“BEFORE THE STORM, THERE WASN'T MUCH OF A THOUGHT. WHEN
KATRINA HAPPENED, THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING:”
SOCIAL NETWORK GEOMETRY, DISCOURSES OF THREAT, AND
ENGLISH USAGE AMONG LATINXs IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

AN ABSTRACT
SUBMITTED ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY 2019
TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN LINGUISTICS
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents the results of a tripartite exploration of English use by Latinxs in post-Katrina New Orleans, defined here as an ethnolinguistic repertoire that I call New Orleans Latinx English (NOLAE). The project considers how contemporary English use differs from that found in a pre-Katrina sample, how social network geometry influences linguistic performance, and how the localized discursive articulation of the Latinx community shapes the sociolinguistic context. I find that while vowel realization patterns provide no evidence of large-scale deviation across the pre-and-post Katrina samples, there are four vowels which exhibit statistically significant divergence. In each of these cases, the post-Katrina sample is more variable. I also illustrate that the geometry of the local Latinx social network, defined in terms of neighborhood affiliations, has a statistically significant impact on the realization of linguistic variables. Finally, I demonstrate that Spanish and Spanish-influenced English are discursively constructed as marked linguistic performance, leading local Latinxs to aspire to ‘standard’ English performance in public spaces. Differential experiences of this pressure is posited to underlie much of the linguistic variation observed in NOLAE, both across the pre-and-post-Katrina samples and within the contemporary sample.

Methodologically, this project is grounded in Zentella’s (Zentella, 1995, 1997, 2003) call for an anthropolitical linguistics, which develops interdisciplinary methodologies in order to make explicit the links between linguistic performance and the political realities in which marginalized communities exist. I apply a tripartite
methodology. First, I consider patterns of vowel realization across pre-and-post-Katrina samples by plotting normalized formant values for vowel realizations from a subset of two corpora: an archive of oral histories provided by Latinxs in the city in the 1980s and 1990s and my corpus of sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the city during 2017 and 2018. Vowel distributions were checked for similarity by applying a variation of the Bhattacharyya’s distance metric (Bhattacharyya, 1946; Fieberg & Kochanny, 2005).

Second, I modeled the local Latinx social network using a bipartite affiliation graph (Latapy, Magnien, & Del Vecchio, 2008) and treated metrics calculated off of a projection of this graph as additional independent variables in order to investigate which factors predicted linguistic variation in the contemporary sample in terms of prosodic timing and /æ/ realizations. Finally, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the contemporary sample in order to determine the role of Latinx Threat Narratives (Chavez, 2008) in shaping and constraining language use among local Latinxs.

This project addresses a gap in the sociolinguistic literature, as no previous research into English use among Latinxs in New Orleans exists. In addition, researchers have noted a dearth of sociolinguistic exploration of English use in New Orleans. This project contributes to ongoing efforts, including a large scale study by Katie Carmichael and Nathalie Dajko, to document English use in the city. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this project participates in an ongoing effort to explore how raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017) position linguistic performance among marginalized communities as deficient, which necessitates a shift in focus from simply describing the linguistic performance of marginalized groups to
understanding how the perceptions of the listening subject (Inoue, 2006) constrain the types of linguistic identity work available to racialized speakers.
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In the fall of 2010 I embarked on what I conceived of, at the time, as a ten year plan to complete my undergraduate degree, earn a Master’s degree, and earn a Ph.D. At the time my plan was to study English Literature, but I fell in love with Linguistics while researching a paper in Dr. William Neal’s course on Modern English Grammar at Campbellsville University. This brings me to the first group of people that I need to thank. The faculty and students in the English Department at Campbellsville University welcomed me back into academia after a seven year hiatus, and I am forever grateful for the support and encouragement I received there. In particular, the aforementioned Dr. Neal, who has since passed, and Dr. Judith McCormick were important figures in encouraging me to move forward with my studies.

Upon leaving Campbellsville University with a B.A. in English, I enrolled in the Dual M.A. program at Ball State University. The faculty at Ball State also deserve mention here. In particular, Dr. Frank Trechsel and Dr. Carolyn MacKay were important influences in my development as a linguist. Dr. MacKay introduced me to the construct of social networks and to the work of Lesley Milroy, which has been a major theoretical mechanism shaping my thoughts on the interaction of linguistic variation and personal identity. In addition, my colleagues in the Dual M.A. program, including Shane Lanning, Leslie Erlenbaugh, Seula Han, Brian Greer, Kevin Daily, Katarina Pabst, Tom St. Pierre, and Matias Raess deserve gratitude both for challenging me as an academic and for their support and friendship.
I also owe a huge debt of gratitude to the faculty at Tulane University who have been both mentors and colleagues. Harry Howard chaired this dissertation and provided important feedback and encouragement, including handing me a copy of Ana Celia Zentella’s *Growing Up Bilingual*, after one of our first conversations about this project, which completely transformed my approach. Olanike Orie served on my committee and offered valuable advice and feedback on both my methods and my ideas. In addition, Dr. Orie’s support to me and other graduate students as we sought to place our stamp on the Interdisciplinary Program in Linguistics has been invaluable. Nathalie Dajko’s detailed feedback on the prospectus and dissertation made my project infinitely better. Judie Maxwell’s courses have been infinitely important in shaping the ways I think about the intersections of language, culture, and society. I also owe gratitude to Dr. Maxwell for the opportunity to visit Guatemala and learn Kaqchikel as well as to work with the Tunica language revitalization project.

I have been unbelievably fortunate to study at Tulane University with a group of fellow students, both in the Interdisciplinary Program in Linguistics and in the Linguistic Anthropology program, who have become not just classmates and cohort-mates, but friends. Nathan Wendte, Andrew Abdalian, Lisa Sprowls, Rebecca Moore, Jarrette Allen, Craig Alcantara, Troy Spier, Taofeeq Adebayo, and Isaac Muhando have all challenged me as a linguist and supported me as a friend. I am forever in their debt.

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SECTION 1.
FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND HYPOTHESES

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation presents an account of New Orleans Latinx English (NOLAE), an emergent variety of American English spoken by Latinxs in the New Orleans area, including Orleans Parish and adjacent Jefferson Parish. The discussion, articulated within Zentella’s (1981, 1995, 1997, 2003) anthropopolitical linguistics, seeks to not just describe the ways in which this linguistic variety incorporates markers of Spanish as a heritage language and localized features of traditionally New Orleans varieties of American English, but also to account for the role of the sociocultural context in constraining and shaping the development of NOLAE. The end goal of the work is to contribute to the demarginalization of NOLAE by illustrating that NOLAE is a socially and linguistically salient ethnolinguistic repertoire spoken by Latinxs in the city. NOLAE, I demonstrate here, shares many characteristics of established linguistic codes. It displays both diachronic and synchronic variation, and is used by speakers in creative ways to perform identity work. NOLAE is also socially salient, as both Latinxs and non-Latinxs recognize the distinctly Latinx linguistic performance, and Latinxs perceive their linguistic performance as being socially marked. Thus, by not just focusing on linguistic characteristics but by also demonstrating that social ideologies function to marginalize
speakers of NOLAE, this dissertation aims to contribute to a process of demarginalizing these speakers.

In this dissertation, I apply data from a series of sociolinguistic interviews ($n = 33$) conducted with Latinxs in New Orleans in 2017 and 2018 as well as data excerpted from archived oral history interviews conducted with Latinxs in the city between 1986 and 1996 in order to pursue a tripartite exploration of NOLAE. First, I consider the evolution of NOLAE through comparative/contrastive descriptive linguistic analysis. I explore the changes in vowel realizations evident in comparing linguistic performance in the pre-Katrina subset with performance in the contemporary corpus. Second, I focus on the contemporary sample, pursuing a quantitative sociolinguistic analysis that considers realization of /æ/, a well-acknowledged linguistic marker of American English dialects (Labov, 1991) and prosodic rhythm, a more recently established marker of Latinx Englishes (Carter, 2005; Carter, Sims, & Lopez, 2014; Fought & Fought, 2002; Robles-Puentes, 2014). The analysis demonstrates synchronic variation in NOLAE and illustrates how this variation can be accounted for using traditional sociolinguistic characteristics and a more modern approach to social network modeling. Third, I analyze NOLAE in terms of evidence of Latinx Threat Narratives (LTN) (Chavez, 2008), illustrating that LTN discourses are highly salient in the city, and function to constrain access to unmarked linguistic identities among local Latinxs.

This chapter serves to introduce the current work. In section 1.2, I more fully define the object of inquiry, elaborating on the nature of NOLAE. In section 1.3, I provide my research questions. Section 1.4 introduces several critical theoretical constructs that frame the current work. In section 1.5, I introduce the population sample,
the methodologies I apply, and provide an initial rationale for my chosen linguistic
variables. This chapter concludes, in section 1.6, with an outline of the dissertation.

1.2 Defining the object of inquiry

I have stated that this dissertation is primarily concerned with NOLAE, which I
deﬁned above as an ethnolinguistic repertoire spoken by Latinxs in New Orleans and the
surrounding area. In this section I want to provide some additional context to what I mean
by the term. The community referred to as ‘Latinx’ is by no means monolithic, but is
instead composed of a variety of people from various national, cultural, and linguistic
backgrounds, including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Honduran,
Guatemalan, and several others. Even within these groupings there is considerable
heterogeneity. Sluyter, Watkins, Chaney, & Gibson, (2015), in their discussion of the
New Orleans Latinx community, identify several primary groups of Spanish heritage
currently residing in the city. These include Isleños, Mexicans, Cubans, Hondurans,
Guatemalans, and Salvadorans. My own previous work has considered Puerto Ricans in
the city. It is clear that the umbrella term ‘Latinx,’ in the context of New Orleans, refers
to a broad and diverse group of people.

My treatment here references Latinxs in New Orleans as a uniﬁed community
with a corresponding linguistic code, which I call New Orleans Latinx English, or
NOLAE. This is by no means intended to erase the internal differences within the
community, but is a choice intended to foreground the shared experience of being Latinx
in New Orleans and highlight how individual speakers invoke linguistic resources in
order to construct and negotiate latinidad. This clariﬁcation is particularly relevant in
light of the discussion in chapters 7 and 8 of the role of LTN discourses in shaping
linguistic performance. One of the core tenets of LTN discourses references the perceived homogeneity of the Latinx community in ways reminiscent of what Zentella (1995) terms the ‘chiquitafication’ of U.S. Latinxs. My use of Latinx as a generalized label for the community and of NOLAE to reference the entirety of the linguistic resources invoked by Latinxs is driven by the repeated affirmation of my participants of a sense of community among local Latinxs of diverse national heritage, defined, in many cases, in opposition to not just the local Anglo culture, but other minority communities. While my participants were careful to reject attempts to erase the diversity within the Latinx community, they were also quick to affirm a sense of solidarity across the various national groups composing the Latinxs community. For example, Sasha says, “the Latino communities band, band together and they sort of create this insular community” (030, 12-13).

The internal diversity of the Latinx communities in the city has important linguistic consequences that are relevant to the current project and help to motivate the decision to treat NOLAE as a unified code across intra-Latinx communities. Michael Newman and Peter Slomanson, in their treatment of the English spoken by Latinxs in New York City, argue that the linguistic performance in their data is distinguished from ethnically specified varieties of Latinx English such as Chicanx English or Puerto Rican English in that, because of the diversity of the Latinx community in New York City, it incorporates Spanish markers across ethnic boundaries (Newman, 2003, 2010; Newman & Slomanson, 2003; Slomanson & Newman, 2004). I argue here that a similar process is in effect in New Orleans. NOLAE, because of the diversity of the New Orleans Latinx
communities, is a unifying construct that becomes a marker of Pan-Latinx identity in the city.

While it is common in sociolinguistics to speak of ethnolects (Clyne, 2000), I prefer to invoke Benor’s (2008, 2010) ethnolinguistic repertoire framework. She defines ethnolinguistic repertoires as “a fluid set of linguistic resources that members of an ethnic group may use variably as they index their ethnic identities” (160). In additional work on the New York City Latinx community by Negrón (2014), it is made clear that Latinxs in the city construct a pan-ethnic latinity discursively, drawing elements from a shared ethnolinguistic repertoire. NOLAE, I argue, functions similarly. NOLAE is a repertoire of linguistic resources commanded by Latinx speakers in the city. Specific linguistic performance can vary widely across speakers, and can vary within speakers depending on context and on the type of identity work being performed in the specific situation. What is clear from the discussion, however, is that NOLAE is socially conceptualized as distinct from other varieties of English use in New Orleans, and thus merits continued attention in the sociolinguistic research program that seeks to understand how English is used in the city.

Another benefit of the use of ethnolinguistic repertoire as an organizing construct in this work is that it allows us to avoid the erasure of internal diversity that can be inherent in reference to Chicanx English, Puerto Rican English, or other dialectal labels. NOLAE, as an ethnolinguistic repertoire, refers to the entire range of features invoked by Latinxs in New Orleans in constructing a Latinx identity. However, individual speakers can vary in terms of which features they chose to employ. This variation can occur along
lines of gender, generation, socioeconomic status, national heritage, or any other vector of diversity, as well as along contextual lines.

Additionally, traditional discussions of ethnolects can suffer from what Rosa & Flores (2017) identify as a problem with distinctiveness approaches, as they rely on the assumption that “racial categories are equated with empirically distinctive sets of linguistic features” (11). They instead advocate beginning by considering how certain linguistic features become enregistered (Agha, 2005) as distinctive sets of features indexing a particular racial identity. By conceptualizing NOLAE as an ethnolinguistic repertoire, I articulate it as not a concrete, distinctive set of linguistic features, but instead as a range of linguistic features having undergone raciolinguistic enregisterment (Agha, 2005; Rosa & Flores, 2017) and invoked by Latinxs in the city as part of the linguistic process of identity articulation. In particular, in section 4 I illustrate that the sociopolitical context articulates ‘Spanish’ and ‘accented English’ as a raciolinguistically enregistered icon of threat, thus constraining the linguistic choices available to Latinxs in the city.

1.3 Research questions

This project aims to answer several broad questions. First, how does English use among Latinxs in contemporary New Orleans compare to English use among the same population pre-Katrina? Second, can social networks account for patterns of synchronic variation in contemporary NOLAE? Third, are LTN discourses a salient component of the New Orleans sociolinguistic context, and, if so, what role do these play in shaping linguistic performance in the city? Each of these questions becomes the foundation for one of the major methodological strategies employed in this dissertation and for one of results sections of this dissertation.
1.4 Conceptual frames

In this dissertation I respond to Zentella’s call for an anthropolitical linguistics with an account of NOLAE that incorporates quantitative analysis of the role of social network composition in shaping language performance and qualitative analysis of the role of the Latinx Threat Narrative (Chavez, 2008) in shaping the nature of the sociocultural context in which Latinxs language usage in New Orleans occurs. The goal of my work is to combine quantitative and qualitative analytical mechanisms in order to query the underlying sociocultural realities that serve to constrain the range of linguistic performance choices available to Latinxs in an effort to increase access to positive linguistic identities for Latinxs. In this section I will elaborate on Zentella’s anthropolitical linguistics as well as introduce the analytic frames of both the quantitative and qualitative components of an anthropolitical approach to NOLAE.

1.4.2 Anthropolitical linguistics

Ana Celia Zentella (1995, 1997, 2003) introduces the concept of an ‘anthropolitical linguistics,’ which forms the primary theoretical framework in which the current project is articulated. Zentella (1997) notes that the development of anthropolitical linguistics emerged from recognition that the families she worked with failed to transmit bilingualism across generations because they “were more concerned, justifiably, about factors that affected their families’ life chances” (13). Thus, their linguistic choices were constrained by the sociopolitical context in ways that drove them to choices that were, ultimately, against their best interests. Anthropolitical linguistics, as defined by Zentella, seeks to combine methodological mechanisms from linguistic anthropology and variationist sociolinguistics in order to “understand and facilitate a
stigmatized group’s attempts to construct a positive self within an economic and political context that relegates its members to static and disparaged ethnic, racial, and class identities, and that identifies them with static and disparaged linguistic codes” (13). Anthropolitical linguistics is articulated as a response to the need to frame issues of language attrition, shift, and loss “in relation to the ‘real Americans are monolingual English speakers’ ideology they reflect” (Zentella, 1995, 2).

Zentella (2003) takes note of the precarious position of Latinxs attempting to navigate Anglo public spaces in the United States, particularly in light of the privileging of monolingualism noted above. She notes that attempting to assimilate linguistically is problematic as it confirms linguistic purity as a legitimate goal, even though this goal is unobtainable for a large number of Latinxs. However, refusing to linguistically assimilate subjects Latinxs to ongoing social framing as “dangerous and in need of control” (53). She proposes an ‘anthropolitical linguistics’ that aims to make explicit the connection between language and politics. She advocates for analyses that “place individuals in the day to day networks and experiences that shape their language” and “address the political and social conditions that determine their linguistic and cultural capital, and the repercussions for their lives” (Zentella, 1995, 15).

Anthropolitical linguistics as a sociolinguistic construct serves as the primary frame for my work. I incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to developing a robust account of linguistic performance among Latinxs in post-Katrina New Orleans. My approach not only seeks to demonstrate the linguistic viability of NOLAE as an ethnolinguistic repertoire deserving continued sociolinguistic attention, but also seeks to develop an ethnographically informed account of how localized discourses shape the
sociolinguistic context in ways that constrain and restrict the types of linguistic identity work available to Latinxs. In this way I look to not only demarginalize NOLAE by positioning it as an important component on the local linguistic context, but also contribute to discussions of how the social marginalization of Latinxs can be traced to an underlying ideological positioning of Latinxs as threat, that is then rearticulated in locally salient discourses. My goal then is multifaceted: I aim to position NOLAE as a linguistically viable ethnolinguistic code while also explicating the political and social ideologies that constrain the linguistic identity work available to Latinxs in the city.

1.3.3 Quantitative analysis:

Social networks

Sociolinguistic applications of social network theory trace back to Milroy & Milroy’s (1978) innovative study of the role of social network density and multiplexity in shaping linguistic variation in Belfast. Subsequent research has shown that social networks function to constrain language use in a variety of contexts, ranging from British adolescents (Edwards, 1986) to Cajun English ((Dubois & Horvath, 1998b). This work fits generally into two categories: research on the role of ego networks, focusing on characteristics of an individual’s network ties, and research on the role of network structure, focusing on the network geometry and the importance on an individual’s positioning within the structure (Sharma, 2017).

My approach is to focus on the social network geometry, drawing heavily on Dodsworth & Benton's (2017) approach to modeling social networks in Raleigh. I construct a bipartite affiliation network based on participant neighborhood affiliations. I then project this network to the participant level and calculate two network metrics: a
depth score (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Moody & White, 2003) and harmonic centrality (Marchiori & Latora, 2000; Rochat, 2009). I treat these metrics as operationalizing neighborhood affiliation as a locally meaningful social construct that I posit will shape linguistic performance.

1.3.4 Qualitative analysis:

Latinx Threat Narrative

According to Leo Chavez (2008) U.S. discourses on immigration and citizenship with regard to Latinxs are driven by an underlying articulation of Latinxs as threats. Under this conception, Latinxs in general and Mexican-Americans in particular, are positioned as threats to the American way of life. Carter (2014) expands on this work to describe how linguistic performance among Latinx middle school students is shaped and constrained by localized rearticulations of national discourses of Latinx Threat. Crucially, Carter argues that this rearticulation of national threat discourses at the local level incorporates the iconization of Spanish as an emblem of latinidad. Thus, the use of Spanish, or Spanish-influenced English is associated with threat by Anglo listeners in a process I refer to as ‘chain iconization.’

I argue here that the LTN underpins many of the theoretical constructs articulated by scholars to represent the sociocultural reality of Latinx communities in the United States. Discussions of Mock Spanish (Hill, 1998), Latinx language use in white public space (Urciuoli, 1996), and raciolinguistic attribution of racialized language characteristics (Rosa & Flores, 2017) all incorporate elements of the articulation of Spanish as Latinx and Latinx as threat. In essence, much of the discourse surrounding Latinxs in the United States has at its roots the articulation of Latinxs as threat. In this
claim I, again, follow Zentella, who links anti-Latinx rhetoric with Anglo fear of shifting national demographics, arguing that “the ‘chiquitafication’ and demonization of US Latino cultures and languages are fearful reactions to being engulfed by Latino hordes – a way of cutting the enemy down to size” (Zentella, 1995:12).

1.3.5 Third wave sociolinguistics

Eckert (2012, 2018) classifies variationist sociolinguistic research in terms of three waves. The first wave took large scale demographic categories as predictors and illustrated that these predictors correlated with linguistic variation in predictable ways. Early work such as Labov’s work on post-vocalic ‘r’ in New York City (Labov, 1972c) focused on how these large-scale demographic categories were implicated in shaping linguistic performance. The second wave moved beyond predetermined large-scale categories, applying ethnographic principles to explore how meaningful social categories were locally constructed. For example, Eckert’s (2000) work in a Detroit area high school took into account the locally salient stratification of the student population into ‘jocks’ and ‘burnouts.’ She found that by incorporating these locally meaningful categories into the analysis, the role of traditional categories like ‘gender’ became clearer. The third wave makes explicit the ways in which speakers function “as stylistic agents, tailoring linguistic styles in…projects of self-construction” (Eckert, 2012:97-98). Moore (2004), for example, highlights how a specific group of high school girls modified patterns of first person ‘were’ usage in concert with changing lifestyle patterns. Podesva (2004) examines how a medical student shifts his patterns of /l/ release as he navigates different contexts within his daily life.
The analysis of post-vocalic /r/ in Schoux-Casey (2013) can be articulated as a locally grounded instantiation of third-wave sociolinguistic analysis. She illustrates that post-vocalic r-lessness has been constructed as not just a linguistic feature, but as a semiotic resource that speakers command in order to self-position as ‘local’ and ‘authentic.’ In the post-Katrina context, speakers have redefined the indexical value of post-vocalic r-lessness, participating in the semiotic process of associating linguistic variables with social meaning or enregisterment (Agha, 2005). This type of analysis clearly moves beyond treating a linguistic variable as indexing identity, instead illustrating that speakers are actively participating in the re-definition of the indexical value of r-lessness while consciously invoking this feature in identity construction.

My work here clearly is influenced by both first and second wave sociolinguistics research. I take as a primary target population ‘Latinxs’ as a large-scale category, and consider the roles of gender, education, and generation. I also incorporate second-wave emphasis on locally meaningful categories, as I incorporate metrics calculated on affiliation networks based on neighborhood affiliations. This choice is specifically driven by the insight that neighborhoods are locally meaningful aggregating constructs both for Latinxs in the city as well as New Orleanians in general. However, I advocate a third-wave approach in my overall conceptualization of NOLAE. I argue that NOLAE is best conceptualized as an ethnolinguistic repertoire or a set of linguistic resources from which speakers variably drawn in order to negotiate an identity that foregrounds or backgrounds latinidad depending on context. Thus, speakers in my sample are not restricted to robotically reproducing linguistic variables indexing specific identities, but instead
actively participate in the negotiation of both their personal identities and the meaning of
the linguistic variables.

