: Assimilation, race, and identity among Latin American descendants in the US

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ABSTRACT

In the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS), 6% of respondents with Latin American ancestry answered 'no' when asked whether they were Hispanic themselves. Conventional definitions of the Hispanic population exclude such respondents as 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' even though they are self-identified Latin American descendants. Since their exclusion may bias our assessments of Hispanic social mobility, it is important to know more about them. Non-Hispanic identification is most common among Latin American descendants who (1) list both Latin American and non-Latin American ancestries, (2) speak only English, and (3) identify as White, Black, or Asian when asked about their 'race.' Ancestry and racial identity are considerably more influential than respondents' education, income, place of birth, or place of residence. These findings support both traditional straight-line assimilation and a more recent "racialized assimilation" theory in explaining discrepant responses to the ethnicity and ancestry questions among Latin American descendants.

1. Introduction

In the year 2006, there were an estimated 44.1 million US residents who reported Spanish or Latin American ancestry (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Guatemalan, Spanish, Salvadoran, Colombian, etc.). Of that number, 2.5 million (6%) answered in the negative when asked whether they were "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino." This fact may reflect a pattern of 'ethnic attrition' that has important methodological and theoretical implications for the study of racial/ethnic identification and immigrant incorporation. Since most studies of Hispanic[1] experience and advancement define the Hispanic population(s) on the basis of Hispanic *identity* and not Latin American or Spanish *ancestry*, those 2.5 million non-Hispanic (identifying) Latin American descendants are routinely excluded from assessments of intergenerational mobility (Duncan and Trejo, 2007a) as well as from projections of Hispanic population growth (Golash-Boza and Darity, 2008).

Strong cases have been made that assimilation will not proceed at the pace nor to the extent for recent immigrants as it did for the European immigrants of the early 20th century (Gans, 1992; Levitt, 2003; Portes and Zhou, 1993). Non-Hispanic identities held by Latin American or Spanish descendants, however, may speak to the centripetal force assimilation continues to exert on American life in the 21st century. Recent studies have demonstrated the emergence of the unhyphenated 'American' identities among Latinos (Golash-Boza, 2006; Telles and Ortiz, 2008), but in those studies the 'American' label is not necessarily *to the exclusion of Hispanic or Latino identities.* The question here is not why some Latin American

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[1] While we understand that the term 'Latino' is preferable is some regards, we use the term 'Hispanic' throughout the paper to minimize confusion as we discuss the imperfect relationship between Latin American ancestry and Hispanic identity. Those who identify as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some 'other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' in response to the American Community Survey Hispanicity question are referred to as 'Hispanic;' those who respond 'no, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' are referred to as 'non-Hispanic.'

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descendants choose to identify as 'American' but rather why they choose to identify ethnically as '*not* Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.' Few studies focus squarely on the issue of non-Hispanic responses among Latin American descendants, and those that do focus entirely on Mexican descendants (Alba and Islam, 2009; Duncan and Trejo, 2007a, 2007b). However, the Mexican–American experience is unique and not necessarily generalizable to other Hispanic groups with respect to identity (Jimenez, 2008; Agius Vallejo, 2009). This study is novel in that we focus on patterns of racial and ethnic identification among Latin American descendants of all ancestries.

The theoretical and methodological contributions of this paper will inform debates on the extent and processes of Latin American identificational assimilation by using 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) data to answer the question, what explains the occurrence of non-Hispanic identification among Latin American descendants?

2. Measuring hispanic identity: problems and potentialities

It should be noted from the outset that we can never know the meanings and motivations respondents draw on when answering survey questions regarding their racial and ethnic identities which tend to be fluid and situational (Harris and Sim, 2002; Nagel, 1994; Omi, 2001). This is no less true among Hispanic people (Eschbach and Gomez, 1998; Oboler, 1995; Rodriguez, 2000) who are often confused by race and ethnicity questions (Hirschman et al., 2000; Rumbaut, 2006) that treat their Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc., identities as *ethnic but not racial* (Grieco and Cassidy, 2001). The complex nature of racial/ethnic identity is revealed in the US Census and ACS questions regarding race, ethnicity, and ancestry which often yield inconsistent answers – especially among Latin American descendants.

Part 1: 'List of Residents' – 6 Questions

Question 5 (Close-ended)

"**Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?** Mark (X) the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino." Response options:

- "No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino"
- "Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- "Yes, Puerto Rican"
- "Yes, Cuban"
- "Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. Print group" below

Question 6 (Closed-ended)

"**What is this person's race? Mark (X) one or more races** to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be."

- "White"
- "Black or African American"
- "American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principle tribe*" below
- "Asian Indian"
- "Chinese"
- "Filipino"
- "Japanese"
- "Korean"
- "Vietnamese"
- "Other Asian. *Print race*" below
- "Native Hawaiian"
- "Guamanian or Chamorro"
- "Samoan"
- "Other Pacific Islander. *Print race below*"
- "Some other race. *Print race below*"

Part 2: 'Housing' Survey – 25 questions

Part 3: 'Person' Survey – 42 questions

Question 12 (Open-ended)

"What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?" Followed by two blank spaces and the instruction, "*(For example, Italian, Jamaican, African Am., Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Norwegian, Dominican, French Canadian, Haitian, Korean, Lebanese, Polish, Nigerian, Mexican, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and so on.)*"

Fig. 1. Exact wording and ordering of Hispanicity, race, and ancestry questions on the 2006 American Community Survey.

Fig. 1 displays the Hispanicity,[2] race, and ancestry questions exactly as they appear on the 2006 American Community Survey enumeration form. As we point out above, an estimated 44.1 million US residents had some or another Latin American or Spanish ancestry listed in response to the question, "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?"[3] We call them Latin American descendants or 'LADs' for the purposes of this paper. Long before they are given a chance to acknowledge their Latin American and/or Spanish roots, however, they encounter the question, "Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?" and some 2.5 million LADs say they are "*not* Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" in response. We call these people 'non-Hispanic' for the purposes of this study. It is possible that non-Hispanic identities among LADs registered in the American Community Survey reflect 'ethnic attrition' as Alba and Islam (2009) suggest, but it could be argued that discrepant answers to the ethnicity and ancestry questions reflect little more than a flawed survey instrument.

First, there is the matter of the problematic ethnic labels—Spanish/Hispanic/Latino—employed on the survey. Discrepant responses to the ethnicity and ancestry questions could stem from a lack of familiarity or aversion that some LADs have to 'one size fits all' panethnic labels like 'Hispanic' or 'Latino' (Rumbaut, 2006; Telles and Ortiz, 2008). Some may mark 'No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' in protest of those labels. But it is crucial to note here that the Spanish/Hispanic/Latino identity question is a close-ended question with the response options: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino; Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano; Yes, Puerto Rican; Yes, Cuban; Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. For Mexican descendants who are averse to the panethnic labels mentioned above, these response options may present a quandary. For them, marking 'No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' is also to say 'no' to the 'Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano' option. The same is true of Puerto Ricans and Cubans. It seems unlikely that even those Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban descendants with deep-seated misgivings about panethnic labels would choose the 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' option *over* the 'Mexican' or 'Puerto Rican' or 'Cuban' options.

We might expect that if unfamiliarity with or aversion to the terms 'Hispanic' and 'Latino' were behind non-Hispanic responses among LADs, 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' responses would be more common among those whose specific national origins do not appear as response options to the Hispanicity question. Guatemalans or Salvadorans, for instance, may say 'No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' because they have no connection to any of those panethnic terms AND no connection to Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban identities. However, Table 1 shows that, despite the absence of their nationalities in the response options, more than 98% of Guatemalans and Salvadorans identify as 'some other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.'[4]

Second, there is that matter of question ordering on the survey. As Fig. 1 illustrates, the Hispanicity and race questions appear fifth and sixth on the questionnaire and ancestry is addressed after 30 intervening questions about the quality and location of their household as well as the socioeconomic characteristics of individuals and families residing there. This question spacing is fortuitous in that it reduces the chances that respondents identify ancestries based on their expressed ethnic and/or racial identities rather than on the basis of their known family histories. Were all three—Hispanicity, race and ancestry—questions asked in succession, respondents might more often answer them in ways that were mutually corroborating but not entirely accurate. For instance, a respondent of German, Irish, and Mexican ancestry who had chosen 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' in response to the Hispanicity question and 'White' in response to the race question might be more likely to write 'German and Irish' in response the ancestry question rather than choosing a combination suggestive of any Spanish or Latin American heritage. Spacing the Hispanicity, race and ancestry questions this way may distract respondents from their own personal identities before asking them about who their ancestors were, and this is important if we want to measure the association (or disassociation) between identity and ancestry as we attempt to do here.

