Editorial

New beginnings ...

Latino Studies (2012) 10, 443–447. doi:10.1057/lst.2012.50

As *Latino Studies* achieves the significant milestone of entering a second decade of publication, I am deeply honored to become the journal's editor. Suzanne Oboler, Founding Editor, deserves our gratitude for her unwavering devotion to the journal over the last 10 years. Under her distinctive leadership *Latino Studies* has earned comprehensive recognition both nationally and internationally as a premier journal in the interdisciplinary field of Latino Studies.

In returning to Chicago, the journal is coming back to its roots. *Latino Studies* was established in the Midwest, and this central location continues to be a well-suited site as it boasts not only diverse Latino/a communities of all nationalities, but also many productive Latino/a scholars at its prominent universities, and committed activists in the field. DePaul University, in particular, is an ideal institutional home for the journal. With the enthusiastic support of our Dean and Provost, *Latino Studies* is now housed in the Latin American and Latino Studies Program in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at DePaul University. I very much appreciate the institutional backing that DePaul University is providing. For the first time in its history, the journal will enjoy the support of a full-time Managing Editor; María Isabel Ochoa will assist me with all matters of running the journal and organizing symposia.

The editorial structure remains the same. For the sake of continuity, I am grateful that the journal's three extraordinary Associate Editors, Marisa Alicea, Raymond Rocco and Silvio Torres-Saillant, have agreed to continue in their positions. With this strong editorial team and our vibrant International Advisory Board of scholars representing diverse disciplines and regions of the country, the journal is in great shape. As members of the Board complete their terms and rotate off we will bring in new members, always ensuring that the Board balances representation according to academic fields, geographic regions and ethnicities. The editorial team and I are committed to maintaining the journal's high quality and enhancing its visibility and impact.

The mission and focus of the journal remain as is. *Latino Studies* is an important site to publish the most original and significant interdisciplinary research that speaks both to emerging and long standing scholarly issues across the humanities and the social sciences, as well as major public policy debates.

Latino Studies is an established but growing field. I see the journal as central to the ongoing development and support for scholarship on Latino/a communities across the United States. The journal offers a venue for the dissemination of pioneering research and provides an intellectual home for the discussion of novel approaches to the myriad issues that impact our communities, including the national and transnational politics and policies that condition our lives. As demographic shifts indicate that the Latino population continues to grow, and more universities establish or enhance Latino Studies Programs and related areas (Chicano Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, Dominican Studies, Ethnic Studies), the *raison d'être* of the journal is only more apparent. In addition, the rapidly changing political reality of the day necessitates a response to the numerous challenges and questions raised by the impact of these changing demographics. The journal directly addresses these important matters in provocative and timely essays.

Latino Studies has evolved organically so as to provide a venue for different types of writing. We publish original scholarly articles, reports from the field (Vivencias), as well as special sections featuring essays on pedagogy (Reflexiones Pedagógicas), important historical documents (Páginas Recuperadas) and current issues crucial to Latino/a communities (El Foro). The journal presents a healthy mix of scholarly articles, opinion pieces on critical social and political issues, and reviews of important new work. I am open to diversifying the structure depending on emerging trends in the field. Also, we welcome proposals for special issues on cutting-edge themes, new or significant issues, and/or areas that deserve more scholarly attention in Latino Studies discussions such as Latino/as and the health-care debates, language and politics, new approaches to Latino/a sexualities and many other topics. With your support, I look forward to building on *Latino Studies'* considerable strengths. If you have proposals or responses to journal content please send them to me at the journal's new E-mail address: latstu@depaul.edu.

A central characteristic of the journal that we will maintain is its role in mentoring junior scholars. The Associate Editors and Editor meet three times a year to discuss all submissions and provide internal editorial feedback and advice for pieces that are promising but not ready for external review. Although this process adds another layer to the process of editing, it is one of the most noteworthy and unique features of *Latino Studies*, and has led to the publication of pioneering research from junior scholars, alongside of the incisive work of our more senior and established colleagues. We want the journal to continue to be an outlet for articles representing trailblazing innovation as well as established and relevant research paths.

This issue of *Latino Studies* offers exciting articles that focus on current issues significant in our field. While gender has been a common analytic across many fields including Latino Studies, few studies focus on men and fewer still on gay men of color. This issue's lead article by Anthony C. Ocampo, "Making Masculinity: Negotiations of Gender Presentation among Latino Gay Men"

addresses this gap in a provocative study of Latino gay male performances of masculinities based on ethnographic research. Ocampo shows how some Latino gay men “do masculinity” in the context of their gendered socialization and racialized positions in the United States. For example, the subjects in Ocampo’s study reject a gay white male identity that they read as feminine in favor of an urban male masculine presentation of self that is suspect and criminalized in white contexts. The study sheds light on strategies gay Latinos use to negotiate the diverse implications of various performances of masculinity in both Latino/a and mainstream LGBTQ communities.

The four articles that follow take on myriad issues concerning Latin American immigrants in the United States, issues that range from violence on the border, to coming of age in small-town America. Authors explore measures used by undocumented citizens to secure a voice in the United States political process and strategies taken up by middle-class immigrants as they experience downward mobility in the United States. These studies remind us that although immigrants are often portrayed in one-dimensional demeaning and stereotypical narratives in the US media, their realities are diverse and complex and need to be analyzed and understood in all their complexity.