1.3.6 Summary of the conceptual frame

Based on Zentella’s (1995, 1997, 2003) call for an anthropolitical linguistics, I
have crafted a project that incorporates methods and mechanisms from across a variety of
disciplines in an effort to contribute to the process of demarginalizing a traditionally
marginalized ethnolinguistic community. I do this by drawing on two important
structuring constructs. The first is social network graph theory (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011),
which posits that social affiliation networks (Davis, Gardner, & Gardner, 1941) function
to constrain social behavior. My application of this construct to linguistic performance
has its roots in early work by Milroy & Milroy (1978) and Milroy (1987) as well as more
recent innovations (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Sharma, 2017). The second construct
that serves to frame my analysis is the Latinx Threat Narrative (Chavez, 2008). This
narrative positions Latinxs as threat and, by articulating Spanish as an icon of latinidad
(Carter, 2014), links Spanish to threat. I demonstrate in this dissertation that these two
constructs are both crucially implicated in shaping Latinx linguistic performance in New
Orleans.

1.4 Sample and Methodology

The bulk of the analysis presented in this dissertation is based on a series of
sociolinguistic interviews that I conducted with Latinxs living in Orleans and Jefferson
Parishes\(^1\) during 2017 and 2018 (\(n = 33\)). In addition, this data was supplemented with a

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\(^1\) The state of Louisiana is divided into ‘parishes’ in the same way that other U.S. states are divided into
‘counties.’
subset of interviews \((n = 10)\) excerpted from an archived collection of oral histories conducted with Latinxs in New Orleans in the 1980s and 1990s by Beatrice Rodriguez Owsley, currently housed at the University of New Orleans. The analysis, as described throughout this dissertation, occurred along three primary lines of inquiry. First, I conducted a contrastive analysis of the vowel spaces of Latinxs in pre-Katrina and post-Katrina New Orleans. Second, I conducted a variationist investigation of synchronic variation in the post-Katrina sample, focusing on /æ/ realization as a marker of local linguistic identity and on prosodic timing as a marker of Spanish influence. Third, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the role of LTN discourses in shaping language use among New Orleans Latinxs. Greater detail for each methodological approach can be found in chapter 3, as well as in the chapters reporting the results of each individual approach.

The linguistic analysis presented in sections 2 and 3 of this dissertation includes attention to three variables. These variables were each selected because existing research on American Englishes, Latinx Englishes, and New Orleans English suggests that they will be highly salient linguistic variables in the current context. The first is vowel space realizations. This variable is an area of focus because it has been identified as a highly salient marker both of varieties of North American Englishes (Labov, Ash, & Boberg, 2006; Thomas, 2001) and of Latinx Englishes (Carter, Sims, & López, 2014; Fought, 2003; Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004). I expect, based on this literature, vowel realizations to be highly salient features of NOLAE. The second variable in the realization of a particular vowel. The low-front vowel /æ/ has been noted as one of the two primary identifying markers of North American English varieties (Labov, 1991) and has been
argued to be a salient marker of traditional New Orleans English as well as an ongoing change-in-progress in New Orleans speech patterns (Carmichael, 2014; Labov, 2007). This variables is thus posited as an important feature of New Orleans English based on previous research in the city as well as particularly relevant to Latinx English use in the city based on earlier observations of the importance of this variable among Latinx speakers of English (Carter et al., 2014; Thomas, 2001). The final variable I consider here is prosodic timing. While early studies proposed a neat bifurcation between syllable-timed and stressed-timed languages (Pike, 1945), recent methodological innovations (Grabe & Low, 2002) have allowed for the objective quantification of prosodic timing, which in turn has led to a burgeoning research program that firmly positions timing as a salient marker of Latinx English use (Fought & Fought, 2002; Carter, 2005; Robles-Puentes, 2014; Carter et al., 2014; Shousterman, 2014). Based on this body of literature, I expect prosodic timing to be an important variable in the analysis of NOLAE.

1.5 Outline of the dissertation

Section 1 is titled ‘Foundations.’ This section includes the first three chapters of the dissertation and functions to establish the setting for the research reported here. In this section I introduce the conceptual framework for the current project as well as introduce the population sample being considered here and the methodologies brought to bear on the research questions detailed in chapter 1. Section 2 is titled ‘Contrastive description of diachronic variation in NOLAE.’ This section includes chapter 4, which is investigates the evolution of vocalic realization in NOLAE. In this section I contrast range of vowel realizations evident in each sample and posit some generalizations regarding the contrasts. This section illustrates that NOLAE is a dynamic linguistic code, evolving over
time in ways that are reflective of the changing demographics of the local Latinx communities. Section 3 includes chapters 5 and 6, and is titled ‘Quantitative sociolinguistic analysis of NOLAE.’ This section investigates the role of traditional sociolinguistic variables and of social network geometry in shaping linguistic performance in the community. This section demonstrates that synchronic variation can be accounted for in terms of the sociolinguistic variables proposed here and elsewhere in sociolinguistic literature. This section, along with section 2, serves to establish NOLAE as a linguistically salient ethnolinguistic repertoire that functions as a marker of latinidad in the city. Section 4 is titled ‘Qualitative exploration of the sociolinguistic context.’ In this section, which includes chapters 7 and 8, I elaborate on the role of LTN discourses in shaping the sociolinguistic context in New Orleans. This section illustrates that NOLAE is socially salient, and that speakers manipulate the linguistic resources that form part of NOLAE in response to their perceptions of the nature of the sociolinguistic context. Section 5, titled ‘Conclusions,’ concludes the dissertation with chapter 9, which includes a discussion of conclusions suggested by the data and analysis presented in this dissertation, and also articulates the implications of my work for research in U.S. Latinx communities, research on language in New Orleans, and sociolinguistic research in general.
CHAPTER 2.

NEW ORLEANS AS A RESEARCH CONTEXT

“If there is a place where it is possible to form anything like the correct idea of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel, it certainly is New Orleans.”

– C. D. Arfwedson (1834)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to establish the setting for the dissertation by describing the sociolinguistic context in which the current research was conducted. As a major port city, New Orleans has always included significant cultural diversity. While the French officially founded the city in 1718, archaeological evidence shows traces of habitation in the region dating from many generations prior. Control of New Orleans passed to the Spanish in the early 1760s. While the region was officially returned to the French in 1800, it remained under Spanish administration until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, under which the city passed to American control. This was followed by significant migration to the city from other parts of the United States. The result of this colonial history, fairly unique among major American cities, is an extremely diverse population and a cultural and linguistic landscape that is unique among major American cities.

The city proper, as of the 2010 census, had a population of 342,829. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the demographic break-down of the population.
Table 2.1
Population of New Orleans in 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>206,871</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (Not Hispanic/Latino)</td>
<td>113,428</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>18,051</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9,970</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see here that African-Americans continue to be the largest demographic group in the city, followed by Whites, with the Hispanic/Latinx population being the next largest group, although significantly smaller than the two largest groups. As of 2017 Census Bureau estimates, the city’s population was 393,292.

For the purpose of the current work, what I refer to interchangeably as ‘New Orleans,’ ‘the New Orleans area,’ or ‘the region’ includes all of Orleans Parish and parts of Jefferson Parish, in particular, Metairie, Old Metairie, Kenner, and the Westbank area, the area directly across the Mississippi River, including the towns of Gretna, Harvey, and Terrytown (see Figure 2.2). The primary motivation for the inclusion of these selected areas is two-fold: First, they are part of the metro area and are part of the popular imagining of the city boundaries. That is, while not technically part of New Orleans, people from Kenner, for example, will often tell you they live in New Orleans. Second, they are home to a rapidly growing and highly salient Latinx community. Participants in my interviews regularly expressed sentiments similar to those expressed here by Teresa, a 51 year-old first generation immigrant from Guatemala who has lived in New Orleans for 26 years.

(1) Teresa: But um, if you, if you look at them from the Uptown point of view
it’s different than if you go to Kenner
it’s a totally different point of view.
TDL: How is it different in Kenner?
Teresa: Kenner is ninety percent Hispanic, you know.
So there like, it’s a different world.
It’s like if you travel to our countries.
When you go there you know the restaurants, everything you know.
So they are, I think they feel more comfortable there.
I think that the ones that come Uptown are mostly to work, either to work or to study.
But you don’t have a lot of Hispanic people living even Uptown
I found it with my daughter and my daughter’s classes, schools.
None of her classmates, you know, eh, Hispanics live here in Uptown.
They mostly live in Kenner or the Westbank.

(Teresa, 18-31)²

Thus, as these communities are part of the local imagined community, I include them in this research, while recognizing the value of continued research into the potential for further linguistic stratification among these communities. Figure 2.1 is a map of Louisiana, and figure 2.2 is an enlarged view of the area under consideration in the current work.

² Transcripts are included as Appendix B. Parenthetical citations reference pseudonyms and line numbers.
Figure 2.1. Map of Louisiana.
This primary argument that I intend to develop in this chapter is that New Orleans, as Varela (1992) notes, has always been and continues to be defined by its’ cultural and linguistic diversity. She writes,

Since long before the previously mentioned American ‘melting pot,’ Louisiana was already famous for being a ‘pot’ of Indians, French, Spaniards, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Englishmen, Portuguese, Dutch, Mexicans, Africans, Quarteroons, and North Americans from Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New England, and New York.

This oft-cited cultural diversity, as we will see throughout this chapter, is a persistent theme in observations of the city throughout history. As Plyer and Gardere (2018) note, “there is no doubt that New Orleans’ global reputation is now and has long been dominated by its distinctive culture” (6). This cultural diversity translates to significant linguistic diversity. Popular myths about the cultural and linguistic landscape in the city invariably function to erase, in a sense reminiscent of Irvine and Gal (2000), this diversity by focusing on a single element of the context and obscuring the role of other elements. My primary claim in this chapter is that understanding New Orleans as a sociolinguistic landscape requires foregrounding the diversity of heritage. The blending of cultures and languages is precisely what defines the city.

The remainder of this chapter will serve to elaborate this claim, particularly in reference to language use in the region. Section 2 of this chapter will provide a brief sketch of the cultural and political history of the city. Section 3 will articulate the linguistic history of the city, including attention to the roles of Native American languages, French, Spanish, and English. Section 4 will highlight the existing
sociolinguistic treatments that describe the current linguistic landscape of New Orleans. This chapter will conclude by discussing several myths regarding language in New Orleans and will argue that New Orleans is best understood as a cultural and linguistic amalgamation whose strength is derived from its diversity.

2.2 History of New Orleans

By the time Europeans arrived in the area that was to become New Orleans, the region had been inhabited by Native American groups for several thousand years. The Marksville culture flourished in what is now southeastern Louisiana as early as 100 BCE. At the time of the European invasion, several Native American groups were in the region, including the Annochy, the Bayougoula, the Houma, the Mugulasha, the Tangipahoa, the Acolapissa, the Chitimacha, the Washa, the Atakapa, the Opelousa, the Tunica, the Natchez, and the Biloxi.

While Spanish explorers arrived in the area in the 1500s, the city of ‘La Nouvelle Orleans’ was founded by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville in 1718. Several important waves of emigration shaped the cultural make-up of the city over the subsequent half century. German settlers arrived in 1721 and 1722. An influx of enslaved people arrived between 1719 and 1724. Acadians, francophone settlers from what is now Nova Scotia, arrived in the area during the Spanish period due to political pressure from the British government who feared they would side with the French during the French and Indian War. The Treaty of Paris ended this war in 1763, ceding French territories in Canada and east of the Mississippi to Great Britain, with the exception of Louisiana, which had been ceded to Spain in the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762. New Orleans, at this point, passed to Spanish control (Guenin-Lelle, 2016).
New Orleans was administered by the Spanish from 1762-1800, when the territory was retroceded to France via the Treaty of San Ildefonso. Residents of the city were, according to Garvey & Widmer (2013), initially unaware of the transfer of control of the city to the Spanish. The Spanish crown was hesitant to assume control of the territory and no effort to take official control was made until the appointment of Don Antonio de Ulloa in 1765 (Guenin-Lelle, 2016). Ulloa failed, however, to establish a stable government, and was expelled from the territory in 1768 (Guenin-Lelle, 2016). Don Alejandro O’Reilly was then sent by the Spanish king to establish order in the region. O’Reilly established Spanish control over Louisiana, and was succeeded by a series of Spanish governors who governed the region until the signing of the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, which returned political control of the colony to France.

The Spanish period was a period of population growth, including both small numbers of Spanish speakers, additional French immigrants, and the on-going influx of people of African heritage. The later years of the Spanish period and the early years of the American period also saw significant numbers of Haitian immigrants. In addition, this period saw significant infrastructure improvements, included the rebuilding of the city following the second of two major fires, which is responsible for the strikingly Spanish architectural elements observed throughout the French Quarter (Garvey & Widmer, 2013). Guenin-Lelle (2016) also notes the influence of the Spanish on the architectural landscape of the city due to continued efforts to rebuild following three major hurricanes and two major fires. However, Span’s hesitancy to assume administrative responsibility of the city has to be seen as at least partially implicated in the claims of a lack of enduring, salient Spanish cultural and linguistic remnants in the city.
In 1803, following the Louisiana Purchase, political control over New Orleans and the rest of the region passed to the United States. French representatives assumed control of the city in November of 1803, as mandated by the 1800 Treaty of San Ildefonso. Less than a month later, William C. C. Claiborne and James Wilkinson took command of the city. Louisiana became a state in 1812, shortly before the outbreak of the War of 1812 between the United States and England. The Battle of New Orleans served as the final major battle of the conflict, as American troops, an amalgamation of Acadians, Germans, slaves and free blacks, Creoles, Kentuckians, Tennesseans, and buccaneers, under the command of Major General Andrew Jackson, defeated the British.

The subsequent years, leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, represented a period of growth and development, with the city regularly ranking among the top destinations in the United States for immigration (Campanella, 2006). Significant numbers of German and Irish immigrants arrived in the 1830s and 1840s (Campanella, 2006). In the decades preceding Louisiana’s vote to secede, in 1861, the population of New Orleans grew to 168,000, at the time the fifth largest city in the nation and the largest population center in the south (Lewis, 2003: 175). The city prospered as a major port city and as the largest cotton market in the world. For these and other reasons, the city was a target of Union troops. The city fell in 1862 and was occupied by Union troops. Federal forces remained in the city until 1877.

According to Garvey and Widmer (2013) the period of the Reconstruction was a dark time in the history of New Orleans, marked by “violence, lawlessness, and corruption” (197) as competing factions of freed African-Americans, former Confederate soldiers, and Union sympathizers vied for control of the city. During this period the
traditional tripartite racial categorization in place in the city, which distinguished between Whites, enslaved people, and free people of color, transitioned increasingly towards the White/Black perceptual dichotomy common throughout the southern United States (Campanella, 2010). In spite of rampant political corruption, the late nineteenth century saw an economic revival in the city, which continued through the early twentieth century, although temporarily derailed by the Depression. This period saw continued immigration, including significant numbers of Italian immigrants.

Following World War II, the city’s population continued to grow, resulting in explosive development beyond the Orleans Parish lines, although the growth rate in the city proper lagged behind other major southern population centers (Garvey & Widmer, 2013). In the mid-twentieth century New Orleans was at the center of the wide-spread racial tensions seen throughout the country. The desegregation of New Orleans schools in 1960, in which, to cite but one well-known example, federal marshals escorted six-year-old Ruby Bridges to a local elementary school, was a particularly salient example of the increased tension. One impact of this tension was that large numbers of white New Orleanians left Orleans Parish and settle outside of the city proper, first to the West and East of the city, and later on the Northshore, the area directly north of Lake Pontchartrain. Figure 2.3, taken from Plyer and Gardere (2018), illustrates that census data reflects this trend.
Figure 2.3. Population by race throughout the history of New Orleans.

In the five decades following World War II, from 1950-2000, New Orleans proper transitioned from 68% White and 32% African-American to 28% White and 67% African-American. The city has remained majority minority since 1980.

Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August 2005, and marks a major historical and cultural division in the history of the city. The storm was directly responsible for 1,200 deaths across the Gulf Coast (Blake, Landsea, & Gibney, 2011), mostly in New Orleans. Following the storm, fifty-three different levee breaches resulted in flooding of over eighty percent of the city (Garvey & Widmer, 2013). Ninety-five percent of the city was evacuated, and many residents were not permitted to return to the city as rebuilding efforts occurred. The population of the city has yet to recover to pre-Katrina levels, which
was 484,674 according to the 2000 census and is, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2017 estimate, currently 393,292.

From the perspective of the current work, Katrina’s strike provided the impetus for a significant demographic shift relating to Latinx communities in the city. In the 1990s and early 2000s, much of the American Southeast participated in a demographic shift that has been termed the ‘New Latinx South,’ whereby Spanish heritage communities drastically increased in size and social salience. Sluyter et al. (2015) argue that, based on available census data, “the city had simply not participated in the New Latino South over the 1990s” (10). They further note, however, that “the segregation of New Orleans from the surging Hispanic and Latino population of the New Latino South…changed suddenly when the Crescent City suffered extensive flood damage in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, attracting many workers to participate in the cleanup and reconstruction effort” (10). Sluyter et al. (2015) caution, however, that although there was certainly an increase in numbers of Latinxs arriving in New Orleans after Katrina, the raw numbers regarding the increase in the Latinx community have likely been overstated and misinterpreted. This is attributed to historical undercounting of Hispanics and Latinxs in census data, and to large numbers of people of Spanish-speaking heritage moving into the region from other parts of Louisiana.

In relation to my work, the crucial observation of Sluyter et al. (2015) is that the local Latinx community not just increased in numbers following Katrina, but also increased is social salience. They write,

As the reconstruction efforts began, an influx of Latino workers drove a visible proliferation of Spanish-language signage, taco trucks, Mexican and Central American money-wiring services, advertisers of Radio Tropical Caliente, an
Azteca America television station, English classes for Spanish speakers, demand for bilingual employees, and the numbers of Spanish-speaking patients at health clinics.

As this quote indicates, the Latinx community in New Orleans experienced significant increases in visibility. As I’ll further argue in chapter 3, this increased social salience can be traced to demographic shifts in the Latinx community as well as the fact that the increase in Latinx population was accompanied by a decrease in the non-Latinx population between 2000 and 2010. For my purposes, this increased social salience is more important than raw numerical increases, because research has noted that increased social salience often leads to increased proliferation of Latinx Threat Narrative discourses. The role of these discourses in shaping Latinx language use in New Orleans will be the topic of section 4 of this dissertation.

2.3 Linguistic history of New Orleans

The brief historical sketch in the previous section illustrates how the political control of the region passed from the Native American tribes native to the area to the French, then the Spanish, then the Americans, and how various groups, including French, Spanish, Africans, Germans, Acadians, Americans, Haitians, Hondurans, and others settled in the city. New Orleans has always, then, been an intensely diverse city. Bailey (2003) emphasizes this point with a quote from Samuel R. Brown, who in 1817 wrote,

Here in half an hour you can see, and speak to Frenchmen, Spaniards, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Englishmen, Portuguese, Hollanders, Mexicans, Kentuckians, Tennesseans, Ohioans, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, New Englanders, and a motley groupe [sic] of Indians, Quadroons, Africans, etc.
Likewise Bailey, (2003) observe that Louisiana and New Orleans in the early 1800s, was the most compactly multilingual place in the country: Amerindian and African languages, Caribbean creoles, German, Spanish, French, and English were all routinely spoken by persons permanently resident in New Orleans – and the brisk trading along the levee brought still more languages. While loyalties (and animosities) based on language were certainly strong, multilingualism was a fact of everyday life.

(365)

It is clear, then, that New Orleans at the time of the Louisiana Purchase was a strongly diverse linguistic landscape.

However, in actuality, the region was linguistically diverse before the arrival of the French. At the time of European conquest of the region, what became known as the Louisiana Territory was inhabited, as noted above, by a variety of Native American communities. A variety of Native American languages were spoken in the area. In addition, Mobilian Jargon, a pidgin language based primarily on Choctaw and incorporating elements from various Muskogean languages, was a crucial feature of the linguistic landscape as it was used as a lingua franca throughout the region. Scholars debate the origin of Mobilian Jargon, with some claiming it came about as a result of contact with the French, while others claim Mobilian predates the European arrival. Drechsel (1997) argues that one lingering impact of Mobilian Jargon on the current linguistic landscape of Southeast Louisiana is the word ‘bayou,’ which he argues entered the local English from Choctaw via Mobilian Jargon.

Bailey (2003) argues that, at the time of the Louisiana Purchase three European languages, in addition to English, were salient in the area: French, Spanish, and German. French is the language most saliently associated with the New Orleans identity,
particularly from an outside perspective. The French spoken in the region at the time of the Louisiana Purchase was not uniform. Dajko (2019a) discusses four varieties of French spoken in Louisiana, each of which has its foundations in the colonial period. French first arrived in the area in 1682 when Robert René Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle claimed the region for France. Colonial French is used to refer to variety of the language spoken by the earliest French settlers in the region. Picone (2015) proposes a variety of French he terms Plantation Society French to distinguish the French spoken by the newly arrived speakers, part of continued migration to the area from Europe, from the Colonial French spoken by these earliest settlers (Dajko, 2019a). As the French began importing slaves from Africa, the contact between French and African languages, including Bambara, Yoruba, and others, resulted in the creation of Louisiana Creole, a French-lexified creole language (Dajko, 2019b). Louisiana Regional French is the fourth major variety of French spoken in the region. This variety is partially rooted in Acadian French, the langue d’oïl spoken by the influx of francophone migrants from Nova Scotia who began settling in Louisiana in 1765 after being banished by the British in 1755 and that would have been a highly salient feature of the linguistic environment in the region at the time of the Louisiana Purchase. As (Dajko, 2019a) notes, however, it would be a mistake to claim that Louisiana Regional French is a clear descendent of Acadian French, considering the multiplicity of linguistic and cultural elements involved in its creation and evolution. While details concerning French in the region are beyond the scope of this project (see Dajko & Walton, 2019 for a more complete discussion), it is clear from the above discussion that multiple varieties of French were highly salient components of the linguistic landscape of New Orleans at the time of the Louisiana Purchase.
Eble (2009) argues that French is no longer a living language in New Orleans. She writes, “there is no movement to revive the French language in New Orleans. In New Orleans today, French is a piece of the city’s image. It is for fun and for funds” (215). Her argument is that the French spoken in the city exists primarily for the benefit of the tourism industry, claiming that as the city’s economic reliance on tourism has increased, so too has publically visible French linguistic elements.