Third, and perhaps the most serious potential problem, is the fact that, in most cases, one respondent answers the Hispanicity, race, and ancestry questions for all household members. Accurate *self*-identification, therefore, may only be available for the (typically) one person in the household who completes the survey. There is reason to think that this would affect the results of this study, but it is not clear how. In any case, we avoid this problem by including only LADs who are likely to have completed the survey for themselves.[5]

[2] Question 5 in Fig. 1 captures ethnicity, but only for those who consider themselves Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or 'some other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.' For this reason, we use the term 'Hispanicity' rather than ethnicity.

[3] There are two additional groups of Latin American descendants who are, by necessity, excluded from this study. First, there were an estimated 2.7 million US residents identifying as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or "some other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" in response to the Hispanicity question but not listing Spanish or Latin American ancestries in response to the ancestry question who brought the Latin American descendant population to 46.8 million. Second, it is likely that there were Latin American descendants who identified as such on neither the Hispanicity question nor on the ancestry question. Their inclusion might push the Latin American descendant population toward 50 million or more. The former of these groups is excluded from this study since none of them identify as non-Hispanic rendering their identity choices impossible to model; the latter is excluded because we cannot identify them in the data. Without knowing the size of the latter group it is impossible to say what the effect of their inclusion would be, but the inclusion of the first and second of these groups would partly offset one another since the 0% of the former identify as non-Hispanic while 100% of the latter identify as such.

[4] We might further expect foreign born Latin Americans to have less familiarity and less affinity for panethnic terms and, thusly, opt for non-Hispanic identities more often than US born Latin American descendants, but Table 2 shows us that this expectation does not hold up either. It could be argued, conversely, that as Latin American descendants become politicized in the US they take on reactive ethnicities (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) that defy panethnic labeling in favor of more precise nationality-based identities. To the extent that this happens, it would probably not lead people to choose 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' *over* 'Mexican' or 'Puerto Rican' or 'Cuban.'

[5] We include only respondents who are listed as 'Person 1' on the ASC survey. 'Person 1' is "the person ... in whose name the [dwelling] is owned, being bought or rented." He or she is often, but not always, the one who completes the survey since respondents are asked to list information for 'Person 1' immediately after the question, "What is *your* name?" In any case, our main conclusions are the same whether or not we apply this selection.

Table 1
Percent identifying as 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' by ancestry and ancestral mix among Latin American descendants. Data Source: 2006 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2008)

	% Who Identify as "not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino"			Distribution	
	Foreign born (%)	US born (%)	Total (%)	*n*	%
ANCESTRY based on 1st response only					
Mexican	0.7	3.9	1.9	44,747	46.8
Mexican American	1.9	2.7	2.6	5559	5.8
Hispanic	1.8	6.2	4.6	6632	6.9
Puerto Rican	1.5	4.0	2.7	7771	8.1
Spanish	7.0	29.2	21.4	6010	6.3
Cuban	0.9	12.3	3.7	4114	4.3
Salvadoran	0.4	3.8	0.5	2366	2.5
Dominican	2.9	6.2	3.3	2447	2.6
Colombian	1.0	8.7	2.1	1769	1.9
Guatemalan	0.9	5.6	1.2	1536	1.6
Other	6.1	40.8	21.5	12,663	13.2
ANCESTRY based on 1st and 2nd responses					
Single Latin American Ancestry	1.3	5.0	2.7	85,063	89.0
Mixed Latin American Ancestry	0.5	2.9	2.0	1112	1.2
Mixed Latin Am/non-Latin Am Ancestry-Latino 1st	16.1	27.8	25.9	5462	5.7
Mixed Latin Am/non-Latin Am Ancestry-Latino 2nd	31.9	56.9	53.1	3977	4.2
SAMPLE TOTAL	1.8	11.8	6.1	95,614	100.0

*Latin American descendents are those respondents who acknowledge one or more Latin American, Spanish, or Hispanic ancestry in response to the ancestry question. Respondents whose responses to race or ethnicity questions have been imputed or altered by the Census bureau are excluded. Only householders are included.

The particulars of the American Community Survey itself pose no insurmountable problems for the purposes of this study. To the contrary, the survey design exposes discrepant responses to ethnicity and ancestry questions that have to this point gone largely unexamined. We cannot possibly know the motivations of individuals responding in these discrepant ways, but we can uncover a great deal about what types of Latin American descendants are likely to identify as non-Hispanic. Even if their responses are erroneous is some way, the real question is whether they are *predictable*; social science theory and research literature provides us reason to believe that they are.

3. Literature review

Scholars question whether recent immigrants and their children, the vast majority of whom are non-European, are incorporating in the 'straight-line' fashion of their European predecessors. Milton Gordon's (1964) canonical definition of assimilation posits that immigrants may acculturate by adopting the language and other cultural trappings of the 'host' society. Acculturation is often followed by integration into the core educational, occupational and economic structures leading, ultimately, to intimate social and even familial relations between newcomers and more established members of the host society. A logical outcome of all of this is widespread intermarriage and the dissolution of old-country ethnic attachments. In this definition, complete assimilation means the erosion of ethnic antipathies partly predicated on the decline of ethnic identities and the rise of unhyphenated 'American' identities.

This explanation holds up in most respects for the US immigrants of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though nine out of ten hailed from European countries they were initially viewed as foreign and distinct racial/ethnic groups such as Catholic, Slavic or Jewish. Eventually, the racial/ethnic boundaries of the host society shifted and blurred and these once distinct "racial" groups became "White" (Ignatiev, 1996; Lieberson, 1980; Roediger, 2005). Alba and Nee (2003) have argued that the mainstream of US society has become essentially multicultural and able to integrate diverse immigrant groups into its fabric making assimilation a real possibility for 21st century immigrants. Others, however, suggest that the unprecedented racial diversity of recent immigrants, the less favorable economic circumstances that greet them, and the maintenance of close ties to countries of origin (by way of inexpensive and rapid communication and travel) may hinder the assimilation of recent immigrants (Gans, 1992; Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Levitt, 2003). As the US-born children of recent immigrants begin to age into adulthood in significant number, their assimilation, generally, and indentificational assimilation, more specifically, remains an open empirical question.

3.1. Identificational assimilation among Latin American descendants in the US

There are two possibilities traditional assimilation theory offers to explain non-Hispanic identities among LADs—one views identificational assimilation as an *unconscious* process and the other views it as *conscious and/or strategic*. First,

"Latino-ness" may come to hold no salience in the lives of some LADs. They may declare "No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" because they lack the knowledge, opportunities, and/or desire to live archetypal 'Hispanic' lives. The structural and cultural trappings typically associated with Hispanic experience, such as residence in areas of high Latino population concentration and/or speaking Spanish, may be foreign to them. This foreign-ness may reflect the strivings and socioeconomic incorporation of immigrants (i.e., educational attainment and intermarriage) rather than any contempt for tradition. Alba and Nee (2003) said it best: "Assimilation, one could say, is something that frequently enough happens to people while they are making other plans" (p. 282). In any case, theory would predict that LADs who evince traditional indicators of assimilation such as mixed (Hispanic/non-Hispanic) ancestry, residence in non-Hispanic areas, English language exclusivity, and/or high educational attainments will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than others.

Some LADs, however, may make *conscious* efforts to distance themselves from identities and cultures associated with their (parents') home countries to avoid stigmatization or out of a sense of US nationalism or patriotism. They may perceive social and economic costs associated with Hispanicity, broadly defined (Bendick, 1992; Darity and Mason, 1998), and, on those grounds, attempt to evade Hispanic labels no matter how central (specific) Hispanic folkways are in their personal lives (Oboler, 1995).

Both of these possibilities reflect assimilation on the part of Latin American descended persons who identify as non-Hispanic. In the first explanation, Latin American or Spanish ancestry loses its salience in the lives of grandchildren, children, and, in rare cases, immigrants themselves. Ethnic attachments take on a more peripheral and voluntary character, especially as immigrants and their children achieve upward mobility over the generations (Alba, 1990; Waters, 1990). Immigrants from Latin America and, more often, their US-born progeny may come to see themselves as "American first" and in some cases "American only." Such identities may replace rather than augment ethnic attachments based on Latin American ancestry. This is the essence of *identificational assimilation* (Gordon, 1964).