In an effort to account for the horrific stories of immigrants who have died attempting to enter the United States, or who have experienced violence on the border, John D. Márquez critiques models that propose neoliberal politics and labor exploitation as an explanatory framework. He argues instead for a theory premised on the notion of “a racial state of expendability” that links such violence to the racialization of Latinidad on the US – Mexico border. The increase in brutality and bloodshed is facilitated by anti-Latino postures that have become normalized elements of US policies. Márquez goes on to demonstrate how activists and artists have devised creative campaigns to document borderland violence and to insist on the humanity of its victims. Although most undocumented immigrant deaths go unreported by the US press, activists work to ensure that such violence is not forgotten and that the victims are not rendered invisible. For example, when 14-year-old Sergio Hernández Güereca was killed on the border in 2010 by a US Border Patrol agent, artists in Mexico responded to his assassination by creating a large mural, facing the US side of the border, with his name written in large letters. This serves both to memorialize Hernández Güereca, and to denounce the violence that took his young life.

Turning her focus on undocumented youth coming of age in a small rural community in North Carolina, Alexis Silver considers both the support systems available to young people in a new immigrant destination and the challenges they face as their undocumented status makes them feel “transparent” and devoid of a secure place in the United States or their home countries. She examines different options that young people explore upon completing high school such as returning to their countries of origin when it seems as if all avenues to success are closed to them in the United States. She reminds us that we need to examine how

immigrants are adapting to their many new destinations. Among other matters, such analysis captures emerging racial dynamics in the South. Silver finds, for example, that immigrant teenagers often enlist supportive white “god parents” who help them secure resources and opportunities. In the context of polarized racial politics, Latinos were often read as “foreigners” and thus deemed entitled to a helping hand that is rarely extended to African Americans.

In another study that documents how immigrants are participating in ways to affirm their humanity and their rights, Juan Simón Onésimo Sandoval and Joel Jennings demonstrate how undocumented Latino immigrants address the challenges they face once they have secured work and housing in the United States. Their intervention, “Latino Civic Participation: Evaluating Indicators of Immigrant Engagement in a Midwestern City,” explores the impact of legal status on involvement in civic life in the United States. They remind us that lack of legal status does not prevent Latino immigrants from contributing politically in various venues. The authors develop a model that seeks to explain the factors that are more likely to lead to such civic engagement. They show that beyond the mega marches that began in 2006, immigrants find ways to organize, advocate for themselves and make their voices heard by partaking in a wide range of actions. Factors such as education, previous political practices in the home country and party identification all are associated with civic participation in the United States.

Although middle-class Latin American immigrants clearly have some advantages as they settle in the United States, changing locations is always an experience fraught with difficulty. In “Denaturalized Identities: Class-Based Perceptions of Self and Others among Latin American Immigrants in South Florida,” Elena Sabogal explores how professional immigrants’ understanding of themselves and their class status changes in a new US context. She considers the impact of downward mobility on the identities of such immigrants. Perceptions of class are context specific and not easily translatable in the United States. Sabogal looks at how people define their class status in their home countries and how that meaning changes as they assume a new status in the United States. Despite no longer possessing the privileges and symbols of wealth they claimed in their home countries, many professionals used their social and cultural capital to find ways to feel good about themselves, to feel like “somebody,” in their new cultural contexts. For example, some immigrants take comfort in the reality that they earn more now in the United States even though they are working at low-skilled jobs. Others relish the respect they garner when they achieve positions that, while not comparable to what they had in their home countries, at least afford them respect in the eyes of others and thus grant them a measure of the social capital they lost following migration.

In our *Reflexiones Pedagógicas* section, April M. Schueths and Miguel A. Carranza turn to another critical issue in Latino Studies, offering a review of the available literature on the mentoring of Latino students in primary through

post-secondary schools. In “Navigating around Educational Road Blocks: Mentoring for Pre-K to 20+ Latino/a Students,” they examine peer-reviewed literature focused on the mentoring of Latinos/as in schools. The literature suggests, among other things, that mentoring approaches differ and must be appropriate to the context; also, the particular characteristics of both mentors and those they are mentoring must be considered. Factors such as the ethnicity of mentors, the training they receive and the relationships that they establish with their mentees must be carefully evaluated if the mentoring relationship is to prove effective. Scheuths and Carranza provide suggestions for working toward more effective assistance for Latino students, including the establishment of “a mentoring research registry” with a specific focus on Latino/a students.

Rounding out this issue is a provocative contribution by Silvio Torres-Saillant titled “The Indian in the Latino: Genealogies of Ethnicity.” This *Páginas Recuperadas* essay considers the place of indigeneity in our current understandings of Latino panethnicity through an exploration of writings ranging from early Mexican American authors such as María Ruiz de Burton and Jovita González to those who explore indigeneity in other Latino contexts, for example, Cuban novelist José Barreiro, and Dominican novelist Manuel de Jesús Galván, as well as mixed raced contemporary authors such as Ofelia Zepeda. Torres-Saillant invites us to assess the logic of the inclusion and exclusion of indigenous ancestors in Latino/a understandings of ancestry. He asks why we tend to recognize certain indigenous connections while disavowing others. Particularly intriguing is Torres-Saillant’s discussion of the difference between the metaphors of mixed blood and *mestizaje* where the former highlights the coming together of discernible parts, whereas the latter tends to mask individual components. As Torres-Saillant suggests “the conceptual legacy of *mestizaje* may in fact interfere with our remembering the native whose body and history lie dormant in the discourse of Latino identity.”

The range of disciplines, perspectives and critical lenses in these articles is far-reaching, and the issue as a whole stands as a noteworthy example of the breadth of our endeavor. It is an excellent illustration of the caliber of work that I look forward to sharing with you as I begin my journey as editor of *Latino Studies*.

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