In any case, it is clear that French has had a salient impact of the linguistic landscape of the city. Dajko (2018) notes that French enjoys a privileged position in the local imaginary of the region and remains “a language with which people identify.” Many lexical items often associated with the varieties of English spoken in the city have their origins in French. Eble (2009) lists several, including ‘banquette (sidewalk),’ ‘beignet (rectangular donut covered with powdered sugar),’ ‘mirliton (vegetable pear),’ and ‘flambaeu (torch carried in Mardi Gras parades).’ In addition, it has been claimed that certain lexicalized syntactic patterns, such as the oft-cited (though rarely attested) ‘make-groceries,’ originate with French influence.

Spanish was spoken in the area due to the political status of the city as the former capital of Spanish Louisiana. As noted above, the Spanish maintained administrative control over the city from 1762 until the Americans assumed control following the Louisiana Purchase. However, throughout the Spanish rule, large percentages of the population continued to speak French. Bailey (2003) notes that in the years following ceding control of the city first to the French and the to the Americans, the Spanish living in the city were small in number and politically marginalized, which is another reason why Spanish initially failed to have an enduring impact on the linguistic landscape of the
city. One notable exception is the Isleño community, descendants of settlers from the Canary Islands who settled in southeastern Louisiana in the late 18th century (Lipski, 1988). Language and identity among the Isleños, many of whom now live in St. Bernard Parish, east of New Orleans, has been explored by Felice Coles (2003, 2012).

While the enduring influence of colonial Spanish may have been minimal, later waves of immigrants from Spanish speaking countries re-established Spanish as a salient linguistic feature of the city. Varela (1992) notes that Latin American immigration to New Orleans increased significantly following the Second World War. Among these groups, sociolinguistic work has only been done in the Cuban community, which can be traced to Cuban refugees who settled in the city while fleeing the Castro regime. Varela (1974) argues that the Cuban community in the city at the time, which she claims numbered approximately 15,000, spoke a variety of Spanish that evidenced some lexical and phonetic influences from English. However, it was her contention, at the time, that the Cuban community in the city was not in danger of shifting to English monolinguism. While it appears, forty years later, that the descendants of these original refugees have, in fact, transitioned to English, Varela’s work is important in that it was an early example of academic recognition of the re-emergence of Spanish as a key component of the New Orleanian linguistic context.

German was also spoken in the city at that time. A small group of German settlers was established on the Mississippi coast in 1722 and this group attracted later waves of German settlers (Merrill, 2005). German continued to be salient in the region at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, as C. C. Robin and B. Duvalon noted in 1803, writing, “the Germans still retained their language and were easy to recognize because of their accents
and light complexions” (quoted in Merrill, 2005). Tolzmann (2005) claims that in 1870 one-fifth of the population of New Orleans was of German heritage. Two major factors seem to have conspired to limit the lasting influence of German culture and language in the region. First, anti-German sentiment during the World Wars took a major toll. From 1918-1921, it was illegal to teach or speak the German language (Tolzmann, 2005). Second, the German population assimilated heavily with the larger cultural groups in the region (R. W. Bailey, 2003; Merrill, 2005). While German has not had a significant impact on the spoken language used in the city, the language and culture of German immigrants has left a lasting impact. One visible reminder can be found in New Orleans’ famous cemeteries, where there are often large numbers of tombs bearing German names and inscriptions. For example, St. Roch Cemetery, established by the German priest Father Peter Leonhard Thevis (Dedek, 2017), evidences significant German influence.

English was already being spoken in the city at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, and, in the years following, rapidly transitioned into a position of dominance (Bailey, 2003). Duden’s letters, published in Germany in 1829, which advised potential immigrants to the city to learn English, at least in part as “a sure protection against the annoying arrogance” of American English speakers (quoted in Bailey, 2003). Following the assumption of control of the city by the Americans in 1803, large groups of migrants from various parts of the United States began arriving in New Orleans. In particular, large groups of settlers arrived from Kentucky and Tennessee (Garvey & Widmer, 2013). Several varieties of English were spoken in the city, many of which were stigmatized and subjected to ridicule. This included English spoken by Irish immigrants and the English spoken by the aforementioned Kentuckians (Bailey, 2003).
In addition to the Native American languages and European languages spoken in the city at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, African languages were also an important part of the linguistic context. According to Sublette (2009), 5,951 enslaved African people arrived in New Orleans during the period of French control of the city, beginning in 1719. The majority of the enslaved people were from Senegal. While exact numbers for the Spanish period are harder to ascertain, it is known that this period included a higher influx of slaves from Kongo-Angola region of Africa. These slaves would have arrived speaking a range of languages, including Mande and Bantu languages. The languages and cultures of the Africans brought to the area indubitably contributed to the impression of New Orleans as a highly diverse sociolinguistic context.

New Orleans at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, then, already had a reputation as a multicultural and multilingual city. Native American languages, African languages, and European languages were all salient components of the linguistic landscape. After the purchase, English grew in influence, becoming the dominant language in the area. However, French, Spanish, German, Mobilian Jargon, and African languages continued to be salient features of the local linguistic landscape, in particular via proper nouns and local toponyms, and also in the distinctive lexical markers found in local speech. The following section will take up the current linguistic landscape in the city of New Orleans.

2.4 Contemporary linguistic panorama of the city

This section will focus primarily on the varieties of English spoken in the city. However, it is worth noting that New Orleans continues to be a multi-lingual city, as the above section notes it has always been. Data USA notes that the language other than English spoken by the most people in New Orleans is Spanish and that the city includes a
higher than average number of French and Vietnamese speakers. Table 2.2 provides data on non-English languages spoken in New Orleans from the 2017 American Community Survey.

Table 2.2
Non-English languages in New Orleans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>17,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Indo-European languages</td>
<td>5,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Island languages</td>
<td>8,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other languages</td>
<td>1,986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the languages spoken throughout the city, the visual linguistic landscape contains many multilingual elements. Most significantly, proper names are often visually (if not always phonetically) French. Examples abound, including street names like Bienville, Iberville, and Chartres. Street names also evidence the Native American heritage of the city. One salient example is Tchoupitoulas Street, which has at least two origin stories. In one etymology, the word is a combination of Choctaw words meaning ‘those who reside at the river.’ In another legend, the word was coined by a Frenchman’s interpretation of the phrase ‘mudfish are all there’ in a local Native American language (Asher, 2014). In both cases, the Native American origin of the term is clear.

A major contention of the current project is that the increase in raw numbers of Latinxs in the city after 2005 was accompanied by a drastic increase in social salience. The above ACS data, illustrating that Spanish is, by far, the most often spoken language in the city apart from English, is one piece of evidence for the increased visibility of the Spanish language. Another piece of evidence for the increased social visibility of Spanish is that one can now see Spanish language grocery stores throughout the city.
As I noted above, the English spoken in New Orleans has been acknowledged to be, somewhat unexpectedly, understudied from a sociolinguistic perspective, leading Dajko et al. (2012) to comment, “it is widely acknowledged that there is a dearth of material on New Orleans English” (139). There have, however, been several popular publications dealing with English in the city. The most well-known may be *Yeah You Rite!*, a documentary film released in 1985 and produced and directed by Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker. Recently, New Orleans has received increased sociolinguistic consideration, including a special issue of *The Southern Journal of Linguistics* in 2012. The following is an overview of the existing literature on English in the city.

Early work often focused on lexical items and phonetic features, primarily post-vocalic r-lessness (Aubert-Gex, 1983; G. Bailey, 1986; Blanton, 1989; Brennan, 1983; Malin, 1972; Reinecke, 1951). More recently, Schou-Cassey’s (2013) dissertation, which addresses linguistic commodification in New Orleans, includes an overview of language varieties in the city that follows White-Sustaïta (2012) by positing the existence of five varieties of English in New Orleans: New Orleans African American English, Creole English, Y’at English (YE), Southern White English, and Mainstream American English. Carmichael (2014) argues that Creole English has not been documented in the city and is likely included due to social perceptions that are not necessarily grounded in actual linguistic performance. A significant portion of the existing work focuses on YE, including Coles (2003), Mucciaccio (2009), and Carmichael (2014, 2015). Eble (2009) discusses the commodification of French in the city, while Eble (2003) provides an overview of the literature existing to that point. New Orleans language use has also been described in two linguistic atlases: the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS)
(Pederson, McDaniel, & Adams, 1993), which includes data from thirteen speakers, and the Atlas of North American English (ANAE) (Labov et al., 2006), which includes data from eleven speakers. The Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE) also lists sixteen lexical items it notes as being associated with language use in New Orleans.

Identifying the most salient linguistic markers of New Orleans English is complicated by two factors, both of which have been referenced in the preceding discussion. First, the amount of information is limited. In many cases, accurate, updated information is simply not available. Second, there does not appear to be a single well-defined, strongly delineated New Orleans variety of American English. Instead, there are multiple varieties associated with the region, stratified in various ways. However, the majority of the research focuses on linguistic markers of YE, the white, working class variety that is most often associated with the city in popular imaginings. That is, in the popular imagining, YE is the authentic New Orleans English (Carmichael & Dajko, 2016; Coles, 1997, 2003; Mucciaccio, 2009). In the remainder of this section I will review some of the most commonly discussed features.

Early work by Reinecke (1951) and Brennan (1983) described patterns of post-vocalic non-rhoticity in New Orleans. More recently, Schoux-Casey (2013) and Carmichael (2014) elaborate on current patterns of post-vocalic /r/ realization. Another frequently noted marker of New Orleans English is a split short-a system, in which the low front unrounded vowel /æ/ is raised in certain phonetic contexts. According to Labov (2007), tensing takes place before nasals, /b/, /d/, and voiceless fricatives. However, Labov et al., (2006) and Carmichael (2014, 2015) note the possibility of an ongoing switch from the traditional split system to a nasal system similar to that found in many
other varieties of American English. Labov (2007) and Carmichael (2014, 2015) are among the scholars who have noted that New Orleanians lack the ‘cot-caught’ merger, often realizing /ɔ/ as raised. Carmichael (2014) also notes variable realization of the diphthong /aʊ/, including what has been called ‘Canadian raising,’ in which the initial vocalic element in the /aʊ/ diphthong is raised to /ʌ/ in words like ‘out’ and ‘about.’ Attested syntactic and/or lexical features include lexical items such as ‘neutral ground,’ the use of the locative ‘by’ to mean ‘to be at,’ the use of punctual ‘for’ as in ‘The store will close for four,’ and the use of local phrases such as ‘where y’at’ and ‘making groceries.’ Table 2.3 provides an overview of several previously described features of New Orleans English use. While this list is not comprehensive, it provides the most extensively described and most socially salient features. In other words, many of these features are what people have in mind when they speak of a New Orleans accent.

Carmichael (2014), from which much of table 2.3 is adapted, provides a comprehensive list of markers of YE.

Table 2.3
Markers of New Orleans English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Split /æ/</td>
<td>Tensing of /æ/ conditioned by the phonetic nature of the</td>
<td>‘man’ as [mæn]</td>
<td>(Carmichael, 2014, 2015; Labov, 2007; Reinecke, 1951)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised /ɔ/</td>
<td>following consonant.</td>
<td>‘bought’ as [bɔʔ] (Carmichael, 2014; Coles, 1997; Eble, 2003, 2006; Labov, 2007; Mucciaccio, 2009; Reinecke, 1951)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised /ɑʊ/</td>
<td>Raised realization of /ɔ/</td>
<td>‘house’ as [hɑʊs] (Carmichael, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/æ/ monophthongization</td>
<td>Realization of the diphthong /æ/ as a lengthened /æ/.</td>
<td>‘pride’ as [praːd] (Coles, 1997; Reinecke, 1951; Rubrecht, 1971)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative ‘by’</td>
<td>Use of ‘by’ to express the locative sense.</td>
<td>‘stay by’ to mean ‘live with’ (White-Sustaita, 2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctual ‘for’</td>
<td>Use of ‘for’ in time-related contexts typically using ‘at’ in standard AE.</td>
<td>“I’m coming to work for one o’clock tomorrow.” Targeted in Carmichael and Dajko’s ongoing work, but, to my knowledge, not specifically explored in previous literature. (Carmichael &amp; Dajko, 2016; White-Sustaita, 2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-traditional ‘make’</td>
<td>Use of ‘make’ in contexts not seen in standard AE</td>
<td>“My nephew made ten on his last birthday.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As noted above, the majority of research on English in New Orleans has focused primarily on YE. Thus, the majority of the features listed above have been investigated primarily in that context, although White-Sustaíta (2012) provides context by comparing linguistic features of YE with African American English. Scholars of language interested in New Orleans need to address language use in other communities. Current work by scholars based primarily out of Tulane University is intended to expand our understanding of the varieties of English spoken in the city. This includes an ongoing large scale examination of English used by native New Orleanians currently being conducted by Natalie Dajko and Katie Carmichael and a study of Garden District English, which she refers to as ‘Rex English,’ by Lisa Sprowls. The current work, by exploring the English spoken by the Latinx community, contributes to this project.

2.5 Conclusion: Myths and truths about language in New Orleans

As I have argued here, the political, social, and linguistic heritage of New Orleans has resulted in a sociolinguistic context that is relatively unique among major American cities. This salience of New Orleans as different, embodied in the quote often attributed (probably apocryphally) to Tennessee Williams, which notes “there are only three cities in the United States: New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans. Everything else is Cleveland.” This salience as different or unique has led to (often inaccurate) speculation regarding the nature of the linguistic and cultural panorama of the city. One of the most repeated myths is that modern New Orleans is a French speaking city. As Eble (2009)
persuasively notes, this is false. What French is spoken in the city is, in her terms, “a gesture, an approximation” (214). According to her figures, in 2000 less than 1.5 percent of the population of Orleans Parish reported speaking any variety of French (211). This is not to deny the importance of French to shaping the cultural landscape of New Orleans (Dajko, 2018). It is, however, to recognize that to classify New Orleans as ‘French’ is to miss significant aspects of the cultural landscape.

Senator Mary Landrieu, as quoted in Sluyter et al. (2015), stated in a congressional debate in 1999, that “New Orleans is sometimes referred to as ‘the third largest Honduran city.” Sluyter et al. (2015) note that this, also, is a myth. According to census data, New Orleans has not even had the largest population of Hondurans in the United States since 1970. At the end of the twentieth century, New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Houston, and Washington, D.C. all have larger Honduran communities. Additionally, there is no point in the last fifty years in which the Honduran population in New Orleans would have ranked among the top ten most populous cities in Honduras. Sluyter et al. (2015) suggest that this myth results from a combination of the city’s positioning as a gateway community for Honduran immigrants to the country and the local Honduran community’s size relative to the total local Latinx population and the total population (79).

A third oft-repeated myth is the idea that New Orleans is a Southern city, and its speakers speak ‘Southern’ American English. As this chapter has made clear, New Orleans has never been a typical Southern city in terms of culture or language. The population demographics, settlement patterns, and cultural history differentiates the city in significant ways from other southern population centers.
A more recent myth about New Orleans, in reaction to increased visibility of the post-Katrina Mexican community, posits the city as a “future San Antonio.” Sluyter et al. (2015) argue that this is false, noting that Spanish heritage communities have long formed part of the cultural make-up of the city and that, even with recent increases, still make up less than 10 percent of the population. Thus, New Orleans is not on track to become a ‘future San Antonio,’ but, instead, has incorporated Spanish heritage communities into an identity that is uniquely New Orleans, which “changes through collaborative improvisation…relishes extemporaneous performance” and “remains open to still unimagined possibilities” (158). A crucial point made here is that while the Latinx community has indubitably grown post-Katrina, it is not a new community. Spanish heritage communities have always been a part of what makes New Orleans. Post-Katrina this community has simply become larger, more diverse, and more visible.

My goal in this chapter to paint an accurate picture of the cultural and linguistic landscape of the city in order to establish the setting for the current research. The myths mentioned above primarily suffer, as most such myths do, from hyperbolic extrapolation of nuggets of truth. The picture of New Orleans that emerges from the description in this chapter is of a city defined by its’ diversity. A myriad of cultural and linguistic influences have formed part of the history of the city and have each contributed in important ways to the cultural and linguistic panorama of the area. As C. D. Arfwedson wrote in 1834 of a day in New Orleans, “this mixture of languages, costumes, and manners, rendered the scene one of the most singular that I ever witnessed…If there is a place where it is possible to form anything like the correct idea of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel, it certainly is New Orleans” (56).
This blend of, in Arfwedson’s words, “languages, costumes, and manners,” unique among American cities, I argue, is one of the defining characteristics of the city. The myths mentioned here, from ‘third largest Honduran city,’ to ‘a future San Antonio,’ to ‘predominantly French-speaking,’ are dangerous precisely because they serve as a sort of erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000). By focusing on a single aspect of the New Orleanian linguistic landscape, these myths erase the diversity of the cultural and linguistic landscape. Instead, it is important to recognize that New Orleans is, and has always been, an amalgamation of cultures and languages that come together to create something unique.

This incredible linguistic diversity should make the city a prime candidate for sociolinguistic consideration, particularly within the American Variationist school that developed for the early work of William Labov in the 1960s. However, as various researchers have affirmed, the city has been understudied (Carmichael, 2014; Dajko et al., 2012; Eble, 2009). One of the goals of this work is to contribute to the growing body of literature that seeks to redress this gap in the sociolinguistic literature, by, at what is likely to be the outset of continued academic interest in language use in New Orleans, focusing on NOLAE as an important variety of American English active in this context. This is motivated by the desire to demarginalize Spanish heritage communities, providing appropriate attention to the role of these communities in the cultural and linguistic diversity that make New Orleans unique, strong, and enduring.
CHAPTER 3.
SAMPLE POPULATION: LATINXS AND LATINIDAD IN THE U.S. AND IN NEW ORLEANS

3.1 Introduction

While chapter 2 functioned to illuminate the setting of the current research project, this chapter provides a detailed discussion of the sample population. I begin with a general discussion of Latinx communities in the United States, using census data to illustrate the size of the community and some basic demographic patterns. I then take the Puerto Rican and Chicanx communities as case studies of the types of sociolinguistic research conducted with Latinxs. This discussion is followed by a review of various sociocultural frames which have been developed to conceptualize the Latinx experience in the United States, before specifically discussing recent treatments of Spanish language-heritage groups in New Orleans. This chapter concludes with an overview of the specific population sample described in the remainder of this dissertation.

3.2 Latinxs in the United States

As has been repeatedly noted in a variety of sources, in many parts of what is now the United States, Spanish-language heritage communities predate Anglo settlement, and Spanish predates English as the unmarked linguistic code. However, the United States as a nation-state or imagined community (Anderson 1983) originated and was conceptualized within the thirteen East Coast British colonies, and as this imagined community spread South and West across the continent, this Anglo identity, with English
as its primary linguistic marker, was imposed upon the incorporated territories. Thus, the imagined community that makes up the nation-state known as the United States is conceptualized as an Anglo nation. The unmarked cultural identity is Anglo and the unmarked linguistic code is English, and non-phenotypically Anglo, non-English speaking groups are articulated as foreigners and as immigrants within public discourse, regardless of the historical record. Spanish heritage communities are no exception. The various groups of Spanish heritage Americans currently living in the United States are widely articulated as immigrants and as foreign, even in parts of the country that were Spanish long before they were Anglo.

3.2.2 Demographic information

According to the 2010 decennial census, self-reported Hispanics or Latinxs numbered 50,477,594 individuals. Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of this population according to regions of origin.

Table 3.1
Self-reporting Hispanics or Latinxs by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of Origin</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico and the Caribbean</td>
<td>39,622,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>3,998,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>2,769,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4,087,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50,477,594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this table makes clear, the majority of the group self-identified as Latinx or Hispanic are of Mexican or Caribbean origin. I will look at each of these groups in more detail below.

According to 2010 census data, Mexican-Americans number 31,798,258 individuals, although it is worth noting that simply enumerating counts of Mexican-Americans living within the borders of the United States fails to accurately reflect the
reality of life on the US-Mexico border. Prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, large parts of what is now the Southwestern United States were part of Mexico, and in the time since the treaty’s signing, significant blending of language and identity has become common in the region. Given this history, one would expect the primary population centers for Mexican-American communities to be situated in the Southwestern United States. This is confirmed by 2010 census data, which shows that 51.8 percent of Mexican-Americans reside in the Western region and 34.4 percent reside in the Southern region. The Northeast and Midwest have significantly smaller populations. More than half of Mexican-Americans in the United States live in just two states: California and Texas.

Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans are the three primary Caribbean origin groups living in the United States. Puerto Ricans differ importantly from the other two groups in that, as Puerto Rico is a U.S. Commonwealth, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, and have full rights to move freely between the island and the U.S. mainland. Significant waves of Puerto Rican migration to the mainland followed the U.S. assumption of political control over the island at the close of the Spanish-American war. This migration, which accelerated particularly with the congressional declaration of citizenship for Puerto Ricans in 1917, has been called “one of the most massive flows of emigration of this century” (Rivera-Batiz & Santiago, 1996). Whalen & Vazquez-Hernandez (2005) note that migration to the mainland continued at such a rate that by the 2000 census, nearly fifty percent of Puerto Ricans lived on the mainland, positioning Puerto Rico as “a divided nation” (1). In the 2010 census the population of Puerto Ricans
on the island was 3,554,642, while the population of Puerto Ricans on the mainland was 4,623,716.

Cuban-American and Dominican-American communities are significantly smaller. The 2010 census data identifies 1,414,703 individuals self-identified as of Dominican descent living in the United States. According to census data, 1,785,547 individuals of Cuban descent lived in the United States as of 2010. The vast majority (over 1.2 million) of Cuban heritage Latinxs in the United States live in Florida. Dominicans, in contrast, have settled primarily in the Northeast, with New York and New Jersey combining to account for nearly 873,000 of Dominican origin Latinxs. Individuals of Central American descent, not including Mexico, numbered 3,998,280 as of 2010. People of Guatemalan and Salvadoran descent represented the two largest communities, each numbering over one million people, including 1,648,968 people of Salvadoran descent and 1,044,209 individuals of Guatemalan descent, with the largest concentrations being found in California.

In comparison to groups of Mexican, Caribbean, and Central American origin, South American-origin communities are fairly small. As of 2010, 2,769,434 individuals of South American descent lived in the United States according to census data, with the largest single national origin community being Colombians, at 908,734 individuals. According to 2014 estimates, 2,856,000 people of South American origin resided in the United States. The most popular destination is the New York area, where 847,000 South American immigrants currently reside, although, in terms of overall percentage of the local population, Miami outpaces New York, with 7.8 percent of the local population being of South American descent, compared to 4.3 percent in New York.
3.2.3 Sociolinguistic treatments

There is an immense body of literature that explores the use of language in these communities. While a full enumeration of the literature on language use in US Latinx communities is beyond the scope of this project, we can take Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans, two of the most often studied communities, as case studies of the types of literature that exist.

Significant work has been done in terms of identifying the linguistic features of Puerto Rican English both on the island (IPRE) and on the US mainland (MPRE). Work on IPRE includes descriptions by Walsh (1994) and (Fayer, Castro, Diaz, & Plata, 1998). Fayer et al. (1998) provide a useful description of both the morphosyntax and the lexical features of IPRE, noting, for example, that IPRE features variable constituent order that reflects Puerto Rican Spanish syntax and auxiliary omission. Walsh (1994) provides a description of the phonological features of IPRE, including the realization of [ð] as [d], [θ] as [t], and the devoicing of [z].