In the second explanation above (conscious distancing), LADs with significant ties to Hispanic cultures and communities may begin to perceive prevailing anti-Hispanic sentiments and attempt to distance themselves from the group. To the extent that anti-Hispanic affect is part of the "host" culture, this distancing may reflect *cultural assimilation*—internalizing US perceptions of Hispanics as alien, unassimalable, and undesirable. As Lopez and Stanton-Salazar (2001) assert, "when children learn what it means to be Mexican in California [for instance] they are undergoing precisely what Gordon (1964) meant by 'acculturation'"(p. 73).

These adaptations may take place both within and across immigrant generations. Alba and Islam (2009) track *intra*-generational changes in cohorts of Mexican–Americans across the 1980, 1990, and 2000 US Censuses noting substantial population losses that cannot be explained by mortality or migration. They make a compelling case that these losses are largely a function of "identity switching" between Censuses. That is, substantial numbers of respondents who identified themselves as Mexican–American on the 1980 census failed to do so in 1990 and/or 2000. Previous scholarship has contended, however, that "the decisive turning point for change in ethnic and national self-identities can be expected to take place in the second, and not the first, generation" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001:150). Accordingly, Ono (2002) uncovers even more dramatic identificational shifts—away from Mexican or Mexican American and toward 'American'—among third and fourth generation Mexican–Americans. Theory tells us that identification is a matter of time; the longer a person or a group resides in the US, the more likely they are to identify as "American."

On these grounds, it is reasonable to predict that:

Hypothesis 1. Latin American descendants who have experienced more acculturation and/or integration into the United States' core social and economic structures are more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those who have experienced less.

Hypothesis 1a. Latin American descendants of mixed (Latino and non-Hispanic) ancestries will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those with only Latin American or Spanish ancestry.

Hypothesis 1b. Latin American descendants born in the US will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those born abroad.

Hypothesis 1c. Latin American descendants who speak English exclusively will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those who continue to speak Spanish.

Hypothesis 1d. Latin American descendants with higher levels of education and income will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those with lower levels.

Hypothesis 1e. Latin American descendants residing in areas of lower Hispanic population concentration will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those residing in areas of higher Hispanic population concentration.

3.2. The possibility of a racialized assimilation among Latin American descendants in the US

Contemporary proponents of assimilation theory argue that it remains a centripetal force that pulls newcomers into a 'new American mainstream' whose culture and identity are more multicultural or hybridized than 'Anglo' in character (Alba and Nee, 2003). Segmented assimilation accounts recognize that some immigrants and their descendants may not find their way into the mainstream since different *national origins* groups are differently situated with respect to the 'American mainstream' (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Others argue, however, that *race and racial identity figure centrally* into social trajectories of immigrants generally (Bashi and McDaniel, 1997), and LADs, more specifically (Golash-Boza, 2006).

Some LADs may choose to identify as non-Hispanic because another racial or ethnic identity has become more salient in their daily lives than the fact of their Latin American or Spanish descent. They may come to identify simply as White or Black or even Asian (see Ropp, 2000); they may come to understand White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic as mutually exclusive categories; and this may bear on the likelihood that Latin American descendants express non-Hispanic identities. These ideas are captured in Fig. 2, a schematic diagram of racialized assimilation borrowed from Golash-Boza and Darity (2008: 5).

Fig. 2 suggests that the Hispanic population was racially heterogeneous in 2000 but may become more racially homogenous as 'Hispanic Whites' gain entre into the (non-Hispanic) 'White' population and begin to identify as such, 'Hispanic Blacks' begin to identify with the (non-Hispanic) 'Black' population, leaving mainly 'Hispanic others' in the 'Hispanic' group by the year 2050. This paper is uniquely positioned to illustrate what may be the early stages of this process by examining the racial identities of LADs who identify, explicitly, as non-Hispanic.

Golash-Boza (2006; Golash-Boza and Darity, 2008) provides evidence that the process depicted in Fig. 2 may be afoot. Qualitative studies by Lopez (2003), Newby and Dowling (2007), and others are also suggestive of a racialized assimilation process among LADs. In her recent work on the Mexican-origin middle class Agius Vallejo (2010) recounts a conversation about identity with Vincent, a college educated second-generation Mexican professional who reveals:

> "I grew up in a White neighborhood and school district with White friends and people at work have always assumed I was White. And I don't have an accent and I don't wear clothes that would classify me as Mexican and everyone just thought I was Italian because of that. And I don't speak Spanish that good so people always say I'm White."

Vincent's Mexican ancestry could ultimately be relegated to a laundry list of trivial facts in his family history—an *ethnic option*, if you will—and may be even less salient in the lives of his children. Because US residents tend to use the words "White" and "American" as synonyms (Feagin, 2000), Vincent and others like him may sometimes opt for a White racial identity as an assertion of their own unhyphenated American identity. Such an association between (White) racial identity and (non-Hispanic) ethnic identity would be consistent with traditional straight line assimilation theory as well as the "idea that racial status plays a key role in immigrant adaptation" (Golash-Boza, 2006:35).

Racialized assimilation, may mean something very different for Latin American immigrants and descendants who are of primarily African and Asian ancestries. From the moment they arrive, they may have a *racial minority* identities imposed on them. Dominicans of primarily African ancestry may often be seen simply as 'Black' and thereby be subjected to traditional patterns of Black exclusion (Denton and Massey, 1989; Bailey, 2001; Candelario, 2001; Lopez, 2003; Rodriguez, 2000). Much as 'Asian' stereotypes will often be applied to Chinese- and Japanese-descended immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America, 'Black' stereotypes may be applied to dark-skinned Afro-Latinos irrespective of their national origins (see Ojito, 2001; Lee and Bean, 2010). This may lead to some LADs to more readily identify as non-Hispanic racial minorities.

To this point we have discussed racial identities that may be associated with dis-identification from the Hispanic groups—that is, 'Hispanic Whites' and 'Hispanic Blacks' in Fig. 2. But who are the 'Hispanic others?' The answer to this question lies partly who they are not; they are those who seem themselves as neither White nor Black. The long history of contact between Indigenous, African, European, and Asian peoples in the Americas has left an indelible mark on Latin

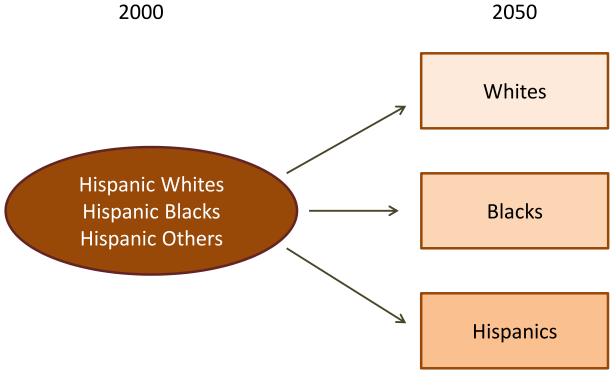

Fig. 2. A depiction of racialized assimilation. From Golash-Boza and Darity (2008).

American identities. *Mestizaje*—the racial and cultural hybridization of European and indigenous peoples in the Americas—has been a central aspect of Latin American identities (Lugones, 1994; Rodriguez, 2007). In at least one respect, then, the Hispanic/Latino identity can be understood as fundamentally "multiracial," and it is reasonable to expect that self-identified Hispanics may often exercise the option of marking 'one or more' boxes on standard survey questions regarding their race. That 'one or more' may often include 'American Indian' or any of its variants since indigenous peoples often figure centrally (if only symbolically) in narratives of peoplehood in much of Latin America. Therefore, it is also reasonable to expect that some Hispanics identify as 'American Indian' (Menchaca, 1993) as an acknowledgment that some part of their lineage is indigenous.[6] In short, we might expect that non-Hispanic identities would be less prevalent among those LADs who identify racially as multiracial and/or as 'American Indian' since 'mixed' and/or indigenous heritages are part and parcel of many Hispanic identities.[7]

Still, multiracial and American Indian response options may not be satisfying for those LADs who understand themselves as the products of contact between European, African, and indigenous people. Many of them view their race (*raza*) as 'Mexican' or 'Puerto Rican' or 'Latino'—nothing more and nothing less. Because Latin American groups are not recognized as 'social races' by the census bureau like Whites, Blacks, American Indians, and Asians, the 'some other race' response[8] is the only option for those insistent on an explicitly Hispanic or Latin American *racial* identity (see Landale and Oropesa, 2002). Prior research suggests that the "some other race" category has become the de facto Hispanic racial identity (Jones-Correa and Leal, 1996; Rodriguez, 2000). To the extent that this is true, we should find that those who identify racially as 'some other race' on the race question are less likely to identify as 'non-Hispanic' than LADs of other racial designations.