Although, as noted above, the social context of IPRE differs significantly from the social context involved in the development of PRE on the American mainland, many of the features described in Walsh (1994) and Fayer et al. (1998) are also salient in PRE as spoken on the mainland. Mainland Puerto Rican English (MPRE) refers to the variety of English that has developed on the American mainland as a result of contact between Puerto Rican Spanish and varieties of American English. As indicated above, MPRE has developed in a significantly different social context when compared with IPRE. While IPRE is a variety of the minority language within its social context, MPRE is a variety of the majority language. In addition, MPRE has been significantly influenced by other
varieties of American English within its contact contexts. Torres (2010) writes, “when asked why Puerto Ricans don’t speak much Spanish at school, one student responded, ‘Because Puerto Ricans, we think we’re black. We talk ghetto, we don’t all talk Spanish’” (51). The impact of African American English on MPRE has been discussed by a variety of linguists (Flores-Gonzales, Rodriguez, & Rodriguez-Muniz, 2006; Rivera, 2003; Wolfram, 1973; Zentella, 1997). Thus, it is useful to note that MPRE is a product of an extremely different social context when compared to IPRE.

Wolfram (1973) represents one of the earliest systematic works concerned with the features of MPRE. His research was conducted on second generation high school aged males in New York City’s Harlem neighborhood. While his research featured an extremely specific subset of the community, he noted “it is expected that much of the description will have wider application, e.g. to a number of northeastern urban areas, than simply to the specific situation we are describing here” (1). Wolfram’s research identified many phonological and morphosyntactic features, including the tendency to realize [θ] as [t], similar to what has been described for IPRE, although Wolfram noted that this occurs primarily in morpheme initial environments, with [θ] exhibiting different realization patterns in morpheme final positions. Other features discussed by Wolfram include the realization of morpheme final [t] and [d] as [0] and multiple negation. Additional works on MPRE also tend to focus on the American Northeast (Fishman, 1971; Poplack, 1978; Torres, 1997; Urzua & Gomez, 2008; Zentella, 1997).

There is a long, extensive tradition of sociolinguistic work on Chicano English (CE), the variety of English spoken in the Mexican-American community. While it would be difficult, if not impossible, to articulate a comprehensive list in the current setting,
important descriptive works include Peñalosa (1980), Santa Ana (1991), Mendoza-Denton (1997), Fought (1997, 2003), and (Bayley & Santa Ana, 2004; Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004). Much of this work has, naturally, considering the census data discussed above, centered primarily on the Southwestern United States. In particular, CE has been studied extensively in the Los Angeles, CA area and in Texas. However, as Santa Ana & Bayley (2004) note, the spread of Mexican-Americans throughout the United States has resulted in the spread of the linguistic variety throughout the country.

As several scholars have argued, phonological differences are the most salient characteristics of CE (see Fought, 2003). Vowel inventories are often typically salient markers of this variety. Some examples of vowel realizations typical to CE mentioned by Fought (2003) include the realization of /ɪ/ as [i], and the realization of /ɑ/ as similar to the Spanish [a]. Thomas (2001) mentions that pre-nasal /æ/ is often not raised. Santa Ana & Bayley (2004) generalize four phonological properties of CE vowels: more monophthongal, greater overlap of front vowel space, different system of reductions, and distinct linguistic variables. Major consonantal features, according to Santa Ana & Bayley (2004) include the deletion of syllable final alveolar stops (t, d), particularly in consonant clusters, th-stopping, and glottalized syllable final voiceless stops. Another salient characteristic that was first discussed by Santa Ana (1991) is a tendency for the prosodic patterns of CE to resemble the Spanish syllable-timed prosody as opposed to the stress-timed nature of English.

Scholars have also identified syntactic variables that mark CE. Many of these are shared by CE and several other non-standard varieties of American English. For example, Bayley & Santa Ana (2004) note that CE shares several grammatical patterns with AAE,
including the regularization of irregular verbs, negative concord, and ‘is’ with a plural subject. In addition, they argue that CE includes some unique grammatical variables. For example, they claim that CE speakers, likely under influence from Spanish, will at times exhibit non-standard use of ‘in’ and ‘on,’ driven by the fact that both prepositions are translated as ‘en’ in Spanish.

A more recent trend particularly relevant to my work is to focus on Latinx English as a variety emerging in contexts of significant Spanish heritage populations where no one national origin group can be clearly delineated as dominant in terms of number and/or social salience. A useful example is what has been termed ‘New York Latino English’ (NYLE) by Newman (2003, 2010) and Newman & Slomanson (2003). They argue that while Latinx English in the American southwest is primarily influenced by Mexican Spanish, the variety emerging in New York City incorporates a wide range of Latin American Spanish influences, reflecting the more diverse Latinx population of the area. In addition, NYLE as a variety of American English incorporates influences from other local varieties of English, including African American English. Newman (2010) identifies a list of linguistic variables that he argues are markers of Latinx English across national origin groups and that present a Spanish influenced substrate realization that contrasts clearly with a superstrate realization. These variables, with substrate and superstrate realizations, are presented in table 3.2.
Table 3.2
Substrate and superstrate realizations of Latinx English markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Substrate</th>
<th>Superstrate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervocalic /b/</td>
<td>baby, I bought</td>
<td>[β], [ɓ]</td>
<td>[b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervocalic /d/</td>
<td>daddy, a dude</td>
<td>[ð]</td>
<td>[d], [ɾ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable final /d/</td>
<td>bad, badness</td>
<td>[ð], [0]</td>
<td>[d], [d’], [ʔ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable final /t/</td>
<td>cat, catnip</td>
<td>[0]</td>
<td>[t], [t’], [ʔ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset /l/</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>[l]</td>
<td>[l]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable-timed prosody</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Syllable-timed</td>
<td>Stress-timed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I argue that, like those living in NYC, Latinxs in New Orleans are not a homogenous group. The community is composed of various ethnic groups and is not dominated by any one nationality. Demographic data reported in Fussell & Diaz (2015) notes that the two largest groups are Mexicans and Hondurans, with Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans all composing between four and eight percent of the total Latinx population of the city. In addition, I argue that NOLAE incorporates influences from NOE and African American English. Thus, I am taking as a starting point Slomanson and Newman’s approach to NYLE in my exploration of NOLAE, treating the variety as a uniquely local variety of American English.

3.2.4 Sociocultural framing of US Latinxs

In addition to the descriptive works described above, scholars working at the intersections of linguistics, sociology, and anthropology have articulated several theoretical constructs that aim to describe the socio-cultural context of Latinx communities in the United States.

Mock Spanish, as first articulated by Jane Hill (1998), posits that the use of a disorderly Spanish by outgroup members is inherently derogatory, establishing a ‘white
public space,’ in which Anglo linguistic behavior is naturalized, while Latinx linguistic performance is highly monitored. This is accomplished via a dual mechanism, in which Anglo speakers directly index a jovial, good-natured persona while indirectly indexing derogatory, racist stereotypical images of Latinxs as lazy and ignorant. In his discussion of language use in a Mexican restaurant, Barrett (2006) provides an example of how the use of Mock Spanish functions to perpetuate racist stereotypes and reify existing power hierarchies by structuring public space as White/English. I argue that Mock Spanish is an instantiation of the Latinx Threat Narrative (Chavez, 2008). That is, the direct and indirect indexicality Hill notes as constructing white public space are both responses to the perception of Spanish as Latinx and Latinx as threat. Thus, Mock Spanish is itself a reaction to the Latinx Threat Narrative, creating and maintaining white public space and perpetuating existing social power hierarchies.

Work within Sociology and Critical Theory has elaborated the construct of public space, noting that hegemonic power structures naturalize existing power hierarchies by defining the nature of identity work that is deemed unmarked within public space. Urciuoli’s (1996) *Exposing Prejudice: Puerto Rican Experiences of Language, Race, and Class* is an important contribution to the understanding of Latinx identity work in public space. In this book, she argues that the “ideologically unmarked American citizen” is “the white, Anglo, middle-class, English speaking male” (138) and that the unmarked language of the U.S. imaginary community is “an English as unmarked as the white, middle-class heart of the nation-state itself” (37). She notes that racialized individuals “try to control prejudiced perceptions of themselves by editing the ways in which they may be seen as marked, through their name, hair or skin color, behavior, or language”
The social action of ‘acting white,’ in her account, is the result of an attempt to access an unmarked identity within public space, where unmarked identities are restricted to Anglo identity performance.

As Carter (2014) notes, Spanish is an icon of *latinidad*, in the sense of Irvine & Gal’s (2000) conceptualization of iconization as a mechanism whereby indexical relationships between signifiers and signifieds are reconceptualized as iconic relationships (Pierce, 1935). In this sense, Spanish and Spanish influenced English are seen as resembling *latinidad* in some inherent way. The linguistic performance of Latinxs, then, is seen to be inherently tied to conceptions of *latinidad*, and via what I am referring to as ‘chain iconization,’ as ultimately an icon of Latinx threat. Although Urciuoli (1996) does not make the connection as explicitly as Carter does, the idea of Spanish as an icon of *latinidad* underpins much of her work, as she notes that the “English-Spanish boundary” is mapped onto the articulation of race as ‘ethnic-American’ (174). The boundary between Spanish and English is, in this view, mapped onto the boundary between Latinx and Anglo, meaning that access to an unmarked racial identity requires the rejection of Spanish.

As discussed previously, the unmarked linguistic identity in the imagined community of the United States is English. Latinxs are driven to reject Spanish and Spanish influenced English in public space as a way to attempt to access unmarked linguistic identities. This is similar to what I have observed regarding Puerto Ricans in Lorain, OH. The Latinx community in Lorain strongly connects the Spanish language to the Puerto Rican identity and argues that Spanish-English bilingualism is highly beneficial. However, second generation Puerto Ricans mostly fail to transmit Spanish to
the third generation, leading to wide-spread participation in the oft observed trigenerational process of heritage language attrition (Myers-Scotton, 1998). This perceived tension, I argue, results from Puerto Rican reactions to the sociopolitical contexts in which Spanish is an icon of latinidad and latinidad is an icon of threat. The failure to transmit Spanish to subsequent generations results from the effort to gain access to unmarked, positive linguistic identities within these contexts.

Scott (1985), drawing on Bourdieu’s work, elaborates on the role of euphemization on perpetuating and naturalizing social hegemony. As Goldstein (2003) argues, “euphemization, the cleaning up of the official or public transcript…serves to hide domination” (89). In terms of U.S. Latinx communities, euphemization applies by rearticulating racist narratives of Spanish as an icon of Latinx threat in terms of discourses regarding the need for English in order to function adequately within American society. That is, English is positioned as the unmarked linguistic code within American society, and thus as symbolic cultural capital. This allows Anglos to maintain a positive self-image, as the rejection of Spanish and Spanish-influenced English is reconceptualized as beneficial for Latinxs because the acquisition of ‘pure’ English, devoid of Spanish influences, is seen as providing valuable cultural capital in the form of unmarked linguistic identities. This is reinforced by Silverstein’s (1996) observation that English is publically articulated as rational, logical, unbiased force towards progress. Within this narrative, “impurities interfere with progress, so everyone should want to rid their English of impurity in accent, word, or grammar” (Urciuoli, 1996, 38). By rearticulating racist narratives positioning Spanish as ‘Latinx’ and ‘Latinx’ as disorderly and threatening as narratives of English as progress oriented cultural capital, Anglos
retain positive positioning via a euphemizational operation. However, even fully anglicized linguistic performance does not guarantee access to an unmarked identity, as the hegemonic social structure prevents Latinx access to unmarked linguistic identities, regardless of linguistic performance. The positioning of public space as ‘Anglo’ space is euphemized as beneficial to society in general and Latinxs in particular, while functioning to reinforce Anglo identity as unmarked.

Drawing on Inoue’s (2006) articulation of the ‘listening subject,’ Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores illuminate the ways in which hearers impose racialized perceptions onto the speech of racialized speakers, leading to the perception of deficient speech. They argue that the analytical focus must be not on minority linguistic practices, but on the racialized ideologies of listening subjects (Flores, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Standard English does not correspond to any given constellation of linguistic practices, but is attributed to the speech of unmarked racial aggregates. Thus “altering one’s speech might do very little to change the ideological perspectives of listening subjects” (Rosa & Flores, 2017, 152). By redirecting attention from the language use of minority speakers to the listening practices of the hegemonic power structures, they problematize the notion of Anglo speech as natural as opposed to minority speech. The link of Latinx to Spanish and Spanish to threat rests not on speaker performance, but on hearer ideology, and thus cannot be subverted by altering linguistic performance. To summarize this section, English is naturalized as the unmarked linguistic code in public space in the United States. This allows for the reinforcement of traditional power hierarchies by restricting access to unmarked, positive linguistic identities to English speakers. Spanish, and Spanish-influenced English, are marked as
icons of Latinx threat. Further, raciolinguistic ideologies extend perceptions of racialized speech to include all speakers phenotypically marked as Latinx.

What emerges from this discussion is that it is effectively impossible for Latinxs to assimilate their way to ‘unmarked American.’ As Rubin (1992) shows, Anglo perceptions can attribute racialized linguistic identities even in situations of fully standard linguistic performance based on phenotypical perceptions of racialized features. Thus, as Rosa & Flores contend, the focus must shift from solely investigating the linguistic performance of minority communities to querying and problematizing the underlying sociopolitical structures and mechanisms that serve to reify and perpetuate power hierarchies. This, I believe, is where many sociolinguists fall short. One of the goals of the work I am doing here is to participate in this shift of focus by exploring not just Latinx language use in New Orleans, but the ways in which the sociopolitical context shapes linguistic performance by restricting access to unmarked, positive linguistic identities in public spaces.

One of the primary mechanisms for this process of restriction is what Chavez (2008), in his insightful text *The Latino Threat*, has termed the Latinx Threat Narrative (LTN), which he argues is a pervasive, if often unspoken, narrative that drives discourses on Spanish, Latinxs, and immigration in the United States. The narrative, he notes, posits “that Latinos are not like previous immigrant groups, who ultimately became part of the nation…Latinos are unwilling or incapable of integrating, of becoming part of the national community” (3). Within this narrative, Latinxs are conceptualized as an “invading force…bent on reconquering the land that was formerly theirs…and destroying the American way of life” (3). Chavez argues that this narrative forms part of the
underlying, unspoken ‘truths’ assumed in public discourse on immigration in the United States. This conception of Latinx as threat, then, can be seen as a naturalized hegemonic narrative, shaping and structuring conversations surrounding Latinxs.

Similar to how Carter (2014) finds evidence of these ideologies working to shape discourse in a North Carolina middle school, I have argued that these ideologies are strongly salient to Latinxs in New Orleans (Lewis, 2018b, 2018a). A full exploration of how these ideologies function to mark Latinxs in New Orleans, restricting access to unmarked, positive linguistic identities, is taken up in section 4 of the current work.

3.3 Latinxs in New Orleans

As we saw in chapter 2, Spanish speakers have lived and worked in New Orleans since very early days. However, while the French linguistic and cultural impact on the city has been the subject of intense academic and popular interest, the role of Spanish and Latin American communities has received significantly less attention in linguistic work in the city. One of the few linguists to have examined communities of Spanish heritage in New Orleans is Beatriz Varela. Varela focused primarily on the Cuban population, comparing the use of Spanish among Cubans in New Orleans and Miami and exploring the influence of English on the Spanish spoken by Cubans in the city (Varela, 1974, 1992). The Isleños, a traditionally Spanish speaking community in Southeastern Louisiana has also received some attention (Coles, 2012; Lipski, 1988, 1990). Felice Coles’ work, in particular, is relevant because it explores the impact of spatial movement from the traditional Isleño enclave of Delacroix Island to the suburbs of New Orleans. Outside of these works, the linguistic performance of Spanish heritage groups in the greater New Orleans region has been mostly ignored. Importantly, English use among
Latinx American immigrants to the city has received, to my knowledge, no significant attention.

However, there has been increased recent academic recognition of the importance of Latinx culture to the region, mostly in reaction to the increased social salience of the community following Hurricane Katrina. Prior to the storm, New Orleans failed to participate in the demographic trend that has been labeled the ‘New Latinx South.’ According to census data, while states like Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Arkansas saw their Latinx populations increase by over 200 percent between 1990 and 2000, New Orleans and surrounding parishes saw an increase of approximately five percent. However, following Katrina, New Orleans experienced an influx of Latinx immigrants, many of whom were laborers coming to participate in the rebuilding efforts. According to census data, the Latinx population in Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard parishes increased by 49 percent between 2000 and 2010. Sluyter et al. (2015) while noting that this growth is still not on par with the other southern states mentioned above, argue that this growth has been accompanied by increased visibility. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that, particularly in Orleans Parish proper, the increase in Latinx population was accompanied by a decrease in non-Latinx population. Between 2000 and 2010, the non-Latinx population of Orleans Parish decreased by 30.66 percent, while the Latinx population increased by 21.75 percent.

Two additional changes contribute to shifts in perception of the Latinx community of the city. First, prior to Katrina, the Latinx population of the city was well-established and well-integrated, particularly linguistically. As Fussell & Diaz (2015)
note, roughly 50 percent of foreign-born Latinxs reported speaking English very well in the 2000 census and over 70 percent reported having been in the area for at least ten years. However, according to data released from the 2013 American Community Survey, nearly 65 percent of Latinxs in the New Orleans area now self-reported that they speak English less than very well and less than 50 percent have been in the area for more than ten years. Essentially, the make-up of the Latinx population has shifted from a small, well-established, well-integrated group composed primarily of long-term New Orleans residents to a larger, less-integrated group including a large number of new arrivals. Second, the self-described ‘invisible’ pre-Katrina population was dispersed throughout the city, but, post-Katrina, there has been an increased tendency to congregate in specific areas. Rosa Gómez-Herrin, in her dissertation project at the University of New Orleans, has illustrated that while New Orleans has never had ‘barrios’ of the types seen in other major Latinx population centers, current census data clearly shows patterns of what she has termed ‘emerging barrios,’ as new Latinx immigrants have begun to congregate in specific census tracts (Gomez-Herrin, 2018).

Scholars working outside of linguistics have also noted that media attention to the post-Katrina Latinx community in New Orleans has been, in many cases, negative. Trujillo-Pagan, (2007) argues that media attention to Latinxs in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina “characterized them as a new population that threatened the city in several ways” (95). By articulating Latinxs as “an army of aliens,” she argues, the media participated in excluding Latinxs from recovery efforts and contributed to increased racial tensions, in particular, between Latinxs and African-Americans in the city. Participants in my research often speak of the racial tension, articulating themselves in
opposition to both Anglos and African-Americans. For example, Mercedes told me that in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a group of African-American preachers visited a local Latinx non-profit where she was working, and one of the pastors indicated to her that he believed Latinxs were ‘stealing’ jobs from the African-American community. She articulates this experience as an example of “fear…creating more division within…the minority communities” (Mercedes, 031).

3.4 Description of the population sample and data extraction

The primary source of data for this work is drawn from a series of interviews conducted with local Latinxs in 2017 and 2018. The interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes and were audio recorded as mono .wav files using a Zoom H4N Pro recorder and a Shure SM10 headset microphone, which allows for the isolation of the participant audio track and provides high quality audio for acoustic analysis. Participants were asked first to answer a series of questions designed to collect the types of demographic information crucial to traditional sociolinguistic analysis, including age, gender, time in the city, educational background, and occupation. Participants were also asked to provide a brief overview of the neighborhoods in which they have lived to provide data for the social network modeling procedure described below. They were then asked a series of questions designed to elicit information about his/her experiences in the city, opinions on the nature of the Latinx community, and perceptions of the relationship between the Latinx community and other demographic groups in the region. Everything following the demographic portion of the interview was transcribed and considered for additional analysis.
In addition, a supplementary corpus of linguistic data was collected for the comparative analysis detailed in section 2. This sample consists of data drawn from oral history interviews conducted with local Latinxs \((n = 10)\) between 1986 and 1996. This data, which was collected by University of New Orleans archivist Beatrice Rodriguez Owsley, is housed at the Louisiana and Special Collections archive at the University of New Orleans. Where possible, demographic information comparable to the current sample was compiled, although the nature of the archived interviews at times rendered the demographic profiles of participants somewhat incomplete.

The current corpus was stratified in terms of gender, age, generation, time in New Orleans, and education. Age and time in New Orleans were treated as continuous variables. Gender, generation, and education were treated as categorical variables. Education was divided into three categories: High school, college, and graduate school. Each category, with the exception of ‘High School,’ implies completion of the degree. Gender is treated as binary. This is because participants were asked to provide their gender without category suggestions, and no participant provided a gender identity outside of ‘Male’ or ‘Female.’ While it is customary in sociolinguistics to track generational variation across three generations, it was impossible to do so in this context, because there are few adults whose families have been in the city for more than two generations, and, as my participants note, many of those who have been present in New Orleans for three generations have fully integrated to the extent that they no longer identify as Latinx. Thus, I treated generation as binary, with ‘First’ referring to people who were raised in Latin America and moved to the area as adults and ‘Second’ referring to participants raised in the area. Other demographic categories were considered but not
found to significantly predict linguistic performance and are thus not reported in table 3.3 or in the statistical models in chapters 5 and 6. Perhaps the most important of these is national origin. While national origin in clearly an important organizing construct according to my participant commentary, this did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor of linguistic performance. Table 3.3 provides a summary of the demographic information for the current population sample.

Table 3.3
Demographic information for post-Katrina sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Time in NOLA</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nena</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inez</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paco</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dio</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manny</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebeca</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adalberto</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures 3.1 – 3.3 provide visualizations of the contemporary population sample.

**Participant by Gender**

![Pie chart showing participant gender distribution]

- **Male**
- **Female**

**Figure 3.1.** Population by gender.

**Participant by Generation**

![Pie chart showing participant generation distribution]

- **First**
- **Second**

**Figure 3.2.** Population by generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariela</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosita</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

This chapter concludes section 1, which provides the foundation for the analysis presented throughout this dissertation. Chapter 1 introduced the project, providing an overview of the rationale for the research, the primary research questions, and the variables under consideration. Chapter 2 introduced the research setting by providing a social, linguistic, and ethnographic overview of the city of New Orleans. Chapter 3 introduced the population that is the subject of this research, beginning with general statistics, sociolinguistic descriptions, and sociocultural frames relating to Latinxs in the United States, proceeding to a consideration of Latinxs in New Orleans, and then specifically describing the nature of the population sample considered here. The remaining sections of this dissertation deal with the results of the application of these methods to this population.
SECTION 2.

CONTRASTIVE DESCRIPTION OF DIACRHNIC VARIATION IN NOLAE

CHAPTER 4.

EVOLUTION OF NOLAE VOWELS

4.1 Introduction

A sizeable body of research has identified that vowel realizations are (a) an important loci of variation in varieties of English (Labov et al., 2006; Thomas, 2001) and (b) key markers of Latinx Englishes in the United States (Fought, 2003; Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004). This chapter draws on these two observations by comparing the vowel systems in two samples of Latinx Englishes in New Orleans. The first sample is drawn from a set of oral history interviews conducted with Latinxs in New Orleans in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The second sample is a subset of the sociolinguistic interviews described throughout this dissertation. The two samples were analyzed acoustically and compared in terms of the overall vowel space and realizations of specific vowels. This analysis presented here is based on 10 first generation participants per sample.

This chapter compares vowel realizations across these two samples. The data considered illustrates that overall, vowel realizations have remained fairly consistent, as expected considering the lack of recognized mergers or splits in the population in question. However, in cases where statistically significant divergence is evident, the pre-Katrina sample shows more consistent realizations for a given vowel within the sample, while the post-Katrina sample exhibits a larger range of realizations. I argue that these
patterns reflect the shifting nature of the sociolinguistic context in which NOLAE is realized.

The remainder of this chapter is developed as follows. First, in section 4.2, I present pertinent background information, including an overview of American English vowel variation, an overview of research into vowel realization in Latinx Englishes, and some basic ethnographic impressions of the pre-Katrina sample, drawing on census information, existing research from both linguistics and adjacent disciplines, and emic observations as seen in the archived material I use to develop the analysis presented here. Section 4.3 details the methodology applied in this chapter. Section 4.4 provides the results of my analysis. I then present contextualization for the results in section 4.5 before concluding the chapter in section 4.6.

4.2 Background information

4.2.1 Acoustics of American English vowels

Much of the early acoustic work on American English vowels involved the analysis of specific vowels in specific research contexts. For example, in the 1980s and 90s, a large body of research focusing on the realizations of vowels in Philadelphia was generated by William Labov and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania. Fewer scholars attempted to unify these descriptions into (semi) complete systematic analyses. Thomas (2001) cites several exceptions. Among the most notable is Labov, Yeager-Dror, & Steiner's (1972) work, expanded in Labov (1972, 1991), which outlines three major dialects of American English based on three vowel systems (The Northern Cities Shift, the Southern Vowel Shift, and the Third Dialect). Another important early effort is
(Hillenbrand, Getty, Clark, & Wheeler, 1995) replication of an earlier study of the acoustic properties of 12 vowels.

Thomas (2001) remains one of the most comprehensive acoustic studies of the variation in vowel realizations across varieties of American English, in spite of the limitations acknowledged by the author in that work, namely a lack of representation of the Western United States, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Asian-Americans. In addition, particularly relevant to my current work, only one speaker from Southern Louisiana is included, a New Orleans born male, born in 1915 and recorded in 1968. As Thomas notes, Southern Louisiana, and I would add, New Orleans, is known to have a distinct variety of English, but at the time of his undertaking, few acoustic studies of the local speech had been completed. He cites only Rubrecht's (1971) analysis of the data included in the DARE and LAGS atlases and Dubois & Horvath's (1999, 1998) study of language use in Cajun communities (see chapter two of the current work for a more detailed account of English in New Orleans). Despite these shortcomings, his work remains a highly useful description of patterns of variation across varieties of American English as it provides visual plots of the characteristics vowel spaces of speakers of several varieties of American English as well as prose descriptions of distinctive vowel properties for each variety analyzed. I will return to his description of Mexican-American English in section 4.2.2.

The Atlas of North American English (Labov et al., 2006) includes likely the most comprehensive and influential description of the North American vowel system. As their work is concerned with accounting for variation among varieties of North American English in terms of mergers and shifts from an initial inventory, they take up the question
of identifying the initial configuration of the North American vowel system. While this type of account of variation is less of a concern in my work, their initial system provides a useful point of departure for my discussion of vowel systems in Latinx English in New Orleans. Using the binary representation preferred in their work, they present an initial configuration of sixteen American English vowels that they argue represents the maximal vocalic differentiation for North American vowel systems. Table 4.1 provides each of the vowel classes identified in their work along with the representative keywords provided in their analysis.

Table 4.1
Initial position of North American Vowel systems according to Labov, Ash, & Boberg (2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nucleus</th>
<th>Short Vowels</th>
<th>Front Upgliding Vowels</th>
<th>Back Upgliding Vowels</th>
<th>Long Ingliding Vowels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-front</td>
<td>/i/: bit</td>
<td>/iy/: beat</td>
<td>/iw/: suit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-front</td>
<td>/e/: bet</td>
<td>/ey/: bait</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-front</td>
<td>/æ/: bat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-back</td>
<td>/u/: put</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/ah/ (Unrounded): balm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-back</td>
<td>/ʌ/: but</td>
<td>/oy/: boy</td>
<td>/ow/: boat</td>
<td>/oh/ (Rounded): bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-back</td>
<td>/ø/: cot</td>
<td>/ay/: bite</td>
<td>/aw/: bout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labov et al. (2006), working from this initial configuration, identify several dialect regions, accompanied by descriptions of the vowel systems characteristic of each region. The regions identified are the North (including Inland, St. Louis Corridor, and Western New England), Eastern New England (including Boston and Providence), New York City, the Mid-Atlantic, Western Pennsylvania (including Pittsburgh), the South (including Inland, Texas South, and Charleston), the Midland (including Cincinnati and

---

3 Throughout this dissertation I typically default to standard IPA style notation. However, in sections, such as this one, where I specifically discuss work by other scholars, I endeavor to use the notation preferred by the work under consideration. Additionally, in order to mitigate notational differences, I use vowel class keyword labels in the results, discussion, and conclusion to this chapter.
St. Louis), the Southeast, the West, the North Central, and Canada (including Canada and Atlantic Provinces). Specific dialectal features of each of these regions is beyond the scope of my project. However, the crucial observation that vowel systems are major differentiating markers of varieties of American English is critical to my work.

The city of New Orleans is located within the broad boundaries of the South dialect region. The ANAE characterizes this region by monophthongization of /ay/, the Southern Shift (Labov, 1991), and by the back upglide shift, which involves the use of a back upglide in /oh/ class words. However, the authors recognize that New Orleans has a distinctive dialect, and acknowledge the widely discussed patterning of New Orleans with New York City, particularly in terms of palatal upglides on mid-central vowels in words like ‘third’ and ‘first,’ and in /æ/ patterns. Earlier analyses of New Orleans vowels, included with the general linguistic description of the city developed in chapter 2, were often more impressionistic than acoustic. However, as described in chapter 2, New Orleans has, in the years since the publication of the ANAE, experienced increased attention in sociolinguistic literature. In terms of acoustic analysis of vowels in New Orleans, Carmichael’s (2012, 2014, 2015) work stands out, including acoustic treatments of /æ/, /oh/, and /aw/. Her work indicates a traditional /æ/ split is transitioning to a nasal system, a change-in-progress led by higher class speaker towards merged BOT and BOUGHT, and presence of raised, fronted /aw/ nucleus in pre-nasal and pre-voiceless contexts.

4.2.2 Acoustics of Latinx English vowels

In addition to the regional varieties discussed in Labov et al., (2006), scholars have identified several ethnolects of American English, defined by Clyne (2000) as a
variety of a language spoken by a minority community in the wake of a shift to the
majority language that functions as an index of identity. This definition is not without
detractors. Newman (2010) notes three issues with this definition. First, it is difficult to
ascertain the role of language shift. Second, it is unclear how much linguistic
differentiation is required for a variety to be described as a distinct ethnolect. Eckert
(2008), for example, has noted the lack of a systematic way for distinguishing between an
ethnolect and a “dialect with ethnic features” (27). The final difficulty identified in
Newman (2010) is a lack of systematicity in language varieties often described as
ethnolects. Benor (2008, 2010) has argued that the concept of an ethnolinguistic
repertoire is more suited to capturing the fact that the linguistic features invoked in the
process of indexing ethnic identity are variable.

It is, as would be expected, common for native Spanish speakers designated as
English language learners (ELLs) to exhibit transfer from Spanish phonology (Santa Ana
& Bayley, 2004). However, scholars have also noted evidence of Spanish influence in the
vocalic systems of native English speakers of Latinx heritage. Newman (2003) and
Newman & Sloman (2003) discuss realization of several of what they call ‘contact-
sensitive’ vowels, including the following markers of Spanish influence:
monophthongized /ey/ and /ow/ and back /uw/ before coronals. These features persist in
the speech of native English speakers of Latinx heritage, or what I refer to throughout this
dissertation as Spanish heritage speakers.

A large body of research exists that investigates Latinx Englishes. As we
discussed in chapter 3, most of this research focuses on a specific national heritage group,
including a tremendous volume of scholarship on Chicanx Englishes in the Southwest.
Much of this scholarship is impressionistic as opposed to acoustic. Thomas (2001) noted that only a few examples of acoustic research into Latinx Englishes existed at the time of his research, all of which focused on Mexican-Americans in the Southwest. He cites four examples of work on CE in California (Fought, 1999; Godinez, 1984; Godinez & Maddieson, 1985; Veatch, 1991) and two examples of work on Chicano English in Texas (Thomas, 1993, 2000). Among the features Thomas (2001) describes as characteristic of CE are monophthongal /e/ and /o/, not fronted /u/, /ʊ/, and /o/, and un-raised pre-nasal /æ/.

Subsequent years have seen a significant increase in acoustic work on Latinx Englishes, although, again, primarily focused on CE, with work on Puerto Ricans in the Northeast (Becker, 2010) and Cubans in South Florida (Carter et al., 2014) being notable exceptions. Several vocalic variables stand-out in the literature as significant in the discussions of CE, including differing patterns of vowel reduction and monophthongization in comparison to general American Englishes, intermediate patterns of variable realizations, and Spanish-contact influences. Each of these markers merits further discussion.

Reduction of unstressed vowels and diphthongization of long vowels is the general rule in North American English (Labov et al., 2006). In contrast, less frequent vowel reduction and increased tendency towards monophthongization has been observed in Chicano English speakers (Fought, 2003; Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004). These tendencies have been noted as particularly salient for high vowels. In particular, the high vowels /i/ and /u/ resist reduction (Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004) and /e/ and /o/ are articulated with shorter off-glides (Fought, 1997, 2003). This is in conversation with
Thomas’ (2001) observation, as noted above, that some Chicanx speakers produce monophthongal /e/ and /o/.

Several scholars have noted a tendency towards ‘intermediate’ realizations of vocalic variables, similar to the intermediate prosodic patterns observed in our discussion of timing in chapters 5 and 6. For example, one feature of Chicanx English noted in the literature is a tense realization of the vowel in ‘-ing’ constructions (Fought, 2003). Mendoza-Denton (1997, 2008) describes this realization as intermediate, between the reduced English unstressed version and the tense Spanish realization. Wolfram, Kohn, & Callahan-Price (2011) observed that Hispanic English speakers in North Carolina also evidence an intermediate pattern in terms of the percentage of the overall /ay/ vowel duration occupied by the glide.

Santa Ana & Bayley (2004) propose four generalizations that they argue function to delineate CE. The first three, which relate specifically to the vocalic system, are important for current purposes. They note that CE tends towards monophthongization, particularly in monosyllabic words. They also indicate that CE has greater vowel space overlap in front vowels. In addition, they note the presence of different patterns of vowel reduction in comparison to general American Englishes. According to their analysis, these general phonological characteristics are mobilized in cohort with community specific variables to perform a specifically Chicanx linguistic identity.

Another observation, particularly relevant to the current work, is that speakers of Latinx Englishes vary in rates of accommodation to local patterns of vowel realization, both for stylistic and performative purposes. Wolfram, Carter, & Moriello (2004) observed variation in accommodation to /ay/ monophthongization among Latinxs in
North Carolina. Fought (1997, 2003) noted variation in accommodation to ongoing sound changes in Los Angeles based on socioeconomic class and gang affiliations. Konopka & Pierrehumbert (2008) noted variation in Mexican-American accommodation to the Northern Cities Shift. These works indicate that various social and demographic characteristics correlate with patterns of accommodation to specifically local linguistic markers. For example, Becker (2010) finds that Latinxs in New York City produce a similar pattern of BOUGHT raising to Whites, participating in an apparent change, with younger speakers using a less raised BOUGHT vowel. I will take up the question of Latinx participation in local change-in-progresses in New Orleans in chapters 5 and 6.

Michael Newman and others working in New York City have argued for a more generalized approach to exploring English use in Latinx communities. In work associated with the New York Latinx English project (Newman, 2003, 2010; Newman & Slomanson, 2003), Michael Newman and others have argued that in contrast to other sociolinguistic contexts, Latinx English in New York City involves speakers of a wide-range of Latin American Spanishes and incorporates influences from various New York City varieties of English, resulting in linguistic performance reflecting this range of influences. Negrón (2014) expressly applies Benor’s (2010) ethnolinguistic repertoire framework in New York City, illustrating the ways in which New York City Latinxs construct a panethnic latinidad discursively, drawing on a range of features from within their shared ethnolinguistic repertoire.

In chapter 3 I argued that the sociolinguistic context in New Orleans community is similar in many ways to that in New York City. That is, perhaps even more so than in New York, where scholars have noted the strong influence of the Puerto Rican
community (Wolfram, 1973; Zentella, 1997), Latinxs in New Orleans are a diverse
group, where no single national group predominates (Fussell & Diaz, 2015). Thus, work
such as that described in the preceding paragraph provides a useful foundation for work
in the Latinx community in New Orleans.

While Latinx Englishes more generally, and specific varieties of Latinx English,
both in terms of national heritage and current locale, are a topic of on-going, current
sociolinguistic inquisition, a few generalizations can be formulated based on the above
review of acoustic work on the vocalic inventory of Latinx Englishes. First, Latinx
Englishes illustrate increased tendency towards monophthongization. Second, speakers of
Latinx Englishes may be less likely to reduce unstressed vowels. Third, several scholars
have indicated the occurrence of intermediate patterns, in which Latinx English speakers
evidence patterns of realization between Spanish and American English realizations. This
alludes an additional generalization. Latinx English speakers demonstrate Spanish
substrate influence, not just in the interlanguage of English learners, but across
generations of native English speakers. Additionally, research indicates that Latinx
speakers make use of linguistic markers to perform identity work, operationalizing both
Latinx markers and local identity markers in order to style-shift and index a given
identity. This is evident both in variable rates of accommodation to local norms and in
Latinx speakers observed ability to style-shift based on use of local features. One of the
goals of my work, both in this chapter and in the analysis in chapters 5 and 6, is to
explore how NOLAE is in conversation with these generalizations about English use in
Latinx communities.
Prior to moving on from this discussion, it is important to draw a distinction between interlinguistic interference and contact induced features. It is, as would be expected, common for native Spanish speakers designated as English learners to exhibit transfer from Spanish phonology (Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004). Santa Ana & Bayley note that the vocalic system is a highly salient marker of the English of native Spanish speakers designated as ELLs. They attribute this to the speaker’s reworking of Spanish’s five monophthong vowel system. The data considered in this chapter is based on recordings of first-generation Latinxs across two samples. The decision to focus on first-generation participants was necessitated by the nature of the pre-Katrina sample, which included large numbers of first-generation participants, but very few second-generation participants. Thus, the Spanish influences illustrated in the data here should be seen as, at least partially, due to ongoing first-language interference and not necessarily as cross-generational contact induced features. However, this is mitigated by the fact that all but one speaker, across both samples, have been in the United States for at least ten years. The one exception, a first-generation post-Katrina participant, who has been in the United States for four years, is twenty-three years old, so arrived in the United States at age nineteen. Thus, while we expect interlinguistic interference markers, these markers are likely fossilized linguistic features for the participants in question and not pure interlanguage. The question of how Spanish marker maintenance and local feature acquisition interact with generation is treated in greater detail in the analysis presented in section 3 of this dissertation.
4.2.3 Ethnographic impressions of the pre-Katrina Latinx community

In this section I provide some basic ethnographic information about the pre-Katrina Latinx community in order to provide context to the discussion presented in the remainder of this chapter. In particular, I want to draw attention to the ways in which the pre-Katrina sample participants’ perception of the Latinx community in New Orleans is in conversation with the discussion in chapters three and seven regarding the shifting nature of the local Latinx community and the corresponding shifts in the social salience of the community (Sluyter et al., 2015). As discussed in more detail in chapters three and seven the post-Katrina population is significantly more visible. This can be attributed to a variety of factors, including a transition from a local Latinx community consisting primarily of highly linguistically integrated long-term residents to a community consisting of a greater numbers of recent arrivals, in many cases with limited English ability (Fussell & Diaz, 2015), greater levels of neighborhood specific concentration or ‘barrioization’ (Gomez-Herrin, 2018), and the fact that the increase in the size of the local Latinx community was accompanied by decreases in the size of non-Latinx communities (Sluyter et al., 2015). Local Latinxs’ perceptions of the community in the pre-Katrina sample in many ways confirm these observations.

The vision of the local Latinx community that emerges from Owsley’s interviews is that of a well-integrated, largely invisible minority. For example, Armando, a native of Cuba, notes the lack of ‘barrios’ in New Orleans, claiming the lack of ‘barrios’ is due to the fact that there are, in his research, nineteen different national groups in the Latinx community without a “dominant group.” He claims “everybody’s pretty much assimilated into the general population.” Arianna, also a native of Cuba, notes that the
Latinx community has been forced to assimilate based on the make-up of the community, consisting of many small groups as opposed to large groups from single national origins.

These perspectives are repeated by various participants throughout the archived data. When considered in conversation with the discussion in chapter seven of this dissertation in which I illustrate how participants in my current sample affirm their recognition that the local Latinx community has become increasingly socially delineated as distinct from the larger New Orleans community, it becomes clear that both samples are highly conscious of the positioning of the local Latinx community in the overall cultural landscape of the city. In particular, participants across both samples affirm that the local Latinx community has transitioned from a smaller, more assimilated group to a larger, more socially salient community. Or, as Dio, a 48 year-old native of the Dominican Republic and one of my post-Katrina participants says, in a quote referenced in the title of this dissertation: “I could tell you that before the storm, there wasn’t much of a thought…no one even bothered to consider it an issue…when Katrina happened, that changed everything.” Hurricane Katrina was truly a massive transition point for the city in myriad ways. The Latinx community is not exempt to this transition.

4.2.4 Summary and research questions

General work on the acoustics of North American vowel systems illustrates clearly that vowels are highly implicated in the differentiation of varieties of North American English (Labov et al., 2006; Thomas, 2001). Work of Latinx Englishes in the United States has identified several generalizations about the vowel systems of Latinx Englishes, as summarized at the end of section 4.2.2 above. The analysis presented in this chapter draws on these observations to motivate treating vowel acoustics as an important
indicator of the evolution of NOLAE. In particular, I draw observations that Latinx English speakers in the United States exhibit varying degrees of Spanish influence (Fought, 1997, 2003b; Newman, 2010; Newman & Slomanson, 2003; Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004, among others) and varying degrees of accommodation to localized linguistic patterns (Carter et al., 2014; Thomas, Carter, & Cogshall, 2006; Wolfram et al., 2004, 2011) in my analysis of the evolution of the vocalic acoustics of NOLAE.

The work discussed in this chapter analyzes differences in vowel realization across two samples of first-generation Latinx immigrants to New Orleans. Based on the discussion in section 4.2, I identify several questions that I aim to address in the remainder of this chapter. First, are there differences in patterns of realization of vowels across the two samples? Second, which vowels evidence the greatest degree of differentiation across the samples? Third, what do these patterns tell us about the role of shifting social contexts in linguistic performance among Latinxs in New Orleans? Prior to presenting the results of my analysis, I provide an overview of my methodology in section 4.3.

4.3 Methods of analysis

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on the analysis of vowel realizations for two samples of speakers. The linguistic analysis presented here starts with vowel formant measurements extracted from hand-checked auto-aligned text grids generated by the Dartmouth Linguistic Automation (DARLA) (Reddy & Stanford, 2015) interface, which uses the Montreal Forced Aligner (McAuliffe, et al., 2017) for alignment and FAVE-Extract (Rosenfelder et al., 2014) for vowel extraction. The post-Katrina sample consists of five minute excerpts from a subset \( n = 10 \) of the corpus of
sociolinguistic interviews described throughout this dissertation. The subset consists of the first five first generation\textsuperscript{4} male participants and the first five first generation female participants. As described elsewhere, the excerpts were transcribed to text grids using Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2019), and processed via DARLA. The process yielded 2,268 vowel tokens for analysis. The pre-Katrina sample consists of five minute excerpts from a subset of the English language interviews included in the Beatrice Rodriguez Owsley archive made available courtesy of the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans. The archive consists of 108 interviews conducted between 1986 and 1996 and preserved on cassette tape. I digitized the interviews for ten first generation participants, including five male participants and the five female participants, using an Onyx Blackjack USB recording interface. Recordings were imported via Audacity at 44100 Hz sampling rate. I was then able to extract five minute excerpts and extract vowel format measurements using the same process described above. The pre-Katrina sample yielded 1,736 vowel tokens for analysis. In total, the combined pre-and-post-Katrina sample consisted of 4,004 vowel formant measurements. Individual vowels were separated using Python, creating separate files for each vowel in order to facilitate additional analysis. Table 4.2 provides details on the linguistic data considered in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{4} The choice to focus on first-generation participants for the comparison described in this chapter was necessitated by the nature of the comparison sample. The archived oral history collection includes very few second-generation English language interviews. Thus, in order to have a larger sample for comparison, I focus on first-generation Latinx immigrants to the city.
Table 4.2
Summary of linguistic data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Pre-Katrina Tokens</th>
<th>Post-Katrina Tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IH (BIT)</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH (BALM)</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO (BOUGHT)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AW (BOUT)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY (BITE)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH (BET)</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EY (BAIT)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE (BAT)</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IY (BEAT)</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW (BOAT)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA (COT)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER (FUR)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW (BOOT)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH (BUT)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Tokens:</td>
<td>1732</td>
<td>2260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the BOY vowel is excluded from the analysis because of insufficient clear tokens in the pre-Katrina sample. This accounts for why the totals in table 4.2 are inconsistent with the total token counts provided above.

Initial analysis was conducted using NORM (Kendall & Thomas, 2010; Thomas & Kendall, 2007) to plot normalized values for the two samples in order to visualize the comparison of the overall vowel space. Additional NORM plots allowed for the visualization of the range of each individual vowel across the two samples. Bhattacharyya distances for each vowel across the two samples was calculated in R in order to numerically quantify the rates of divergence for individual vowels across the two samples. Finally, independent samples t-tests confirmed which vowels diverged to statistically significant rates along both the F1 and F2 axes.