Our data not allow us to speak to the question of why LADs choose the racial identities they do, but we can assess the strength of association between racial identity and Hispanic identity among Latin American descendants. For reasons discussed above, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2. Racial identity is a statistically significant predictor of non-Hispanic identity among Latin American descendants such that;

Hypothesis 2a. Latin American descendants who identify racially as White, Black, or Asian will be the most likely to identify as non-Hispanic;

Hypothesis 2b. Latin American descendants who identify racially as American Indian, Multiracial, or 'some other race' will be the least likely to identify as non-Hispanic.

4. Data and methods

We employ data from the 2006 American Community Survey[9] to test the hypotheses discussed above. This data set was chosen for (1) its size which allows for the analysis of small national origins groups (i.e., Cubans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians), (2) its recent date of collection, (3) its coverage of all geographic areas of the US and inclusion of local area indicators which allows for analyses of the influence of geography/community on identity, and (4) its place in an ongoing data collection effort that allows for temporal comparisons with past and future samples. There is no other dataset that can match the ACS on these criteria.

Since we are interested in how respondents see *themselves* we include only Latin American descendants presumed to have responded to the Hispanicity, race, and ancestry questions for themselves and whose responses to the Hispanicity and race questions have not been altered by the Census bureau.[10] This leaves 95,614 respondents of Latin American and/or Spanish ancestry of whom 5806 (6.1%) declare that they are *not* themselves "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino."

The dependent variable is "Non-Hispanic identity." The survey asks, "Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?" Respondents who answer: Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano; Yes, Puerto Rican; Yes, Cuban or Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino receive a "0" on this measure. Those who respond "No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" receive a "1." In the analyses to follow, the goal will be to figure out which covariates predispose respondents to receiving a "1" on this measure.[11]

[6] This may be true in the US even if *Ladinos* and *Indios* are thought of as separate and distinct groups in Latin American contexts (Rodriguez, 2000).

[7] On the ACS and 2000 Census enumeration forms the 'American Indian' response is followed by the instruction "Print name of enrolled or principle tribe" and a blank space. The largest share of Latin American descendants who identify racially as 'American Indian' write in tribes that are not coded by the Census bureau—in years past, many such responses were coded into 'Latin American Indian.'

[8] The 'other race' response is followed by a blank line and the instruction, "Print race below."

[9] The Census Bureau boasts a 97.5% response rate which is arrived at by dividing the 'weighted estimate of interviews' by the 'weighted estimate of cases eligible to be interviewed.' However, the response rate is lower (68.2%) when you simply divide the number of household surveys completed by the number of addresses initially selected (US Census Bureau, 2007).

[10] 6.5% of Latinos in the 2006 ACS had their responses to the race item altered by the Census Bureau. We are unable to ascertain their racial self-identifications, and they are therefore excluded from the analyses to follow. Incidentally, only 1.1% of non-Hispanic respondents had their responses to the race question altered.

[11] This may seem counterintuitive, but since we want to know why some Latin American descendants identify as *non-Hispanic*, this operationalization makes the most sense.

4.1. Independent variables

The influence of ancestry will be assessed by comparing the prevalence of non-Hispanic identity among descendants of the ten most prevalent Latin American ancestries, and by comparing those with only Latin American ancestries to those who list some non-Hispanic ancestry in addition to their Latin American ancestries.[12] These two measures are employed to capture the independent effects of membership in specific Latin American ancestry groups and the effects of having 'mixed' ancestry.

Nativity is captured in a three-category variable which compares rates of non-Hispanic identification between respondents who were born in the US but not in the US–Mexico border region to those born in Arizona, California, New Mexico or Texas to the foreign-born.[13] English language exclusivity is a dichotomous measure on which respondents who say they speak 'English only' receive a "1." This treatment of language provides the best chance at identifying the causal priority of language since speaking 'English only' likely reflects the *inability* to speak Spanish rather than an *unwillingness* that may be endogenous to identity.

The effects of socioeconomic status are assessed here by including measures of educational attainment and family income relative to the poverty line. Educational attainment is combined with a dichotomous measure of age (child/adult) to yield a five category variable that compares a very small number of children (18-under) householders to adult non-graduates, high school graduates, college drop-outs, and college graduates. The economic standing of each respondent's family was included as a covariate in preliminary analyses comparing those whose family income fall below the federally established poverty to those in families with incomes 1–2, 2–3, 3–4, 4–5, or 5 times the poverty threshold based on their family size and composition.[14] The influence of geography on identity will be examined by including dichotomous measures indicating whether one resides in the US–Mexico border region and whether one resides in a Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) in which no more than 5% of residents identify as 'Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.'

Finally, Racial identity is treated here as a six-category variable to observe differences between LADs who identify as White, Black, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, or Other in response to the ACS race question. Controls for respondents' age and sex are included as well.

4.2. Analytical strategy

Simple means comparisons will be employed to obtain a rough idea of how each of the covariates listed above is related to identity among LADs. Men and women are not differentiated in these analyses since preliminary analyses indicate that they are practically identical in their patterns of identity across all categories of the independent variables listed in the preceding paragraphs. Instead, we will display rates of non-Hispanic identification across US- and foreign-born samples for all categories of the covariates. Next, logistic regression will be used to ascertain the effects of each of the independent variables net of the others. The multivariate analysis will also yield a *model-chi-square* statistic that will serve as a baseline for comparing the explanatory power of each covariate relative to all the others. The most novel step in the analysis will be the examination of block-chi-square statistics when each covariate is entered into the equation *last*.[15] This will tell us how much more explanatory power is gained when we add each covariate into a model with all of the other covariates already in it. The *net explanatory power* of each covariate will be ascertained this way. By comparing the explanatory power of each covariate net of the others we can come to some empirically founded answers as to which are the most pivotal predictors of non-Hispanic identity among Latin American descendants.

Finally, since Mexican immigrants and descendants make up more than half of the Latin American descended population we will run the multivariate analyses separately for Mexican and non-Mexican descendants to see whether any associations we may uncover are driven by the Mexican experience in the US as opposed to a shared Hispanic experience.

5. Results

Ancestries that respondents list when asked "What is [your] ancestry or ethnic origin?" appear to be predictive of how they answer when asked "[Are you] Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?" Table 1 provides the ancestral composition of the Latin American descendant population in the 2006 American Community Survey sample as well as a bivariate look at the relationship between ancestry and non-Hispanic identity. 86.8% write in one of the ten ancestries listed in the upper panel of the table leaving 13.2% identifying with smaller Hispanic and non-Hispanic ancestry groups. For all ancestries and ancestral combinations, the US-born are far more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than are the foreign-born.

[12] ACS respondents may write in as many ancestries as they can fit in the space provided in response to the ancestry question, but only the first two are coded by the Census bureau. In order to be included in this sample at least one of first two ancestry responses must be a Latin American or Spanish ancestry. Therefore, all respondents in the sample who have non-Hispanic ancestry are mixed Latino/non-Hispanic descendants who have listed their non-Hispanic ancestry either first or second in response to the ancestry question.

[13] Preliminary analyses demonstrated consistently that 'age at arrival' has no statistically significant bearing on this outcome.

[14] See http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh06.html for 2006 poverty threshold values.

[15] As Menard (1995) explains, common Pseudo-R^2 measures treat the Model χ^2 as analogous to the Regression Sum of Squared Deviations (SSR) in ordinary least squares regression. It constitutes the numerator, for instance, in McFadden's R^2. Block χ^2 statistics tell us how much improvement there is in Model χ^2 with the introduction of a new block of covariates to the model and, therefore, has a direct and easily interpretable effect on the overall explanatory power of the model as we demonstrate later in the paper.

Those identifying 'Mexican' or 'Mexican–American' ancestry constitute, by far, the largest group (53%) in the sample. A distant second are those identifying 'Puerto Rican' ancestry (8%). Much has been made of the differences between immigrants (and US-born children of immigrants) who maintain exclusive attachments to foreign nationalities and those who hybridize their ancestry/identity by adding "-American" (see Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Waters, 1999). However, in this sample, those identifying 'Mexican–American' ancestry are only slightly more likely than those identifying 'Mexican' to identify as non-Hispanic when asked. 'Mexican–American' is the only hyphenated ancestry among the top ten, but those US born respondents who claim it are *less* likely than all but two groups to identify as non-Hispanic.