Note: The vowels listed are consistent with the DARLA output. In order to facilitate comparison I have included the corresponding lexical class keyword from Labov, Ash, & Boberg (2006). I will use these word-class keys to identify vowels in the discussion throughout the remainder of this chapter.
4.4 Results

4.4.1 Vowel space comparison

I begin the comparison by plotting the vowel means for each sample using the Labov ANAE normalization formula. Figure 4.1 is the vowel plot for the pre-Katrina sample. Figure 4.2 is the vowel plot for the post-Katrina sample.

![Pre-Katrina Vowel Means](image)

Figure 4.1. Pre-Katrina sample vowel means.
Figure 4.2. Post-Katrina vowel means.

More illuminating is figure 4.3, which overlays the two above plots in order to allow for a visual inspection of the overall vowel spaces illustrated in the two samples.
Figure 4.3. Vowel means by sample.

In all vowel plots comparing the two samples throughout this chapter, the blue labels denote the pre-Katrina sample, while the red labels denote the post-Katrina sample. The visual plot illustrates that some vowels are realized similarly across samples, such as BOUT and BIT, while others, such as BITE and BOAT, seem to have diverged across the two samples.

4.4.2 Bhattacharyya’s distance scores for individual vowels across samples

A more precise investigation of these observations was pursued using Bhattacharyya’s distance scores (Bhattacharyya, 1946; Fieberg & Kochanny, 2005; Thacker, Aherne, & Rockett, 1997). Bhattacharyya’s distance was originally developed
as a geometric test of divergence between multinomial populations. Thacker et al. (1997) argue for the viability of BA scores as a replacement for chi-squared statistics, noting that BA scores are preferable to tests like a chi-squared test or a t-test because they allows for a comparison of the shapes of two distributions as opposed to a comparison of the means of the distributions. As noted in Sneller & Labov (2018), BA scores are particularly useful for linguistic research as they provide measure of similarity across non-parametric multidimensional distributions, such as the data analyzed here, where there are significant difference in tokens across the samples. A BA score of 1 indicates complete convergence, while a BA score of 0 indicates complete divergence (Fieberg & Kochanny, 2005; Sneller & Labov, 2018). I calculated BA scores comparing the pre-Katrina and post-Katrina formant measurements for each individual vowel in the data subset considered in this chapter in R (R Core Team, 2017), using an adaptation of a script provided by Betsy Sneller. The results of this analysis are summarized in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4. Bhattacharyya’s distances by vowel.
Recall that lower BA scores indicates greater distinction between the samples compared. That is, in figure 4.4, the shortest bars are indicative the highest degree of differentiation between samples. We can see that the data corroborates to a large extent the visual inspection in the previous section. BOUT (.965) and BIT (.948) have higher BA scores, and thus greater consistency across the two samples, while BITE (.922) and BOAT (.917) have lower BA scores, thus indicating greater distinction across the two samples. Also, it is worth noting that there is no evidence of large-scale divergence, which is expected considering the analysis is comparing the realization of the same vowel class across the two samples. High degrees of divergence would only be expected in the contexts of vowel class splits.

The data is indicative of considerable consistency across the two samples in terms of vowel realizations. The vowel classes with the greatest rates of divergence across the sample, according to Bhattacharyya’s distance, are BOAT (.917), BITE (.922), FUR (.925), COT (.934), BAIT (.936), BEAT (.939), and BAT (.942). Independent sample t-tests were conducted in R to test if the difference between the two samples of the above mentioned vowels were statistically significant. These results are presented in table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>P-value for F1</th>
<th>P-value for F2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOAT</td>
<td>2.966</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BITE</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>8.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUR</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COT</td>
<td>.0004</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAIT</td>
<td>1.451</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAT</td>
<td>2.120</td>
<td>.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAT</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data indicates that statistically significant divergences at at least a p<.05 level are found for COT along both the F1 (p<.001) and F2 (p<.01) axes, for BITE (p<.05) and FUR (p<.05) along the F1 axes, and for BAIT (p<.05) along the F2 axes.

To further explicate these patterns, I plotted normalized formant values for the four vowels with relatively low Bhattacharyya distances and statistically significant divergence along at least one axis listed above, including BITE, FUR, COT, and BAIT. These plots are included below.

Figure 4.5. BITE by sample.
Recall from table 4.3 that sample is statistically significant along the F1 axis. This plot illustrates that the post-Katrina sample has a greater tendency to raised BITE realizations, while also illustrating a greater tendency towards fronted BITE realizations.

Figure 4.6. FUR by sample.

According to the independent sample’s t-test, FUR differed significantly in terms of height. This divergence is visible in the distribution of the two samples. Post-Katrina realizations, represented by red circles, occupy both the top and bottom extremes of the distribution. Taking a specific lexical item as an example, this pattern is confirmed.

Figure 4.7 is the plot for the word ‘first.’
Figure 4.7. ‘First’ across both samples.

This figure confirms the above observations. The blue circles representing the pre-Katrina sample, are highly centralized, while the post-Katrina realization evidence a more expansive range.
Post-Katrina realizations, represented again by the red circles, are less densely congregated around the core realization. In this case, the highest and lowest extremes are occupied by post-Katrina realizations. The most fronted COT realizations are also produced by post-Katrina participants. These patterns are statistically significant for both height and fronted-ness. Figure 4.9 further illustrates this point by plotting pre-and-post-Katrina realizations of a single lexical item, ‘lot.’
Figure 4.9. ‘Lot’ across both samples.

Here again the most salient generalization is that the post-Katrina tokens, plotted in red here, are less coherent in terms of realization range.
Figure 4.10. BAIT by sample.

The two samples of BAIT differed to a statistically significant level along the F2 axis. The plot does not exhibit visual divergence along the F1 axis, but the significant difference in terms of F2 is visible, as the post-Katrina sample occupies the most fronted extremes.

The overall pattern that emerges from the consideration of the most divergent vowels in the sample is that pre-Katrina participants exhibited a more densely congregated realization of the vowels in question, while the post-Katrina sample realizations were less densely congregated. In other words, the pre-Katrina sample illustrates a more consistent, ‘settled’ realization, while the post-Katrina sample typically
exhibits a greater range of realizations. If we consider each vowel separately, we can
expand on the observation. COT, in the post-Katrina sample, is less strongly delineated.
In addition, as illustrated in figure 4.3, COT and BOUGHT are much closer together for
post-Katrina participants, possibly indicating movement towards merger, which is
consistent with Carmichael’s (2014) proposed merger-in-progress in New Orleans. BAIT
also exhibits a larger range of realizations in the post-Katrina sample. In particular, BAIT
is more likely to be fronted in the post-Katrina sample. The post-Katrina sample occupies
the most fronted, backed, and raised extremes in figure 4.5’s representation of BITE
realizations. The post-Katrina sample also exhibited the most raised and most lowered
FUR realizations. The next section takes up the question of motivation for this pattern.

4.5 Discussion

I return now to the set of research questions identified above, which I repeat here
for sake of reference. First, are there significant differences in vowel realizations across
the two samples? Second, which vowels show the highest degrees of divergence? Third,
what motivates these patterns in light of what we know about the shifting nature of the
local Latinx community? I will consider each question in turn.

The analysis presented here demonstrates that while all vowels illustrate
considerable overlap, as expected in the absence of recognized splits or mergers, certain
vowels do differ significantly across the two samples. This was illustrated in three ways.
First, figure 4.3 presents average realizations for each vowel overlaid on a single vowel
plot, which allows for visual impressions of which vowels occupy similar regions and
which vowels diverge in realization. Second, Bhattacharyya’s distances were calculated
for each vowel. While all vowels demonstrated significant overlap in shape, with
Bhattacharyya’s distance scores above .9, certain vowels illustrated a greater divergence. Third, independent sample t-tests treating F1 and F2 as a dependent variable confirmed that significant differences along one or both axes existed for four vowels: BITE, FUR, COT, and BAIT. Thus, we can claim that these four vowels exhibit the greatest divergence across the two samples. The question of motivation and what these patterns can tell us about language performance in this community occupies the remainder of this section.

Turning now to the question of motivation, it is important to first consider that some of the movement seen in figure 4.3 may result from more general patterns of vowel shift in American Englishes in general. That is, can the differences be accounted for in terms of the input received by Latinx speakers? Labov et al. (2006) identify a pattern of fronting back upgliding vowels that may be relevant. In particular, they discuss the fronting of the BOUT, BOOT, and BOAT vowel classes. An initial inspection of figure 4.3 reveals that each of those vowels does appear to have some forward movement along the F2 axis. As we see above, however, the movement along the F2 axis for BOAT is not statistically significant at a 95 percent confidence interval. The F2 movement for BOOT and BOUT are also not statistically significant. It does not appear that a general tendency towards fronting back upgliding vowels is a significant factor in shaping the linguistic performance observed in the data. However, this discussion hints at the importance of sensitivity to local norms and shifts that is highly relevant in the continued discussion.

It is difficult to motivate the patterns of realization in the data in terms of one sample or the other being ‘more local’ or ‘more Spanish.’ In some cases, the post-Katrina sample provides greater evidence of Spanish influence. Fought (2003) identifies raised
BITE as a contact-induced marker of CE. In the data considered here, the post-Katrina sample had a statistically significant tendency to a raised BITE realization, which can be argued to represent greater Spanish influence. In other cases, the pre-Katrina sample appears to have clear evidence of greater Spanish influence, with less sensitivity to local patterns.

For example, consider the BAT vowel which, while counting with one of the lower Bhattacharyya scores, was excluded from the more detailed individual analysis because the difference in realization did not reach statistical significance according to the independent samples t-test. However, the distribution of the vowel class is insightful. Consider figure 4.11, which plots the realizations of the BAT vowel across the two samples.
Figure 4.11. BAT by sample.

This figure illustrates that higher, more fronted realizations are exhibited most clearly in the post-Katrina sample. This can be taken as indicative that the pre-Katrina sample is producing BAT in a manner consistent with Santa Ana & Bayley’s claim that BAT in Chicanx English patterns as a low vowel, with greater variation in F1 than in F2 (Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004). It can also be seen as evidence of heightened sensitivity to local patterns by the post-Katrina sample, as New Orleans traditionally exhibits some level of allophonic split in BAT realizations. In this data, it is the pre-Katrina sample that patterns with Thomas’ (2001) claims regarding Chicanx English in terms of resistance to BAT tensing patterns. Thus, we can see that the data does not support neat claims regarding
which sample evidences greater retention of Spanish influence and which sample exhibits
greater sensitivity to local patterns.

The ambivalence of the data in this regard is perhaps best illustrated by
considering the pattern of COT realizations evident in the data. As Santa Anna & Bayley
(2004) argue, while individuals labeled as ELLs do not evidence phonological mergers of
the local English variety, Chicanx English speakers do. The pattern in my data illustrates
that the first generation Latinxs in the pre-Katrina sample distinguish COT and
CAUGHT, while first generation Latinxs in the post-Katrina sample are moving towards
merger. In light of Carmichael’s (2014) claim that New Orleanians are moving towards
COT-CAUGHT merger, this would seem to support claims that post-Katrina realizations
illustrate sensitivity to local patterns. However, when the overall vowel space as
presented in figure 4.3 is incorporated into the analysis, we see that the pre-Katrina
sample’s lack of merger depends heavily on significantly raised BOUGHT, which is in
fact characteristic of traditional New Orleans English patterns, in which BOUGHT
resembled Mid-Atlantic patterns (Carmichael, 2014; Labov, 2007). This can be read as
evidence of the pre-Katrina population’s sensitivity to local patterns of BOUGHT raising.

Thus, the most consistent generalization about the data analyzed in this chapter is
that in cases where the two samples diverge significantly, the post-Katrina sample is
more variable. That is, the pre-Katrina sample tends to be more cohesively centered
around a core realization of the vowel in question, while the post-Katrina sample exhibits
a larger range of realizations. The shifting nature of the sociolinguistic context provides a
clear rationale for this pattern. The pre-Katrina Latinx community can be described as a
small community, dominated by a few national groups, and consisting of primarily long-
term residents who were highly integrated both linguistically and in terms of location of residence within the area. Conversely, the post-Katrina population has been shown to be more diverse in terms of national origin, length of residency, and level of integration, as well as evidencing greater tendencies on the part of some Latinxs to congregate in specific areas of the city. Based on the data considered here, this diversity within the Latinx community results in differing levels of sensitivity to localized patterns and varied patterns of retention of Spanish influence.

4.6 Conclusion

While the data illustrates that for most vowels realizations are highly cohesive across the samples, the post-Katrina sample shows greater range for several vowels. That is, participants in the post-Katrina sample appear to illustrate greater variation in realization of the four most highly divergent vowels discussed in detail in this chapter. The pre-Katrina sample appears to be more consistent in terms of vowel realizations. I argue that the larger range of realizations is best understood in relation to the shifting social context in which NOLAE is realized. The current Latinx population is, in comparison to the pre-Katrina community, more diverse, less well-established, and less linguistically integrated. This greater internal diversity of the community has important linguistic implications. Some Latinxs feel a much greater pressure to assimilate to local patterns, resulting in the greater sensitivity to COT-CAUGHT mergers, tensed BAT patterns, and patterns of diphthongization among a subset of participants, while other participants are more likely to retain Spanish-marked features. In contrast, the pre-Katrina population, as a small, mostly long-term, highly integrated community, exhibits greater consistency in terms of vocalic realizations.
This has important implications for the work discussed in the following section of this dissertation, where I take up the question of how to account for varying patterns in the local Latinx community in terms of rates of maintenance of Spanish influence and rates of acquisition to local linguistic norms. The work discussed in this chapter implies that the current sample will illustrate significant variation in terms of rates of realization of these two sets of linguistic markers. Further, the analysis presented in this chapter implies that this linguistic diversity should be able to be accounted for in terms of the internal diversity of the community. Specifically, the analysis I present above suggests that participants more deeply integrated into Latinx neighborhoods will exhibit greater tendencies to resist local patterns, while participants occupying less-deeply integrated positions will be more susceptible to assimilating local patterns. This is the analysis I pursue in section 3 of this dissertation that pursues a variationist account of synchronic variation in NOLAE. In particular, the work in the next section queries how the social networks of the local Latinx population, conceptualized in ways reflecting the on-going ‘barrioization’ processes, shape linguistic performance.
SECTION 3.

QUANTITATIVE SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SYNCHRONIC VARIATION IN NOLAE

CHAPTER 5.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN NOLAE

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore two variables, one a widely acknowledged marker of Latinx Englishes and one a widely acknowledged marker of local New Orleans identity, in order to better understand the role of social demographics in shaping linguistic performance in NOLAE. The analysis in this chapter pursues the implications mentioned at the end of the previous chapter. Chapter 3 noted that the post-Katrina sample is more variable in terms both of retention of Spanish influences and acquisition of localized markers. The question I take up in section 3 of this dissertation is how to account for the patterns of variation exhibited. What social factors are implicated in the patterns of rates of realization of these two sets of linguistic markers? In particular, this section illustrates that social network metrics, conceptualized in relation to ongoing ‘barrioization’ processes, help motivate patterns of linguistic performance. Prior to incorporating the social network metrics in chapter 6, this chapter explores a variationist account on the basis of traditional sociolinguistic variables, including, age, gender, education, and generation of immigration.
This chapter presents an analysis of two linguistic variables. The first, /æ/ realization, is a widely cited variable in sociolinguistics research that has been presented as an ongoing change-in-progress in New Orleans (Labov, 2007; Carmichael, 2014). The second, prosodic rhythm, is an often discussed marker of Spanish influence on Latinx English (for example Carter, 2005; Newman, 2010; Shousterman, 2014). This chapter explores these variables in relation to four large-scale demographic constructs widely explored in the sociolinguistic literature. These are gender, age, generation in New Orleans, and education. I argue here that these variables are able to provide a limited amount of insight into the linguistic performance observed in the local Latinx community.

In particular, my data indicates that generation is a statistically significant predictor of pre-nasal /æ/ tensing and that age is a statistically significant predictor of prosodic rhythm in speech. These observations are able to account for some of the linguistic variation in NOLAE. However, this account is situated primarily within the first wave tradition, as it explores how large scale demographic stratification predicts linguistic variation. Additional nuance is needed in order to develop a more robust account. The analysis presented in chapters 6-9 is directed towards incorporating some of this nuance.

Section 5.2 presents an overview of existing literature related to the two linguistic variables I discuss in this chapter and provides a rationale for expecting each variable to be a salient feature in the linguistic performance of Latinxs in New Orleans. Section 5.3 discusses the methodology applied in this chapter. Section 5.4 presents the results of quantitative analysis of the variables in question, while section 5.5 provides discussion
and tentative conclusions, setting the stage for the social network analysis presented in chapter 6.

5.2 Literature Review

This section will review the existing literature considering the linguistic variables I examine in this section of the dissertation. In section 5.2.1 I will provide information on past considerations of /æ/ realization in American Englishes. In section 5.2.2 I will discuss efforts to quantify prosodic rhythm and will explore a body of recent literature that applies a recent methodological innovation to this problem. Finally, in section 5.2.3 I will summarize the insights from these two corpora of research literature and use these insights to motivate a series of questions that I aim to answer in chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation.

5.2.1 Sociolinguistic treatments of /æ/

5.2.1.1 /æ/ in American Englishes

The low front vowel /æ/ has variable realizations in many varieties of American English. A nasal split system is common throughout many regions of the United States. In this system, as described in Becker (2010), /æ/ is tense when preceding a nasal coda, but lax preceding other segments. Additionally, split /æ/ systems, most heavily associated with New York City and Philadelphia (Cohen, 1970; Ferguson, 1972; Labov, et al., 2016; Labov et al., 1972; Trager, 1940), have been described for several cities in the United States. These include New Haven, CT (Johnson, 1998), Hudson Valley (Dinkin, 2009), Cincinnati (Boberg & Strassel, 2000), and New Orleans (Carmichael, 2014; Labov, 2007). As Boberg and Strassel (2000) note, the low front vowel /æ/, or ‘short –a,’ is among the most important variables for distinguishing varieties of American English.
Labov (1991) goes so far as to identify /æ/ realization as one of the two crucial “pivot points” in American English.

The various areas where split /æ/ systems have been observed are united in the fact that /æ/ tensing is generally conditioned by the nature of the following segment. However, notably, the precise nature of the conditioning environment varies. Durian (2012) notes that New York City and Newark have one version of the split, which differs from the split as observed in Philadelphia and Baltimore (238). In New York City, tensed realizations occur preceding voiceless fricatives, front nasals, and voiced plosives (Becker, 2010; Labov, 1981; Labov et al., 2006). In addition, Labov (2007) notes several extra phonetic constraints, such as the function word constraint, in which tensing is blocked in function words, and the open syllable constraint, in which tensing is blocked in open syllables. In the Philadelphia context, tensing occurs prior to front voiceless fricatives, front nasals, as well as before /d/, but only in three words (Labov, 1989, 1994, Labov et al., 2006, 2016).

More recently, scholars have noted that many of the areas traditionally characterized by a split /æ/ system are in a process of shift to the more wide-spread nasal system. Boberg and Strassel (2000) in Cincinnati, Thomas (2006) in other cities in Southern Ohio, Dinkin (2009) in the Hudson Valley, and Durian (2012) in Columbus have all presented compelling evidence that these areas, while not among the locales traditionally associated with split /æ/ systems, historically featured such systems. In most cases, these authors found that speakers born prior to the early 1970s showed evidence of split /æ/, while younger speakers featured nasal or continuous systems. In addition, Becker (2010) has found evidence of a shift towards a nasal system in New York City,
which she argues began as a shift from the traditional biphonemic system to a monophonemic, allophonic split similar to what Labov (2007) and Dinkin (2009) claim existed traditionally outside of New York. Durian (2012) describes Philadelphia as the lone hold-out among traditionally split systems. However, more recently Labov et al. (2016) details a shift among younger speakers highly oriented towards higher education in Philadelphia.

5.2.1.2 /æ/in New Orleans

New Orleans is among the cities identified in the literature as having an allophonic split in realization of /æ/. Using data from the ANAE, Labov (2007) described the split /æ/ system in New Orleans as featuring tensed realizations preceding nasals, voiced plosives /b/ and /d/, and voiceless fricatives. Carmichael (2014), in her analysis of the YE variety spoken in Chalmette, just east of New Orleans, provides a slightly modified account of the factors conditioning the tensed realization of /æ/ in the region. Figure 5.1 illustrates the tensing environment identified in her work, with the phonemes inside the box representing environments that condition tensing.

Figure 5.1. /æ/ tensing environment for Y’at.

Her analysis differs from Labov’s (2007) analysis in that, in her data, /g/ and /dʒ/ condition tensing, while /θ/ does not.
As in most, if not all of the areas traditionally featuring a split /æ/ system, the split /æ/ system appears to be giving way to a nasal split. Labov (2007) noted that, in the realizations of his two youngest participants, /æ/ was tensed pre-nasally and lax elsewhere. Carmichael (2014) conducted statistical analysis of the short –a systems observed in her data and found that age was a significant predictor of /æ/ system. In her data, no speakers over 50 featured a nasal split, while half of the speakers under 30 featured a nasal split /æ/ system. She concludes that the shift to a nasal /æ/ system in the area is nearly complete.

5.2.1.3 /æ/ in Latinx communities

There is one additional body of existing research that we need to consider before moving on to contextualizing my work within this literature. There is a small set of studies exploring /æ/ realization in Latinx communities in the United States. This literature is, to my knowledge, restricted to Thomas’ (2001) brief comments in his description of Mexican-American vowel spaces, Thomas et al. (2006), who study of /æ/ among Mexican Americans in North Carolina, and Carter et al. (2014), who explore on Latinx English in Miami.

Thomas (2001) notes that there is some evidence that Mexican-American English speakers may resist pre-nasal tensing of /æ/. His comments are in the context a larger exploration of the overall vowel space characteristic of this demographic, and thus are not further elaborated. Thomas et al. (2006) provide a more detailed analysis. They look at /æ/ realizations in the English of Mexican-Americans in North Carolina and in Texas, and conclude that among the populations studied, Mexican-Americans strongly resist pre-nasal raising of /æ/. Additional nuance is introduced to the discussion by Carter et al.,
(2014), whose exploration of /æ/ in Miami reveals that the Latinx college students in their sample did, in fact, evidence an allophonic nasal split system, but that their production of both allophones was significantly lower than that of the local Anglo population.