We might expect that if unfamiliarity with or aversion to the panethnic terms 'Hispanic' and 'Latino' were behind non-Hispanic responses among LADs, as was suggested earlier, such responses would be more common among those whose specific national origins do not appear as response options to the ethnicity question. Guatemalans or Salvadorans, for instance, may say 'No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' because they have no connection to any of those panethnic terms AND no connection to Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban identities. Table 1 tells us, however, that despite the absence of their nationalities in the list of response options, more than 98% of Guatemalans and Salvadorans identify as (some other) Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

There are two panethnic responses to the ancestry question that are common. 6.9% list "Hispanic" ancestry before anything else, and another 6.3% list "Spanish" as their primary ancestry. The former group exhibits slightly greater propensity (4.6%) to identify as non-Hispanic than those who list specific Latin American nationalities while "Spanish" descendants are far more likely to do so (21.4%). Preliminary analyses revealed that foreign-born LADs identifying 'Spanish' or 'Hispanic' ancestry were most often born in the Americas—82% and 94% respectively—suggesting that it is not immigrants from Spain driving these patterns.

Table 2
Percent identifying as 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' by selected background characteristics among Latin American Descendants. Data Source: 2006 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2008)

	% Who Identify as "not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino"			Distribution	
	Foreign born (%)	US born (%)	All (%)	*N*	%
PLACE OF BIRTH/AGE AT ARRIVAL					
US non-border regions		20.4	20.4	14,749	15.4
US–Mexico border-region (AZ, CA, NM, IX)		6.9	6.9	25,817	27.0
Foreign-born – arrived prior to age 6	3.9		3.9	4054	4.2
Foreign-born – arrived at age 6–12	2.1		2.1	5048	5.3
Foreign-born – arrived at age 13–18	1.4		1.4	11,390	11.9
Foreign-born – arrived at age 19+	1.7		1.7	34,556	36.1
ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXCLUSIVITY					
Speaks some Spanish	1.3	3.2	1.9	75,378	78.8
Speaks English only	13.2	22.9	21.7	20,236	21.2
EDUCATION/AGE					
Child (less than 18 yrs of age)	3.0	7.5	5.8	86	0.1
Adult – non-graduate	0.9	6.4	2.1	33,441	35.0
Adult – high school graduate	1.8	10.5	5.9	24,763	25.9
Adult – attended some college	3.0	13.0	8.9	22,558	23.6
Adult – college graduate	4.0	17.0	10.9	14,766	15.4
ECONOMIC STANDING					
Family income below the poverty line	1.2	8.3	3.7	18,029	18.9
Family income 1 to 2Xthe poverty line	1.4	9.5	4.0	25,441	26.6
Family income 2 to 3Xthe poverty line	1.5	11.2	5.4	18,214	19.0
Family income 3 to 4Xthe poverty line	2.1	11.8	6.8	11,935	12.5
Family income 4 to 5Xthe poverty line	2.5	12.6	8.1	7809	8.2
Family income more than 5Xthe poverty line	4.4	16.6	11.9	14,186	14.8
PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
US non-border regions	2.3	19.6	8.4	44,147	46.2
US–Mexico border-region (AZ, CA, NM, IX)	1.4	6.9	4.1	51,467	53.8
Local areas w/5% or more Latino residents	1.7	9.5	4.9	87,854	91.9
Local areas w/less than 5% Latino residents	4.1	31.6	18.9	7760	8.1
RACE					
White	1.5	17.7	8.7	52,979	55.4
Black	20.8	38.5	28.3	1374	−1.4
American Indian/Alaska native	2.8	8.2	6.2	872	0.9
Asian/Pacific islander	46.2	9.2	28.0	464	0.5
Multiracial	4.2	8.5	6.8	2799	2.9
Some other race	1.0	1.3	1.1	37,126	38.8
SEX					
Men	1.7	12.6	5.8	54,521	57.0
Women	2.1	11.0	6.4	41,093	43.0
ALL	1.8	11.8	6.1	95,614	100.0

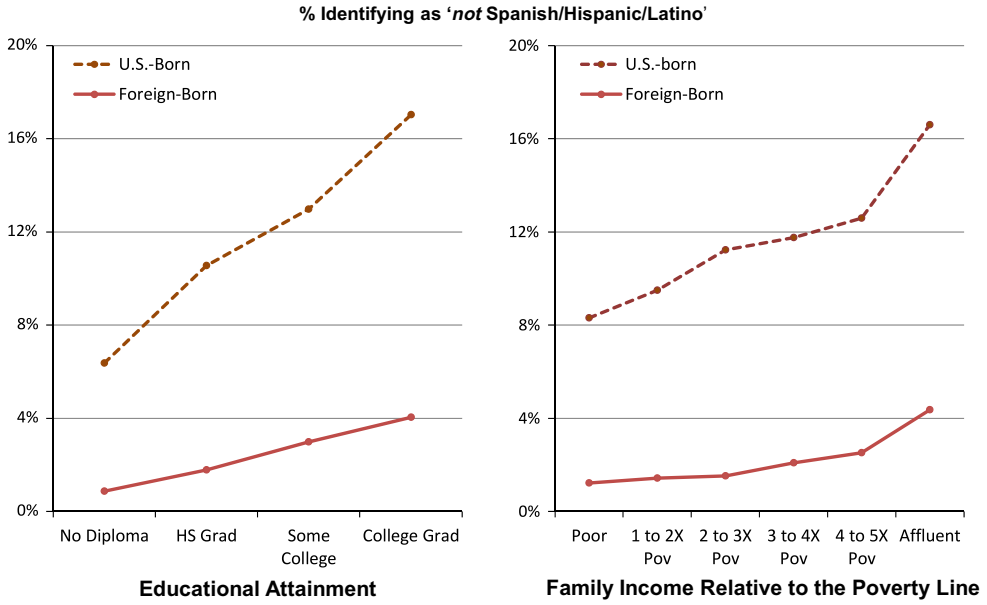

Fig. 3. Percent of Latin American descendants identifying as 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino' by educational attainment and economic class standing.

The bottom panel of Table 1 illustrates the impact of mixed ancestry on non-Hispanic identity. As we hypothesized, those with mixed ancestries are more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those with Spanish or Latin American ancestry only. While less than 3% of LADs with only Latin American ancestry identify as non-Hispanic, more than a quarter (25.9%) of mixed-ancestry LADs who list a non-Hispanic ancestry *after* their Latin American ancestry identify as non-Hispanic. More than half (53.1%) of mixed-ancestry LADs who list a non-Hispanic ancestry *before* their Latin American ancestry identify as non-Hispanic—suggesting that intermarriage may explain the pattern of non-Hispanic identification among LADs.[16]

There are myriad other factors that influence internalized and expressed identities among LADs in the US Table 2 displays non-Hispanic identity figures when the sample is disaggregated by several salient demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The Place of Birth/Age at Arrival panel suggests that the US-born are more likely to identify as non-Hispanic—especially those born outside of the US–Mexico border region (20.4%). Foreign-born LADs are substantially less likely to identify as non-Hispanic regardless of how old they were when they immigrated (1.4–3.9%). Those born in Arizona, California, New Mexico or Texas constitute an intermediate category in which 7% identify as non-Hispanic. Those who speak 'English only' are also far more likely to identify as non-Hispanic (21.7%) than those who speak any amount of Spanish (1.9%). Of course, ancestry, birthplace, and language are correlated with one another and may influence identity by way of each other. The multivariate analysis will sort these effects out.

Education and family income appear be associated with patterns of identity in ways that are consistent with traditional assimilation theory. The relationships are not dramatic but are easily discernable. Fig. 3 makes clear that as we move from lower to higher standing on the educational attainment and family income gradients, non-Hispanic identities become more prevalent among LADs, and this is especially true among the US-born.

Geography also seems to matter. Those residing in the US–Mexico border region are half as likely to identify as non-Hispanic (4.1%) as those living to the north and east (8.4%). A much larger difference, however, is observed at the level of the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA). About 8.1% of Latin American descendants reside in PUMA's where less than 5% of the residents identify as non-Hispanic. They are considerably more likely to identify as non-Hispanic (18.9%) than those living in local areas with more Hispanic presence (4.9%).

Finally, those LADs who identify racially as Black or Asian are most likely of all to identify as non-Hispanic (28%, for both groups) while White, American Indian, and Multiracial respondents with Latin American ancestry identify as non-Hispanic less than 10% of the time. Those who racially identify as "Other"—are far less likely to identify as non-Hispanic (1.1%) than those who identify with the more conventional/recognizable racial categories. On the Census and ACS, Hispanicity is treated as ethnic and not racial. The "some other race" category may be the only acceptable racial option for respondents who consider themselves racially Latino or Mexican or Puerto Rican, etc.[17]

[16] Of course, it is equally likely that non-Hispanic identification among LADs explains patterns of intermarriage.

[17] Respondents who check 'some other race' in response to the race question are provided space to write in a specific racial identity, but these identities are not coded and made public by the Census Bureau. Many Latinos check "Other" on the race question and write what they feel to be a more accurate racial or ethnic descriptor, but they remain racially "Other" in Census tabulations.

The hypotheses outlined in the preceding pages find support in the bivariate case suggesting that both traditional straight-line and racialized assimilation accounts may provide empirically sound explanations of non-Hispanic identities among LADs. Each of the six hypotheses is addressed more explicitly in the pages to follow.

5.1. "All Else Being Equal": multivariate regression predicting non-hispanic identities

Table 3 displays odds ratios from a binary logistic regression that includes all of the covariates discussed above to find the effect of each covariate net of all others. Asterisks indicate that members in the corresponding category differ significantly

Table 3
Logistic regression predicting non-Hispanic identification among Latin American descendants. Data Source: 2006 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2008)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	99% Conf Intrvl		Block chi-square[a]
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Low	Hi	
FIRST ANCESTRY						1101
Mexican	[b]	[b]	[b]			
Mexican American	1.02	0.95	0.94	0.74	1.20	
Hispanic	1.86***	1.70***	1.78***	1.47	2.15	
Puerto Rican	0.81**	0.85	0.76**	0.61	0.95	
Spanish	5.80***	4.71***	4.16***	3.61	4.79	
Cuban	1.62***	1.67***	1.31**	1.02	1.69	
Salvadoran	0.52*	0.59	0.67	0.32	1.40	
Dominican	2.46***	2.89***	2.67***	1.90	3.76	
Colombian	1.25	1.29	1.18	0.74	1.87	
Guatemalan	1.08	1.27	1.25	0.67	2.34	
Other	3.88***	3.72***	3.36***	2.87	3.94	
ANCESTRY COMBINATION						
				1160		
Single Latino Ancestry	[b]	[b]	[b]			
Mixed Latino Ancestry	0.42***	0.41***	0.47***	0.26	0.83	
Mixed Latino/nonLatino Ancestry-Latino 1st	4.85***	3.29***	2.91***	2.58	3.28	
Mixed Latino/nonLatino Ancestry—Latino 2nd	10.02***	6.41***	5.84***	4.95	6.88	
NATIVITY/AGE AT ARRIVAL						349
US-born	5.87***	2.73***	2.62***	2.29	2.99	
US-born – border region (AZ, CA, NM, TX)	2.44***	1.30***	1.56***	1.35	1.81	
Foreign-born	1.00		1.00	1.00		
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS						73
Age	1.01***	1.01***	1.01***	1.01	1.01	
Sex (Male = 1)	1.13***	1.11**	1.11**	1.02	1.22	
ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXCLUSIVITY						1079
Speaks English only	4.44***	3.90***	3.49	4.35		
EDUCATION/AGE						17
Child (less than 18 yrs of age)			1.52	1.51	0.35	6.56
Adult – non-graduate			[b]	[b]		
Adult – high school graduate	1.27***	1.20***	1.04	1.39		
Adult – attended some college	1.35***	1.24***	1.08	1.43		
Adult – college graduate	1.36***	1.18**	1.02	1.37		
PLACE OF RESIDENCE					172	
Local areas w/less than 5% Latino residents	1.78***	1.58	2.01			
US–Mexico border-region (AZ, CA, NM, TX)	0.95	0.84	1.07			
RACE						1145
White			3.28***	2.84	3.78	
Black			11.06***	8.65	14.14	
American Indian/Alaska native			0.92	0.60	1.42	
Asian/Pacific islander			6.53***	4.58	9.31	
Multiracial			0.94	0.73	1.23	
Some other race			[b]			
CONSTANT	0.006***	0.004***	0.002***			
N=	95,614	95,614	95,614			
McFadden's Pseudo *R*-square	0.33	0.37	0.40			
Model chi-square	14,594	16,064	17,411			

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.
[a] The chi-square improvement to overall model fit when the corresponding variable(s) is added last.
[b] Omitted/Referent category.

from the omitted/referent category but do not suggest that they differ from members in other categories on the same variable. 99% confidence intervals are displayed for variables with more than two categories to expose statistically significant differences between all categories rather than just between the omitted/referent category and all others.

Hypotheses 1a through 1e reflect the logic of traditional 'straight-line' assimilation theory and our findings garner some support for all of them. The discussion to follow draws on results from Table 3, Model 3. Hypothesis 1a posits that LADs of mixed ancestry will be more likely to identify as non-Hispanic, and all else being equal, this seems to be true. Odds ratios displayed in the first column of Table 3 indicate that, while LADs with two different Latin American ancestries listed are significantly less likely to identify as non-Hispanic than those who list a only a single Latin American ancestry, those who mention any non-Hispanic ancestry are far more likely to identify as non-Hispanic. Those who list a non-Hispanic ancestry *after* their Latin American ancestry are three (2.91) times as likely as those with singular Latin American ancestries to identify themselves as non-Hispanic. Those who list a non-Hispanic ancestry *before* their Latin American ancestry are six (5.84) times as likely as those with singular Latin American ancestries to identify themselves as non-Hispanic.

As Hypothesis 1b predicts, US-born LADs are considerably more likely to identify as non-Hispanic than are their foreign-born counterparts.[18] This is especially true when we compare the foreign-born to the US born who were not born in the US–Mexico border region (Exp[β] = 2.62). Hypothesis 1c also finds support in that LADs who speak English exclusively are four times (3.90) as likely to identify as non-Hispanic as those who continue to speak any amount of Spanish.

Hypothesis 1d suggests that socioeconomic assimilation will lead to identificational assimilation. To the extent that socioeconomic assimilation is captured in measure of educational attainment, this hypothesis finds some (limited) support.[19] Among adult LADs, those who have earned a high school diploma or more are significantly (but not dramatically) more likely to identify as non-Hispanic, but the relationship is not gradational. The overlapping confidence intervals for adults who graduated high school, attended some college, and graduated college, tell us that these groups do not differ in terms of non-Hispanic identity prevalence, all else being equal.

Hypothesis 1e holds that residence in non-Hispanic areas may lead to identificational assimilation. (Of course, it may be that identification assimilation leads to residence in non-Hispanic areas.) We find that (1) LADs residing in local areas where 5% or less of residents are Hispanic are 78% (Exp[β] = 1.78) more likely to identify as non-Hispanic compared to those living in areas of greater Latino population concentration. Interestingly, (2) LADs in the US–Mexico border region (the region with the greatest concentration of the Hispanic population) are not significantly more or less likely to identify as non-Hispanic compared to those living elsewhere. We will see later, that the apparent weakness of this effect is reflective of the fact that (3) residence in the US–Mexico border region matters for Mexican descendants but not for non-Mexican LADs. The first and third of these findings support the hypothesized relationship between spatial assimilation and identificational assimilation.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b posit that identification may be racialized—that non-Hispanic identities will be more prevalent among LADs who identify with one of the conventional racial categories compared to those who insist that their racial identity is not adequately conveyed by any of the racial options they a presented in response to the race question. These respondents typically opt for 'some other race.' We find, in support for Hypothesis 2a, that LADs who identify racially as 'Black' are 11 times (11.06) as likely to identify as non-Hispanic as 'some other race' LADs; Asian LADs are six and a half (6.53) times as likely to identify as non-Hispanic as 'some other race' LADs; and White LADs are three (3.28) times as likely to identify as non-Hispanic as 'some other race' LADs. Many LADs may become simply Asian Americans or Black Americans who happen to have Latin American ancestry but whose attachments to Hispanic communities and cultures may be fleeting. We also find, in support of Hypothesis 2b, that among LADs, those who identify racially as 'some other race' are less likely than those who identify with most other racial groups to identify as non-Hispanic. Interestingly, those who identify racially as Multiracial, American Indian, and 'Some Other Race' do not differ significantly in terms of the (low) incidence of non-Hispanic identity among them. This may reflect a Hispanic or Latino or 'brown' racial identity that is cognizant of indigenous and mixed heritage but insistent that *la raza* and *mestizaje* have taken on lives of their own—lives that aren't adequately captured by racial designations found on enumeration forms.