5.2.2 Quantifying rhythm

Researchers have long noted that languages can vary in terms of prosodic patterns. English has been described as ‘stressed-timed’ (Pike, 1945) and Romance languages have been described as ‘syllable-timed’ (Abercrombie, 1967). In the earliest articulations of this distinction it was proposed that syllable-timed languages consisted of syllables of equal length, while stressed-timed languages consisted of isochronic feet. Similar claims have been made about varieties of English (Fuchs, 2016). For example, British and American English have been described as stress-timed, while Nigerian English and Singapore English have been described as syllable-timed (Crystal, 1995; Mesthrie, 2008; Platt, Weber, & Ho, 1984). These distinctions were seen as categorical; all languages fell into one category or the other. As Fuchs (2014) notes, the Isochrony Hypothesis failed to withstand acoustic scrutiny. Dauer (1983) demonstrated that if standard deviation is treated as a measure of variability, feet and syllables in stressed-timed languages are as variable as in syllable-timed languages as in stressed-timed languages. Later research proposed a continuum instead of a categorical distinction, with languages like English exhibiting strong stress-timing and languages like Spanish exhibiting strong syllable-timing, with various languages evidencing intermediate patterns (Ramus, Nespor, & Mehler, 1999). Grabe & Low (2002) provides evidence for this claim. Their work shows that while language like English and German are clearly differentiated from languages such as French and Spanish, languages can exhibit
intermediate patterns and can even exhibit different patterns of variability in terms of vowel duration and intervals between vowels. While difficulties defining and operationalizing speech rhythm persisted, it was clear that, as Fuchs (2016) notes, “distinguishing languages based on rhythm…captures the intuitions of many linguists” (37). Thus, while scholars like Dauer (1983) and Ramus et al. (1999) took these complications as evidence that prosodic timing is a consequence of the phonology of a language and not a distinct linguistic feature, scholars like Grabe & Low (2002) were engaged in the search for reliable mechanisms for the quantification of cross-linguistic rhythmic variation.

The late 20th and early 21st centuries provided substantial advancements in operationalizing the intuition of previous scholars regarding cross-linguistic prosodic differences. Most work in this area is based on duration-based rhythm metrics. Fuchs (2016) provides an overview of 29 different rhythm-based metrics, classified broadly into global metrics, which look at differences across all intervals in an utterance and local metrics, which compare adjacent intervals. Gut (2005) demonstrated that Nigerian English is more syllable-timed than British English but less syllable-timed than Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba using a metric called the Rhythm Ratio, which divides the durations of successive syllables and calculates the mean of the quotients. Deterding (2001) applied a metric called the Variability Index, which involves dividing the duration of each syllable by the mean duration of all syllables in an utterance before computing differences between successive syllables, in order to demonstrate that Singapore English is more syllable-timed than British English in spontaneous speech.
Low & Grabe (1995) proposed what has become a widely applied quantitative mechanism for accounting for prosodic differences. They proposed a Pairwise Variability Index (PVI), further developed in Low, Grabe, & Nolan (2000). In this article and in a subsequent article (Low & Grabe, 2002), the PVI was elaborated to include a normalization component to account for variations in speech rate. The normalized formula is presented in figure 5.2, where \( m \) = number of vowels in an utterance, \( d \) = duration of a given vowel, \( k \).

\[
nPVI = 100 \times \left[ \sum_{k=1}^{m-1} \frac{|d_k - d_{k+1}|}{(d_k + d_{k+1})/2} \right] / (m - 1)
\]

Figure 5.2. Normalized Pairwise Variability Index from Low & Grabe (2002).

According to the formula above, nPVI is calculated by first taking the difference between successive syllables. The difference is divided by the mean duration of the two syllables in order to normalize for speech rate. The absolute values of the calculated indexes for the various pairs of successive syllables in an utterance are summed and divided by the number of pairs. This is multiplied by 100. This normalized version of the PVI formula is argued by the authors to be better suited to vowel duration analysis, while the raw version, without the normalization, is better suited to consonantal analysis.

The nPVI metric was originally applied in Low & Grabe (1995), Low et al. (2000), and Low & Grabe (2002) to quantitatively demonstrate that Singapore English is more syllable-timed that British English. It has since been applied to a variety of language contexts. Table 5.1 provides an overview of existing literature applying a variation of nPVI to sociolinguistic research.
Table 5.1
Previous sociolinguistic applications of nPVI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Language(s) Considered</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Low, et al., 2000)</td>
<td>Singapore English (SE), British English (BE)</td>
<td>SE is more syllable-timed than BE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Grabe &amp; Low, 2002)</td>
<td>18 languages</td>
<td>Rhythmic distinctions are gradient and not categorical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spencelayh, 2001)</td>
<td>Local dialects of English from Newcastle, York, Derby, and Buckie</td>
<td>York and Derby were more stressed-timed, Newcastle was intermediate, and Buckie (Scotland) was more syllable-timed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fought &amp; Fought, 2002)</td>
<td>Chicano English (CE), Anglo English (AE)</td>
<td>CE in California is more syllable-timed than AE at beginnings of utterances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Carter, 2005)</td>
<td>Mexican American English (MAE), Anglo English (AE)</td>
<td>MAE is more syllable-timed than AE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Szakay, 2006)</td>
<td>Maori English (ME), Pakeha English (PE)</td>
<td>ME is more syllable-timed than PE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Thomas &amp; Carter, 2006)</td>
<td>African American English (AAE), European American English (EAE)</td>
<td>Contemporary EAE and AAE do not differ significantly, but AAE may have become more stressed-timed diachronically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cogshall, 2008)</td>
<td>Cherokee English (CkE), Anglo English (AE)</td>
<td>CkE is more syllable-timed than AE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Shousterman, 2014)</td>
<td>Puerto Rican English (PRE)</td>
<td>PRE spoken by women in NYC evidences syllable-timing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Robles-Puentes, 2014)</td>
<td>Spanish, English by U.S. and Mexico born Mexican-Americans</td>
<td>Los Angeles born bilinguals accommodate to language of reading passage, English monolinguals/early bilinguals use more stressed-timing in both languages, Spanish monolinguals/late bilinguals evidence more syllable-timing in both languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Carter &amp; Wolford, 2016)</td>
<td>Spanish, English</td>
<td>Spanish of U.S. born Latinxs shifts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two additional studies, both described in Carter & Wolford (2016), provide an additional layer of context. These works suggest that adult L2 learners can exhibit L1 interference on prosodic timing in the L2. Gabriel & Kireva (2014) illustrates that the Spanish spoken by native Italian speakers learning Spanish as an L2 is influenced by Italian prosody. Further evidence comes from Robles-Puentes’ (2014) work in Los Angeles that shows that the English of adult late bilingual native Spanish speakers was significantly more syllable-timed than that of both English monolinguals and early bilinguals.

As can be observed in table 5.1, various researchers have developed treatments of the prosodic nature of Latinx Englishes using variations of Low et al.’s (2000) nPVI formula. These treatments include Fought & Fought (2002) in Los Angeles, Carter (2005) in North Carolina, Shousterman (2013) in NYC, and Robles-Puentes (2014) in Los Angeles. This recent work is in conversation with long-standing impressionistic observations of prosodic differences between Latinx Englishes and Anglo Englishes such as those discussed in Fought (2003). She cites Santa Ana (1991) as being among the first to describe Chicanx English as ‘syllable-timed.’ The more recent acoustic work confirms these early impressions of the distinctive prosodic rhythm of Latinx Englishes, while providing evidence that this perceptual distinctiveness corresponds with what can be described as an intermediate pattern (Carter, 2005). That is, Latinx Englishes tend to be more syllable-timed than Anglo English, but less syllable-timed than the Spanish of monolinguals. This suggests cross-generational influence of Spanish on the English
spoken by U.S. Latinxs and functions to illustrate a more general point: substrate influences can occur on the prosodic level.

5.2.3 Contextualizing the current project

Three key observations from the above literature function to place my work in conversation with the existing sociolinguistic tradition regarding /æ/. First, /æ/ is among the two variables identified by Labov (1991) as key shibboleths for varieties of American English. Second, /æ/ realization is a crucial marker of identity in New Orleans. While the city has traditionally exhibited a unique split system, recent research has indicated an ongoing shift to a nasal system. Finally, /æ/ realization is an important variable for consideration in work on Latinx Engishes, as researchers have suggested that this feature functions as a salient marker of these varieties of American English.

These observations motivate my decision to treat /æ/ realization as a response variable in this work. In particular, these observations motivate several questions. First, are local Latinxs acquiring the traditional New Orleans split, a nasal split, or do they resist the allophonic split in ways similar to the Mexican-Americans in Thomas et al. (2006)? Second, particularly in light of the observation that participants in Carter et al., (2014) were second generation Latinxs, is generation a significant predictor of /æ/ performance? Finally, what do patterns of /æ/ realization in NOLAE tell us more generally about /æ/ realization in post-Katrina New Orleans?

The literature discussed here supports several generalizations about prosodic rhythm. First, intuitive perceptions of cross-linguistic rhythmic variation, wide-spread since at least the mid-twentieth century, are grounded in acoustic reality. While specific hypotheses regarding syllabic or foot isochrony have been demonstrated to be unfounded,
duration-based metrics have illustrated that languages and dialects vary prosodically. Second, adult language users can exhibit substrate influences along prosodic lines. Third, contact varieties of languages can exhibit prosodic influences of other linguistic codes. My work is intended to be in conversation with the above work. The above work motivates three important questions related to rhythm. First, will NOLAE speakers display an intermediate prosodic pattern reminiscent of other varieties of Latinx English? Second, in light of observations by Fought (2003) regarding the role of prosodic rhythm in the construction of Latinx identity, what demographic correlates predict prosodic performance? Finally, what is the role of generation? That is, will first generation speakers, or late-bilinguals, evidence greater syllable-timing?

5.3 Current methodology

Independent variables are selected from among commonly explored sociolinguistic variables. Specifically, I explore the role of age, gender, generation, and educational status on the dependent variables. One important methodological note relates to the question of generation. Throughout this dissertation I have taken the approach described in chapter 3, in which individuals who moved to New Orleans as older teens or adults are categorized as first generation and individuals born in New Orleans or born elsewhere but brought to New Orleans in prepubescent years are treated as second generation. The analysis here requires an adaptation to this methodological stance. In terms of markers of local identity, the above stratification is acceptable. However, in terms of the features of Spanish as a heritage language, the most relevant distinction is not necessarily point of arrival in New Orleans, but rather point of arrival in the United States. Thus, participants either born in the United States or born in Latin America but
brought to the United States in pre-pubescent years are treated as second generation in the analysis of markers of Spanish.

The two dependent variables for the analysis discussed in this chapter are the low front vowel /æ/ and prosodic timing. As discussed previously, the low front vowel is a proposed change in progress in New Orleans. Prosodic timing has been well-established as a salient marker of Spanish heritage influence. Low front vowel tensing is operationalized using Bark Difference Metric normalization. Prosodic timing is operationalized on the basis of normalized Pairwise Variability Index (nPVI) scores (Low, et al., 2000; Grabe & Low, 2002) using a variation of the formula presented in figure 5.2 above.

Phonetic analysis was conducted by selecting a roughly ten minute excerpt from each interview in the contemporary data set (n = 33). Text grids for each excerpt were created using Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2013). The text grids and sound files were then processed via that Dartmouth Linguistic Automation (DARLA) interface, which employs the Montreal Forced Aligner and FAVE-extract to return formant measurements.

All tokens of /æ/ were extracted from the data. This resulted in 927 tokens of /æ/ across the sample. The data was further processed by first removing tokens that were either miscoded by DARLA or where it was unclear what vowel the speaker was targeting. In many cases the mis-categorized or unclear tokens resulted from localized linguistic patterns. For example, DARLA categorized the central vowel in ‘gras,’ as in ‘Mardi Gras,’ as /æ/, but this is not the local pronunciation. Tokens in certain environments were also removed due to well-established co-articulatory effects. Specifically, tokens following [r, w, j] and preceding [r, l, g] were omitted, following
Carter et al. (2014). This resulted in a total of 830 tokens of /æ/ across the sample. The data for the entire sample was normalized in NORM using Labov’s ANAE speaker extrinsic formula. The data was plotted with nasal context as stratification as well as using the traditional New Orleans split as described in Carmichael (2014) as a stratification criteria. In addition, each individual participant’s /æ/ tokens were plotted in NORM. Using the resulting vowel plots, participants were categorized as exhibiting merged, split, or continuous nasal /æ/ systems. Finally, Bark Difference Metric $Z_2-Z_1$ was calculated for the 830 tokens of /æ/ using NORM. This was treated as the dependent variable for the statistical analysis reported in this chapter. This decision follows Thomas (2011), which notes the Bark Difference metric $Z_2-Z_1$ metric is sufficient for accurately modeling /æ/ raising (164-165). Using this metric provides a single number where a higher score represents a more raised /æ/ and a lower score represents a more lowered /æ/. This strategy is useful in one additional way. It provides a single continuous numerical value that can be treated as a dependent variable for statistical analysis.

Prosodic analysis also started with the hand-corrected text grids returned by DARLA. An nPVI score for 100 pairs of consecutive syllables was calculated for each participant. Syllables immediately preceding a pause, hesitation marker, a repair, or a restart were disregarded in order to eliminate the influence of phrase final lengthening as described in Thomas & Carter (2006), Fuchs (2016) and other places. In addition, syllables immediately preceding a break in the text grind annotation were omitted as the unannotated material was often unclear or with unclear syllable boundaries. A Praat script made available by Mietta Lennes (Lennes, 2017) was used to extract the segment lengths for the vowel in each syllable. For each pair of vowels, nPVI was calculated
using Thomas and Carter’s (2006) modification of the nPVI formula developed in Low et al. (2000). This variation on the nPVI formula takes syllable \( a \) minus syllable \( b \) and divides the difference by the mean of the two syllables. The nPVI calculation was completed using an Excel spreadsheet.

This computational mechanism is preferred here for several reasons. First, as Thomas & Carter (2006) note it is more suitable to spontaneous speech than many other proposed metrics. In particular, nPVI as described here is preferable to syllable-based durational metrics because in spontaneous speech it is difficult to determine syllabification. Second, a localized metric is preferable to a global metric because of the variation in utterance lengths and difficulties determining utterance boundaries that are both inherent in spontaneous speech. Additionally, as Fuchs (2016) notes, of the durational metrics, normalized vocalic metrics like nPVI are the most reliable. Finally, my work is intended to be in conversation with the growing body of literature discussing the prosodic nature of Latinx Englishes, and the use of nPVI allows for direct comparison of my results with previous literature.

In summary, the statistical analysis reported in this chapter involves two dependent variables and four independent variables. Table 5.2 summarizes the variables under consideration here and details the mechanism for operationalization for each variable.
Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Operationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Participant self-report, Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Participant self-report, Binary (Male, Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>Participant self-report, Binary (First, Second)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Participant self-report, Categorical (High School, College, Graduate School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low front vowel /æ/</td>
<td>Bark Difference Metric Z2-Z1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosodic Rhythm</td>
<td>nPVI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each dependent variable, descriptive statistics were calculated in Excel. Inferential statistics were calculated primarily using the online Language Variation Suite ("Language Variation Suite," n.d.). Additional statistical modeling was completed in Python using the NumbPy (Oliphant, 2006; van der Walt, Colbert, & Varoquaux, 2011) and Pandas (McKinney, 2010) packages.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Low front vowel

I began by plotting the normalized /æ/ data stratified in terms of the traditional New Orleans split system as reported in Carmichael (2014) and in terms of a nasal split. Figure 5.3 shows speaker means for the traditional New Orleans split short-a system and figure 5.4 shows speaker means for a nasal split system. AE_t, in blue in figure 5.3, represents the traditional tensed environment for New Orleans English and AE_n, in blue in figure 5.4, represents pre-nasal tokens of /æ/.
Figure 5.3. Speakers means stratified by traditional New Orleans split.
Figure 5.5 is a vowel plot of mean normalized F1 and F2 values for /kaen/ ‘can,’ /baed/ ‘bad,’ and /baek/ ‘back.’ /kaen/ is
clearly an example of the pre-nasal context, /baed/ is tensed in the traditional New Orleans split (see figure 5.1), while /baek/ is not tensed in either the traditional or nasal systems.

![Figure 5.5. NOLAE realizations of ‘can,’ ‘bad,’ and ‘back.’](image)

The figure illustrates that while ‘bad’ and ‘back’ essentially share space, ‘can’ is much higher and much more advanced.

I then plotted unnormalized formant values for each individual speaker in terms of a nasal split. This process revealed three distinct systems of /æ/ realizations. One group of speakers evidenced a clear nasal split, as illustrated in Pablo’s /æ/ plot here as figure 5.6.
Figure 5.6. Pablo’s nasal split /æ/ system.

Other speakers exhibit what is often referred to in the literature as a continuous system (Labov et al., 2006). In a continuous system, as in Waldo’s plot reproduced here as figure 5.7, pre-nasal tokens are the most advanced and most raised, but there is not a clear distinction between the tokens. In this system, tokens occur in essentially what Labov et al. (2006) call an “uninterrupted smear” (181), with nasal tokens highest and left-most.
Figure 5.7. Waldo’s continuous /æ/ system.

A third system present in the NOLAE data is more reminiscent of what Thomas (2001) and Thomas et al. (2006) have reported for Mexican-American varieties of English in the United States, where speakers resist the allophonic split conditioned by the nasality of the following segment. Figure 5.8 provides an example of this system.
Figure 5.8. Adalberto’s merged /æ/ system.

Of note is that there appears to be no distinct differentiation between pre-nasal and non-pre-nasal tokens of /æ/.

Initial descriptive statistics on the classification of my participants into /æ/ systems allows for some useful observations. Consider figure 5.9.
Figure 5.9. /æ/ system by demographics.

The descriptive data presented here illustrates that in terms of gender stratifications, merged systems are most common among males while split systems predominate among females. In terms of generation, merged systems are slightly more common among first generation participants, while among second generation participants, split systems are overwhelmingly preferred. In terms of education, split systems are slightly preferred by all levels. Across the full sample, split systems are preferred, followed by merged systems, with the fewest participants possessing continuous systems. The full range of data, illustrating the patterns described here, is presented in table 5.3.
Table 5.3
Systems of /æ/ in NOLAE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Split</th>
<th>Continuous</th>
<th>Merged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I fit a regression model treating participant, gender, age, generation, and education as independent variables and system as a multinomial dependent variable. This model illustrates a significant effect for generation (p < .05) at both levels. The model is included here as table 5.4. I then turned to analyzing /æ/ realization by token.

Table 5.4.
Multinomial logistic regression model for /æ/ system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2: Gender</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Gender</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Age</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Age</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Generation</td>
<td>-2.76</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Generation</td>
<td>-3.21</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Education</td>
<td>-1.10</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Education</td>
<td>-.95</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log-Likelihood</td>
<td>-27.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McFadden R2</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chisq</td>
<td>14.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A mixed effects regression model with gender, age, generation, education, and nasal context (nasality of the following segment) as fixed effects, participant as a random effect, and Bark Z2-Z1 as a dependent variable shows only nasal context as highly
significant (p < .001). I grew a conditional inference tree to further investigate these patterns, which I include here as figure 5.10. The conditional inference tree shows that context is highly significant, and that for pre-nasal tokens (context > 1), generation becomes significant. These results serve to motivate two observations. First, as expected, the nasality of the following segment is a significant predictor of tensing across the sample. Second, generation appears to play an important role. I will not dwell on these results further, but use them to motivate the next portion of the analysis, in which I focus on Bark Z2-Z1 normalized pre-nasal /æ/ as a dependent variable.

Figure 5.10. Conditional inference tree for /æ/ across nasal and non-nasal contexts

The crucial distinctive feature for differentiating the three systems of /æ/ realizations visible in the data is the behavior of pre-nasal /æ/. Pre-nasal /æ/ will be most consistently raised in nasal systems, less so in continuous systems, and even less so in merged systems. Treating Bark Difference Z2-Z1 for pre-nasal tokens of /æ/ as a dependent variable, with participant, gender, age, generation, and education as predictor variables allowed me to focus specifically on these patterns of pre-nasal /æ/ realization. A mixed effects regression model with participant as a random factor, gender, age,
generation, and education as fixed effects, and pre-nasal Bark Z2-Z1 as a dependent variable shows no significant effects at the p < .05 level. This model is shown here as table 5.5.

Table 5.5  
Mixed effects regression model for nasal /æ/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>4.346</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Random forests (Breiman, 2001) have been described as highly valuable tools for sociolinguistic analysis in cases where the number of tokens is relatively small compared to all of the possible interactions of predictor variables and in cases with high degrees of collinearity (Tagliamonte & Baayen, 2012). Due to the nature of my data, this tool can reveal useful patterns that may not be apparent in the mixed regression model. A random forest for the model described above, included here as figure 5.11, illustrates that age, generation, and gender function as important predictors of tensing of pre-nasal /æ/.

Figure 5.11. Random forest for pre-nasal /æ/
In the figure, predictors to the right of the dashed line are significant. Further insights emerge from the consideration of a conditional inference tree grown for the data in question and presented here as figure 5.12.

![Conditional Inference Tree](image)

Figure 5.12. Conditional inference tree for pre-nasal /æ/.

Here we see that generation is highly significant across the sample. With the second generation (Generation > 1), education becomes an important predictor, with participants with college and graduate school education (Education > 1) demonstrating a more tensed /æ/ realization. These results will be considered in greater depth below, but for now, we turn to the analysis of prosodic rhythm.

5.4.2 Prosodic timing

It is useful to begin the report of the results of the prosodic rhythm analysis with basic descriptive statistics. Table 5.6 provides the breakdowns of average nPVI across the various levels of sample stratification.
Table 5.6
Average nPVI across demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.522</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>.507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.525</td>
<td></td>
<td>.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.517</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.13 allows for a visualization of the data.

![Average nPVI](image_url)

Figure 5.13. nPVI comparisons by demographics.

We can observe, based on the above figures, that males, with an average nPVI of .522, are slightly more stress timed than females, with an average nPVI of .508. Second generation participants tend to be more stressed timed, with an average nPVI of .521, than first generation participants, who have an average nPVI of .507. Further, perhaps surprisingly, level of education inversely correlates with average nPVI, as participants with a graduate school education are the most syllable-timed, with an NPVI of .496, followed by participants with a college education, with an average nPVI of .517, while participants with a high school education are the most stress-timed, with an average nPVI of .525. Thus, while we might expect, based on the above observations that higher levels
of education predict more English-like patterns of pre-nasal /æ/, that higher levels of education would correlate with a more stress-timed, or English-like, prosody, this does not appear to be accurate, at least according to initial observations. This will be further elaborated in section 5.5.

Inferential statistical analysis yields additional insights. I began by fitting a mixed effects linear regression model taking participant as a random effect, gender, age, generation, and education as fixed effects, and nPVI as a dependent variable. The model, printed here as table 5.7, yielded no significant factors, with a negative correlation of age to stress-timing being the closest to significance.

Table 5.7
Mixed effects regression for nPVI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>.584</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>8.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A random forest indicates modest effects for age and education, as seen in figure 5.14, while a conditional inference, shown in figure 5.15, tree notes a modest effect for age alone.
Figure 5.14. Random forest for nPVI.

Figure 5.15. Conditional inference tree for nPVI.

The effect in figure 5.15 is in the expected direction. There is modest evidence that older participants, in particular participants over the age of 43, have slightly lower nPVI, and thus illustrate a more syllable-timed prosodic rhythm.