5.2. What matters most? Net explanatory power

We have found some support for each of the hypotheses offered in this paper by examining the associations between eight (sets of) background characteristics and the prevalence of non-Hispanic identity among LADs, but to better gauge the importance of each background characteristic relative to the others, more multivariate analysis is needed. Eight additional logistic regression runs include a first model with seven covariates and a second model introducing an eighth covariate, and in each of the runs the eighth covariate entered was different. This does not change the odds ratios discussed above, but it does change our view of the model fit statistics. By examining the statistical impact of each covariate[20] when it is entered *last,* rather than when it is entered in the order listed in the left-most column of Table 3, we can assess the explanatory

[18] Preliminary analyses revealed that age at arrival does not to matter much; the differences between those arriving prior to the age of 6, between the ages of 6 and 12, between the ages of 13 and 18, and after age 18 were statistically insignificant.

[19] Preliminary analyses uncovered colinearities that rendered the inclusion of family income and education in a single model impractical. The inclusion of both obscured the effects of both. Education is included here instead of family income since it proved to be a slightly better predictor of identity than family income.

[20] In this paper, all covariates are entered as "blocks" of dummy variables corresponding to each of the categorical responses available to respondents.

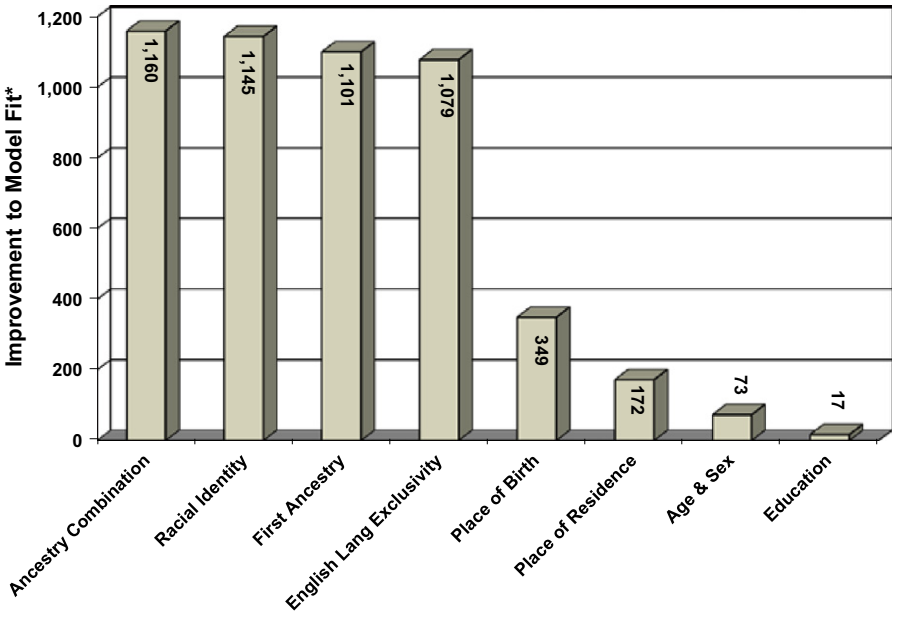

Fig. 4. Improvement to model fit (X^2) associated with the introduction of covariates into models predicting non-Hispanic Identity among Latin American descendants. Data Source: 2006 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2008). *We assess the improvement to model fit by displaying chi-square improvements associated with the introduction of each of the eight variables (in turn) into a model that already contains the other seven. The model chi-square for the fully specified model is 17,410. Since the model chi-square constitutes the numerator in commonly used pseudo R^2 measures (see Menard, 1995), we can assess the relative importance of each covariate by comparing its block Chi-square to the overall model Chi-sq.

power of each *after* all of the others are accounted for. In this way we capture the *net explanatory power* of each covariate which is expressed in chi-square points in the far right column of Table 3.[21]

The fully specified model yields a Model χ^2 of 17,411.[22] By removing each of the covariates from the model we can see how much the Model χ^2 is reduced in its absence. While nearly all of the covariates included in the model bear significantly on patterns of non-Hispanic identity, some contribute more than others to its overall explanatory power. Table 3 tells us that when the ten-category First Ancestry variable is added to a model that has all of the other covariates already in it, the model fit is improved by 1100 chi-square points or 6.7% (17,411/[17,411 − 1100] = 1.067). Fig. 4, however, tells us that the 'ancestry combination' (7.1%) and 'race' (7.0%) both hold slightly more explanatory power than 'first ancestry,' and 'English language exclusivity' (6.6%) is not far behind.

None of the remaining covariates compare to ancestry, race, and English language exclusivity on this count. 'Place of birth' improves model fit by only 2%, and place of residence, age, sex, and education each improve the model fit by one percent or less. In all, patterns of non-Hispanic identification among LADs seem to be driven primarily by (1) what ancestry they list first in response to the ancestry question, (2) whether they also list non-Hispanic ancestries, (3) how they identify racially, and (4) whether they speak English only. But, given that Mexican–Americans and Mexican descendants constitute 53% of the sample, these patterns may be more reflective of Mexican–American experience than of a larger Latino experience in the US.

5.3. Patterns of identity among Mexican and non-Mexican Latin American descendants

Table 4 displays odds ratios for the covariates tested in the multivariate analyses discussed above. But this time non-Hispanic responses are predicted for Mexican and non-Mexican descendants in separate models. A cursory glance at the results reveals close similarity between the effects of the covariates on patterns of identity in the two groups. There are, however, some exceptions. Sex seems to be a significant predictor among non-Mexican descendants while it is not significant among Mexican descendants, but the magnitude of this difference is small. For both Mexican and non-Mexican descendants, education is even less predictive of identity in the disaggregated analyses. The only statistically significant and substantively important differences are that (1) Mexican descendants residing in the US–Mexico border region are significantly less likely

[21] As Menard (1995) explains, common Pseudo-R^2 measures treat the Model χ^2 as analogous to the Regression Sum of Squared Deviations (SSR) in ordinary least squares regression. It constitutes the numerator, for instance, in McFadden's R^2.

[22] This number (Model χ^2 = 17,411) divided by −2 times the Log Likelihood (−2LL = 43,782.2) yielded by a model that includes none of the regressors, gives us a Pseudo R^2 of .398. To the extent that the Pseudo R^2 captures the explanatory power of a given model, any increase in Model χ^2 will have an easily interpretable (arithmetic) effect on the overall explanatory power of the model. For example, if model 1 has seven covariates, a Model χ^2 of 600, and a Pseudo R^2 of .3, and model 2 has eight covariates and a Model χ^2 of 800 we could surmise (1) a Block χ^2 of 200, (2) a Pseudo R^2 of .4, and (3) that the introduction of the eighth covariate improves the explanatory power of the model by a factor of (800/600 or .4/.3) 1.33% or 33%.

Table 4
Logistic regression predicting non-Hispanic identification among Mexican and non-Mexican Latin American descendants. Data Source: 2006 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al., 2008)

	All Odds ratio	*Non-Mexicans* Odds ratio	*Mexicans* Odds ratio
FIRST ANCESTRY			
Mexican	[a]		[a]
Mexican American	0.94	0.93	
Hispanic	1.78***	1.00	
Puerto Rican	0.76**	0.25***	
Spanish	4.16***	1.41***	
Cuban	1.31**	0.45***	3.11
Salvadoran	0.67	0.22***	
Dominican	2.67***	0.93	
Colombian	1.18	0.40***	
Guatemalan	1.25	0.39***	
Other	3.36***	1.17	1.25
ANCESTRY COMBINATION			
Single Latino ancestry	[a]	[a]	[a]
Mixed Latino ancestry	0.47***	0.48**	0.71
Mixed Latino/nonLatino ancestry-Latino 1st	2.91***	2.68***	3.31***
Mixed Latino/nonLatino ancestry-Latino 2nd	5.84***	6.83***	8.16***
NATIVITY/AGE AT ARRIVAL			
US non-border regions	2.62***	2.51***	2.85***
US–Mexico border-region (AZ, CA, NM, TX)	1.56***	2.17***	1.99***
Foreign-born	[a]	[a]	[a]
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS			
Age	1.01***	1.01***	1.01***
Age at arrival			
Sex (Male = 1)	1.11**	1.15***	1.12
ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXCLUSIVITY			
Speaks english only	3.90***	4.27***	3.25***
EDUCATION/AGE			
Child (less than 18yrs of age)	1.51	2.22	0.90
Adult – non-graduate	[a]	[a]	[a]
Adult – high school graduate	1.20***	1.15	1.17
Adult – attended some college	1.24***	1.17*	1.14
Adult – college graduate	1.18**	1.11	1.04
PLACE OF RESIDENCE			
Local Areas w/less than 5% Latino residents	1.78***	1.84***	1.70***
US–Mexico Border-Region (AZ, CA, NM, TX)	0.95	1.02	0.79**
RACE			
White	3.28***	3.70***	2.65***
Black	11.06***	12.05***	8.18***
American Indian/Alaska native	0.92	1.10	0.80
Asian/Pacific islander	6.53***	14.69***	0.37
Multiracial	0.94	1.06	0.78
Some other race	[a]	[a]	[a]
CONSTANT	0.002***	0.005***	0.003***
N=	95,614	38,596	57,018
McFadden's pseudo *R*-square	0.40	0.43	0.27

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.
[a] Omitted/Referent category.

(Exp[β] = .79) than their northern counterparts to identify as non-Hispanic while a similar effect is not observed in the non-Mexican descendant population. And (2) among non-Mexican descendants, those who identify racially as 'Asian'[23] are 15 times as likely to identify as non-Hispanic as those who identify racially as 'some other race' while in the Mexican descendant population those who identify racially as Asian[24] are not significantly different from those who identify racially as 'Other.' In

[23] There are 294 such respondents in the sample of which 43% identify *racially* as Filipino, 11% as Chinese, 9% as Guamanian/Chamorro, and 8% as Japanese. The long history of Chinese and Japanese migration to Latin American and colonial ties between Spain and Guam and the Philippines may explain this 'racial' composition.
[24] There are 170 such respondents in the sample of which 26% identify racially as Filipino, 24% as Vietnamese, 15% as Chinese, and 13% as Japanese.

both the Mexican and non-Mexican descendant populations 'White' and especially 'Black' racial identities are highly predictive of non-Hispanic identities.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This paper began by pointing out an often unrecognized undercount of the Hispanic population in the US More than 2 million persons of self-acknowledged Spanish or Latin American ancestry answer "No" when asked if they are themselves "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" and are, therefore, excluded from most analyses of Hispanic achievement and mobility. Moreover, there may be many more Latin American descendants who do not acknowledge their Latin American ancestry anywhere—rendering them totally invisible for our purposes. What explains the incidence of non-Hispanic identification among Latin American descendants?

This paper has focused on two assimilation pathways that emerge from the social science literature to explain these (seemingly) discrepant identities. The first is that of straight-line assimilation which predicts that over time immigrants become "unhyphenated"—dropping their national or ancestral origins as primary identities and assuming an "American" identity. This may happen more or less organically as homeland customs go from central to peripheral in the daily lives of immigrants and their descendants, or it may happen as immigrants and their children make conscious efforts to distance themselves from stigmatized identities. In either case, the process is embodied in 'White non-Hispanic' racial/ethnic identification among LADs. The second story is that of racialized assimilation which posits that identificational assimilation may depend in part on the racial identities of immigrants and their children. In traditional assimilation theory, immigrants and their off-spring move toward a state of ethnic neutrality as they incorporate into the dominant group, which, in the US, is the 'White' group. But for many recent immigrants, non-European lineages and/or non-White racial identities may obstruct this process. For some LADs this may mean moving away from Hispanic identities toward 'Black' or even 'Asian' identities.

Our analyses find support for both of these explanations. Not surprisingly, education, family income, age, gender, and place of birth are statistically significant predictors of which Latin American descendants choose to identify as '*not* Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.' However, ancestry, racial identity, and English language exclusivity are considerably more powerful predictors.

Two ancestry variables are employed in this study, the first of which disaggregates the Latin American descended population into the ten most common ancestries listed (first) by LADs and an eleventh category for 'Others.' The interpretation of this variable is not guided by any explicit hypotheses, but the net differences between Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban descendants, for instance, may reflect the very different circumstances of their arrivals—circumstances not "controlled for" directly in these analyses. Among the most likely to identify as non-Hispanic are respondents who list "Spanish" or "Hispanic" as their primary (first listed) ancestry. Persons in the first of these categories may have not-so-distant ancestors who migrated from Spain, but it is more likely that they descend from Spanish-speaking peoples in the Americas. Respondents in both the "Spanish" and "Hispanic" categories, then, are of unknown origins, but the unsolicited offering of pan-ethnic terms by these respondents may reflect the fading of nationality-based distinctions in the Latin American descendant population (Jones-Correa and Leal, 1996). The "Other" category on this variable consists of persons who list smaller Hispanic or non-Hispanic primary ancestries. That they exhibit a high prevalence of non-Hispanic identification may reflect the fact that their ancestry groups are too small to maintain distinct communities and identities leaving them more easily drawn into larger non-Hispanic groups by way of residential integration and intermarriage. All of this is implicated in the explanatory power of the 11-category ancestry variable.

The second ancestry variable has a much more straight forward interpretation. Simply put, those with mixed (Latino/non-Hispanic) ancestries are far more likely to identify as non-Hispanic. This is especially true among LADs who list their non-Latin American ancestry *before* their Latin American ancestry. Through intermarriage, many of them have become "Americans with Latin American ancestry" whose Hispanic ties may be little more than symbolic (Lee and Bean, 2010). Accordingly, the influence of English language exclusivity is pronounced; those LADs who speak only English are four times as likely to identify as non-Hispanic as Spanish-speaking LADs. These are two more findings that fall in line with traditional assimilation theory.

We find, however, that racial identity is an equally powerful predictor of non-Hispanic identity compared to ancestry and English exclusivity. All else being equal, respondents who identify racially as White, Black, or Asian are several times as likely to identify as non-Hispanic compared to those who identify as American Indian, Multiracial, or 'some other race.' Whites, Blacks, and Asians are well established US racial groups that may serve as *proximal hosts* (see Mittleberg and Waters, 1992) to newcomers based on the tendency of US society to 'lump' people racially—often with little regard for ethnicity or nationality. This 'lumping' may, in turn, bear on the identities of immigrants and their descendants.

The ACS data do not allow us to address a number of important questions regarding the causal paths and processes of assimilation. For instance, we know that more education and family income are associated higher incidence of non-Hispanic identity among Latin American descendants, but it is not clear whether high levels of education and income lead to high incidence of non-Hispanic identification OR non-Hispanic identification lead to high levels of education and income. We also uncover strong associations between ancestry, racial identity, and non-Hispanic identification among Latin American descendants, but we cannot answer the question, why do some Latin American descendants list their Latin American ancestry first, others list it second, and still others do not list it at all? Nor can we answer the question, why do Latin American

descendants racially identify in the ways they do?[25] These are questions that warrant further examination with different kinds of data, but even in absence of answers to these questions this paper uncovers noteworthy patterns of racial and ethnic identification.

We demonstrate that racial identity and Hispanic identity are associated in ways that support racialized assimilation hypothesis—as it is depicted in Fig. 2—with 'Hispanic Whites' tending toward 'White non-Hispanic' identities, 'Hispanic Blacks' tending toward 'Black non-Hispanic' identities, and 'Hispanic Others' tending toward 'Hispanic' identities as Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) predict. Additionally, we find that 'Hispanic Asians' tend toward 'Asian non-Hispanic' identities.

In short, our findings suggest that the incidence of non-Hispanic identification among Latin American descendants is reflective of: (1) a pattern of *identificational assimilation* by way of US birth, English language exclusivity, intermarriage, socioeconomic advancement and residential integration as predicted by traditional assimilation theories, but also (2) a pattern of *racialized assimilation* whereby Latin American descendants who identify racially as White, Black or Asian are more likely than others to identify as 'not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.' This fact may reflect a racialized notion of Hispanicity that has led many Latin American descendants (and others) to think of White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic as *mutually exclusive racial groups*.

For these reasons and more a non-trivial number of Latin American descendants have disassociated themselves from Spanish, Hispanic, Latino, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc., labels. Census estimates indicate that there were about 2.5 million such Latin American descendants in 2006, but this is surely a low estimate since many more descendants do not reveal their Latin American ancestry on enumeration surveys at all. These patterns of assimilation have significant implications for sociological theory as discussed above but also for the future study of immigrant adaptation in the US Most studies of the intergenerational advancement of immigrant populations count as Hispanic only those who identify as such—a practice that we show excludes 12% of the US-born Latin American descendant population. Because these 'non-Hispanic Latin American descendants' may be a harbinger of future patterns of incorporation, it is time we rethink our definition of the Hispanic population in social science research.

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[25] While Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) find that skin color and experiences of discrimination significantly influence racial self-identifiaction among Latinos, our data do not allow us to test the effects of skin color on the incidence of 'non-Hispanic' identity in the Latin American descendant population.

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