5.5 Discussion

Several important observations emerge from the above analysis. The first is that, as seen repeatedly, random forest and conditional inference trees, consistent with the claims in Tagliamonte & Baayen (2012), reveal additional layers of insights. In terms of /æ/ realization, a mixed effects multiple linear regression model revealed no significant
effects. However, consideration of the data in terms of random forest and a conditional inference tree revealed how the significant effect of generation, hinted at in the statistical analysis of /æ/ systems, functioned in the data. The conditional inference tree revealed that generation interacts with education, as more highly-educated second generation participants showed more tensed /æ/ realizations. In terms of prosodic rhythm, a mixed effects multiple linear regression analysis yielded very little insight. However, further analysis using more sophisticated statistical mechanisms allows us to see a slight effect of age in the expected direction. That is, older participants are more likely to evidence greater syllable-timing in their English use.

The visual inspection of the vowel plots suggests three different /æ/ systems at work among my participants. Participants seem to evidence nasal split systems, continuous systems, and undifferentiated or merged systems. Considering the descriptive and inferential analyses in concert, we can make a few claims about the overall status of /æ/ in NOLAE. First, generation is the most highly influential of the independent variables considered here. Merged systems seem to be primarily a function of cross-linguistic interference. As Carter & Thomas (2006) note, it is not uncommon for Latinx English speakers to resist /æ/ tending under influence from the Spanish vowel space. The fact that nine of the ten speakers with this system are first generation immigrants combined with the fact that inferential analysis confirmed the significance of generation in predicting /æ/ system lends support to this claim. Fully nasal systems, based on descriptive statistics, are the predominant system among second generation participants. Second, education becomes significant within the second generation, as more highly educated participants are more likely to have more tensed pre-nasal /æ/. 

Previous research on /æ/ in New Orleans suggests a change in progress from a traditional local split to a more general nasal split (Labov, 2007; Carmichael, 2014). My data is in conversation with these claims. Based on the random forest analysis, age is highly influential in the data. However, for Latinx speakers, generation appears to be the most salient conditioning factor. Again, this is not unexpected, as the influence of the Spanish vowel system is likely implicated in conditioning merged /æ/ systems among first generation late bilingual participants. The overwhelming tendency revealed in this data is that first generation participants resist pre-nasal /æ/ raising. However, by the second generation, participants, particularly those who are highly educated, are engaged in a fairly advanced process of assimilating to local patterns. This can be treated as evidence for the advanced nature of the shift-in-progress posited by the above scholars.

The descriptive data on prosodic rhythm, as noted above, indicated a surprising trend, in which lower education status seemed to correlate with increased stress-timing. The inferential analysis indicated that this apparent correlation was not significant for predicting variation. Instead, the primary conditioning variable for prosodic rhythm in my data is age. Participants above the age of 43 show a slight trend towards greater syllable timing in speech. The data here does not allow for strong claims regarding the role of the various predictor values on prosodic rhythm.

It is worth noting that my participants do not evidence the type of intermediate pattern expected based on the existing literature. In fact, in comparison with Carter’s (2005) analysis of Hispanic and Anglo English in North Carolina, my participants appear to be more consistent with the Anglo English speakers than with the Hispanic English speakers in his sample, as can be seen in figure 5.16.
My data appears to indicate, as can be seen in figure 5.16, that NOLAE speakers are assimilating to American English prosodic patterns, although this effect is at least partially mitigated by age. Older speakers are slightly more likely to resist this assimilatory pattern.

5.6 Conclusion

The analysis described here allows for a few important insights, which allow us to begin to answer the questions identified in section 5.2.3. Pre-nasal /æ/ follows expected patterns. First generation participants appear to evidence interference from Spanish, leading to merged or continuous systems. Second generation participants, particularly those with higher levels of education, present higher rates of pre-nasal /æ/ tensing. NOLAE speakers do not seem to follow the expected patterns towards an intermediate prosodic rhythm. Speakers across generations, gender, and education level appear to speak at a rhythm more reminiscent of observed patterns for Anglo American English speakers, although this assimilation to standard linguistic practices does seem to be at
least slightly mitigated among older speakers. These insights are by no means inconsequential. I would argue, however, that the picture is still incomplete. The following chapter expands this analysis by exploring the role which a given participant’s depth of embeddedness in and proximity to the metaphorical core of the local Latino social network plays in predicting performance on the two linguistic variables considered in this chapter. The analysis in chapter 6 will illustrate that additional nuance into the types of variables conditioning the linguistic variation observed here can be obtained by considering social network metrics.
CHAPTER 6.
NEIGHBORHOOD AFFILIATION NETWORK GEOMETRY AND SYNCHRONIC VARIATION IN NOLAE

6.1 Introduction

Since Milroy and Milroy’s (1978) paper illustrating the role of social network density and multiplexity in constraining linguistic performance in Belfast, sociolinguists have applied the concept of social networks to a variety of linguistic and cultural contexts throughout the world. Recent work has advanced our understanding of the role of social networks in linguistic performance by incorporating more advanced approaches to social network modeling as applied in adjacent disciplines (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Sharma, 2017). In this chapter, I draw on this work in general, and Dodsworth & Benton in particular, to apply a novel approach to considering the role of social networks in constraining linguistic performance in NOLAE, incorporating insights from anthropology, sociology, social network studies, statistics, and mathematical graph theory. I construct network models based on shared geographic place, treating links to the same neighborhoods as links between participants. The analysis shows that network metrics drawn from mathematical graph theory prove to be significant predictors of language use among New Orleans Latinxs. In this way, we can add additional nuance to the analysis of /æ/ and prosodic rhythm initiated in chapter 5. In particular, the analysis in the chapter suggests that it is the interaction of affiliation network metrics and traditional
sociolinguistic variables that most accurately accounts for linguistic performance in this context.

The primary claim I advance in this chapter is that social network metrics can be used in concert with traditionally examined demographic information to provide a more nuanced, more robust account of linguistic variation in NOLAE. The data indicates that depth score (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Moody & White, 2003) is a statistically significant predictor of patterns of pre-nasal /æ/ tensing, particularly for highly-educated second generation participants. In addition, the data suggests that harmonic centrality (Marchiori & Latora, 2000; Rochat, 2009) is a statistically significant predictor of prosodic rhythm. The secondary claim illustrated by this analysis is the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to sociolinguistic analysis. My approach to modeling and analyzing social networks and to quantifying the role these networks play in sociolinguistic variation draws on insights from sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, social network theory, mathematical graph theory, and statistics in order to develop a robust, nuanced account of linguistic performance in NOLAE.

This chapter is developed as follows. In section 6.2, I provide a sketch of existing literature on the role of social networks in linguistic performance. In section 6.3, I describe the approach to network modeling used for the current analysis. Section 6.4 reports the results of the current analysis. Section 6.5 discusses the implications of these results, and section 6.6 summarizes and concludes this chapter by contextualizing the results of this analysis with the results of the traditional sociolinguistic analysis presented in chapter 5.
6.2 Social networks in sociolinguistics

Elizabeth Bott’s (1971) analysis of the division of labor in household chores among men and women in London is one of the seminal texts on which subsequent social network analysis is founded. In her analysis, which built on insights from earlier work by Barnes (1954) and others, dense and multiplex social networks impose conservative social norms, resulting in more traditional divisions of household chores in couples participating in more dense and multiplex networks. Density refers to the extent to which nodes in a network are interconnected. To borrow a definition from Eble (2006b), “density is the measure of the number of relationships among people in the network…divided by the total possible links” (91). In other words, density measures the extent to which individuals in a network are interconnected by dividing the number of existing links among a group of people by the total number of possible links. Multiplexity refers to the extent to which nodes are connected in multiple ways (L. Milroy, 1987). Milroy & Milroy (1978) were the first to explicitly apply this construct specifically to language use, arguing that in Belfast, dense, multiplex social networks functioned to enforce local linguistic norms. As Eckert (2012) insightfully notes, this work directly opposed passive correlations of demographic categories with linguistic variation, arguing instead that variation functioned to actively express local identity.

Scholars in a wide range of contexts have adapted the social network model to investigate sociolinguistic questions. Labov (1972a) investigated the relationships between linguistic performance and an individual’s position in street gangs. Edwards (1986) analyzed language use among Black British adolescents, while Schooling (1990) analyzed variation in New Caledonia. Dubois & Horvath (1999, 1998a, 1998b), working
in Louisiana, noted that speakers with highly localized contact repertoires behaved differently in terms of linguistic variables when juxtaposed with speakers with fewer local contacts. Eckert (2000) explored how individuals’ positions within communities of practice impacted language variation among Detroit teenagers. This list is, of course, not comprehensive. It does, however, provide a sense of the range of communities and contexts in which social network metrics have been shown to hold explanatory power. As Milroy & Gordon (2003) note, the “specifics of local social structure and social practice” is critically important. Researchers planning social network analysis must pay close attention to local realities in order to develop models that are consistent with these realities.

Social network analysis in sociolinguistics can, as noted by Sharma (2017), focus on two different types of network information in constructing social network models. Network qualities focus on the nature of the ties between individuals, considering questions of the types of interactions between individuals in the network. These analysis are typically ego driven, to adopt a term used by Milroy (1987) to refer to the individual from who the network emanates. That is, the network model is constructed based on a given individual’s personal connections. Network structure, conversely, focuses on the geometrical features of the network graph. In contrast to ego-driven approaches, analyses of network structure focus on the nature of the overall network and on an individual’s position in the network. In terms of the traditionally discussed constructs, density is a question of structure, while multiplexity is a question of quality. This can be straightforwardly observed based on the above definitions of each. Density, referring to the extent to which groups of individuals in a network are interconnected, references the
structure or geometry of the overall network. Multiplexity, or the extent to which two individuals are connected along multiple dimensions, references the quality of the connection between the two individuals in question.

Within sociolinguistics, the analysis of ego networks and network qualities is far more common. Sharma (2017) sites several examples, including Gal’s (1976) measure of peasantness and Bortoni-Ricardo’s (1985) indexes of individual integration. Bortoni-Ricardo (1985), for example, found that the extent to which an individual’s network ties reflected movement away from an ‘insular’ network of family and neighbors towards an ‘integrated’ network of more diffuse urban connections correlated with movement away from the stigmatized local dialect. Newman (2010) is another example of ego driven work within the Latinx community. This work, cited elsewhere in this dissertation as a source of features of Latinx Englishes, includes a discussion of the impact the ethnic composition of an individual’s peer group plays in conditioning linguistic variation. In both cases, the analysis depends on comparing the nature of a specific individual’s connections. Thus, these analyses are categorized as ego-driven network quality metrics.

Sharma (2017) notes that while, ideally, network structure analyses involve comparing multiple full networks, sociolinguists have developed tools to explore the impact of network structure by constructing detailed models of single networks. Early work such as Labov’s (1972) analyses of vernacular language among gang members can be seen as a structure-driven approach, in that he analyzed the impact of a given individual’s position within a particular network. Eckert’s (2000) analysis of jocks and burnouts at Belten High similarly compares individuals’ positions within the social network in order to develop insights into each participants’ linguistic performance.
Milroy’s (1987) is not only perhaps the seminal study of the role of social networks on linguistic variation, but remains an illuminating example of structural analysis. Her work found that participants’ use of vernacular variants was highly correlated with their level of integration into the dense and multiplex local networks. Her work is structurally-based because she compares individuals not based on their personal connections, but on their positioning, or level of integration, into their local network.

A particularly promising approach to whole network structure analysis is developed in Dodsworth & Benton (2017). They note that traditionally, sociolinguistic analyses of social networks rely on self-reported indices to operationalize participant’s social networks, be they ego networks or whole networks. However, there are several potential issues with this approach. For example, self-reported information is often imprecise or incomplete (Marsden, 1990). In addition, self-reported indices are often inadequate for holistic network modeling. Dodsworth & Benton (2017) develop a methodology that involves constructing a bipartite social network model, projecting the model to a single level, and applying a cohesive blocking procedure to quantify a given node’s level of embeddedness in the network. They then propose using a depth score based on how many iterations of the cohesive blocking are required to de-link a given node from the holistic network structure. This depth score can then be incorporated in additional statistical models. In their analysis, depth of embeddedness correlates with linguistic performance. In addition, they develop a mechanism for directly assessing the extent to which similar network position correlates with similar linguistic performance, illustrating that in their data, speakers who differ in age show more similar linguistic performance in cases of co-membership in highly cohesive network clusters.
One of the critical insights elaborated in Sharma (2017) is that different types of network metrics may have varying types of linguistic impacts. Her study compares three different network metrics (two quality-driven and one structural) and three different types of linguistic variables at three different generational levels. In her data, the quality metrics exerted influences more closely tied to specific sub-groups and the historical phase of the community in question. The impact of specific qualities of links on language use are tied to the cultural and historical context. For example, social networks with greater ethnic homogeneity may or may not predict greater rates of ethnolectal forms, depending on the cultural and historical context (Wassink, 2016). However, in her data, the structural metric exerted an influence on accent repertoire. This influence proved to be more stable across generations.

An important point stated explicitly in Milroy & Gordon (2003) is that sociolinguistic research, by nature, is interdisciplinary. Milroy’s (1987) analysis was highly informed by a large body of anthropological research noting the importance of particular types of network ties, including friendship, kinship, and neighborhood. She thus developed an analytic tool for quantifying networks based around these ties. Bortoni-Ricardo’s (1985) work was highly influenced by then-current work in sociology regarding rural to urban migration. Dodsworth & Benton (2017), discussed above, incorporates insights from sociology, social network theory, and statistics to incorporate more sophisticated network modeling procedures and more advanced statistical analytics to provide a more robust account of language variation in Raleigh. Based on these studies, and myriad others, it is clear that sociolinguistic analyses benefit from
interdisciplinary approaches. The insights of adjacent disciplines lead to more precise, more nuanced, and more robust representations of linguistic variation.

6.3 Current methodology

My work is conceptualized in response to the insights discussed above. I develop an approach to social network analysis based on whole network structure, allowing for the comparison of participants in my sample on the basis of extent of integration in the local Latinx social network. I do this in conversation with Sharma’s (2017) observation that these types of metrics exert more general, cross generational influences. My analyses will evaluate the extent to which my network metrics persist across generations and will evaluate the extent to which social network metrics shape linguistic performance in New Orleans. My approach incorporates insights from adjacent disciplines, developing a model of the local Latinx social network based on insights from graph theory, social network theory, and sociology.

Social network analysis is an application of mathematical graph theory (Harary, 1969). In particular, the type of social network analysis common in the social sciences is the consideration of multi-level or bipartite affiliation networks (see Borgatti & Halgin, 2011 for a broad review of the range of applications of affiliation networks to social science research). Research in sociology has recognized the value of bipartite affiliation networks in modeling the diffusion of information and enforcement of social norms across groups of people since at least the early 1940s (Davis et al., 1941). As illustrated in the review of pertinent literature in Borgatti & Halgin (2011), this analytic strategy has been applied to a huge range of human activities, from corporate structure (Mizruchi, 1983) to online chat groups (Allatta, 2005).
I adopt a structural approach to social network analysis, representing the geometric structure of the local Latinx network and evaluating the role a given participant’s positioning within this structure plays in linguistic variation. I draw on the innovations described in Dodsworth & Benton (2017) that apply Moody & White's (2003) operationalization of structural cohesion into an empirically applicable metric in order to formulate a depth score that is useful in sociolinguistic analysis. In addition, drawing on recent conversations in graph theory regarding applying centrality measures (see Borgatti & Everett, 2005 for a review of centrality measures), I apply the notion of harmonic centrality (Marchiori & Latora, 2000; Rochat, 2009) in order to analyze the role of proximity to the metaphorical network core. Drawing on this diverse range of insights, I model the local Latinx network as a bipartite network based on participants’ shared affiliations with local neighborhoods, define embeddedness utilizing cohesive blocking procedures (Moody & White, 2003; Dodsworth & Benton, 2017), and operationalize centrality based on measures of harmonic centrality (Marchiori & Latora, 2000; Rochat, 2009).

The choice of neighborhood as an aggregating construct is motivated by three primary considerations. First, as discussed throughout this work, the local Latinx population is involved in an ongoing process of ‘barrioization,’ as Latinxs have started to congregate in specific areas of the region. Second, as discussed above, insights from anthropology and from the existing body of sociolinguistic treatments of social networks indicate that neighborhood ties are particularly salient forces for structuring people’s social realities. Third, in New Orleans in particular, research has indicated that neighborhood is a highly salient organizing principle (Dajko et al., 2012; Schoux-Casey,
Additionally, as Carmichael (2014) notes, place-based identity can have significant linguistic impacts. In New Orleans particularly, Schoux-Casey (2013) has illustrated the role of place-based identity as an important force in shaping linguistic performance. While her work is focused on New Orleans as a place holistically, in this work I extend place-based identity beyond the city to specific locales within the city. Building on her analysis of New Orleans as a region, I see neighborhoods within the city not solely as physical spaces, but as socially constructed places, representing an overlay of traditional, voluntary, and perceptual regions (Schoux-Casey, 2013) within the larger cultural construct that is New Orleans. Thus, my network model moves beyond the abstract and is crucially situated in locally-meaningful articulations of physical spaces as culturally meaningful places.

To make explicit the rationale for my social network modeling approach, I am expanding on traditional approaches in sociolinguistics by incorporating methodological insights from adjacent disciplines, drawing on and expanding recent work (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Sharma, 2017). My approach allows for an analysis of the role of the network geometry and not just participant ego relationships. This is accomplished by modeling the local Latinx social network as a bipartite affiliation network (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). This allows me to compare participants in terms of objective social network metrics drawn from statistics and graph theory (harmonic centrality) and sociology (depth score). Additionally, as Dodsworth & Benton (2017) note, this type of approach is replicable across a variety of contexts, provided the researcher identifies a locally salient aggregating construct. Furthermore, whole network geometry effects have been posited to be more consistent and more stable (Sharma, 2017). Finally, my approach
allows for the circumvention of self-reported indexes, which we know are often incomplete or inaccurate. To summarize, my approach draws from adjacent disciplines to develop an approach to analyzing the role of social networks in linguistic performance that is consistent with approaches developed in sociology and social network theory and that relies on objective, observable facts about participants as opposed to self-reported indexes.

I began by constructing a bipartite social network model for my participant pool. Using the NetworkX package in Python, I modeled the local Latinx social network by treating participants as one node level and treating neighborhoods in which each participant has lived as a second level of nodes. Edges were drawn connecting each participant to each neighborhood in which he or she has lived. As is often done in social science applications of network analysis, I then projected the bipartite network to the participant node level (Latapy et al., 2008; Opsahl, 2013), creating a single level network in which shared neighborhood affiliation is represented by an edge connecting participants based on shared affiliation to a given neighborhood.

Essentially, this process involved creating a model of the relationships between members of the local Latinx community based on shared orientation to physical space. Each participant was connected to each neighborhood in which he or she currently lives or had previously lived. The neighborhood nodes were removed from the network model and participants were connected to each other if they previously shared a connection to a given neighborhood. This resulted in a model of the local Latinx social network that represents objective orientation to space as opposed to subjective perceptions of links.
The single-level model then allows for the calculation of various metrics that can be treated as predictor variables in inferential statistical analysis. For the sake of the current analysis, I took two network metrics as independent variables. The first is harmonic centrality (Marchiori & Latora, 2000; Rochat, 2009), which allows for the application of closeness centrality (Bavelas, 1948, 1950), or the average shortest path between a node and all other nodes in a graph, to unconnected graphs such as the graph of my participants’ social network. Closeness centrality fails to apply to unconnected graphs because in situations where two nodes belong to disconnected subgroups, the distance between them is infinite by convention (Rochat, 2009). As closeness centrality is calculated as the inverted sum of all distances, the formula fails. Harmonic centrality proposes to resolve this by calculating closeness as the sum of the inverted distances instead of the inverted sum of the distances. Harmonic centrality is ideally suited for analyzing networks such as my own, which include disconnected nodes.

The second is a depth score, intended to operationalize the extent to which a given participant is embedded in the larger network. The depth score was calculated using a cohesive blocking routine as described in Moody & White (2003), which identifies the k-connectivity for a given subgroup in the network, or the number of nodes that would need to be removed to disconnect the subgroup from the full network. A given node’s maximum cohesion is the k-connectivity of its most deeply embedded subgroup. I follow Dodsworth & Benton’s (2017) suggestion of assigning a given node a depth score based on the number of iterations of the cohesive blocking routine required to remove a given node from the network. This bypasses two potential issues with using maximum cohesion as a predictor variable. First, the k-connectivity of a given sub-group, and thus the
maximum cohesion score of member nodes, is highly contingent on the number of nodes in the sub-group, making it difficult to compare networks of different sizes. Second, biased samples that are not fully representative of the community will produce biased cohesion scores. This is particularly relevant to my data, in that I have a disproportionate number of participants from Uptown due to the nature of my sampling process. Thus I adopt depth score, as defined above, as an independent variable in my analysis.

This results in two additional independent variables that I fed into the analytic mechanisms discussed in the previous chapter. The full body of variables, including network metrics, is described in table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Variables for statistical analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>/æ/ system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>/æ/ by token</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>Participant average nPVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Per comparison nPVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic centrality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I hypothesize that participants with a higher harmonic centrality score will be (a) less likely to adapt a nasal realization of /æ/ and (b) more likely to evidence syllable timed prosodic rhythm due to occupying a position nearer to the metaphorical core of the local Latinx social network. As depth score represents the extent to which a participant is deeply embedded in the local Latinx network, I hypothesize that a higher depth score will directly correlate with the maintenance of Latinx English features. That is, speakers with a high depth score will be (a) more likely to resist nasal /æ/ systems and (b) more likely to evidence syllable-timed prosodic rhythm.
6.4 Results

I began by building a bipartite social network model treating participant as one level and neighborhoods of residence as a second level. In this model, as described above, edges were drawn only between levels, such that a given participant is connected to each neighborhood in which he or she has lived. After modeling this network using the NetworkX package as described above, I created a visualization of the network using Cytoscape (Shannon et al., 2003). Figure 6.1 below is this visualization.

![Figure 6.1. Bi-partite representation of local Latinx neighborhood affiliation social network.](image)
The Tulane green nodes represent neighborhoods and the Tulane blue nodes represent participants. There are not many insights to be drawn from this initial image, although it does allow for some early observations about the structure of the network. For example, we can see here that Sasha is isolated, having lived only in two neighborhoods where no other participants have lived. Pablo and Anna share edges only with each other, as they are the only participants to have lived in Old Metairie. Finally, Waldo, Maria, and Junior are connected to the larger network only via Nelly. These observations lead us to expect these six participants to have significantly lower ranges of depth scores.

I then projected the bipartite network to a single level, creating edges between participants who have lived in the same neighborhood. Again, the network was visualized using Cytoscape. This single level model of the local Latinx neighborhood affiliation social network is shown here as figure 6.2.
Figure 6.2. Single level local Latinx neighborhood affiliation social network.

Visual inspection of the single level network further enforces our above observations. Sasha, Anna, Pablo, Waldo, Junior, and Maria are highly isolated. In addition, we can see that certain other participants, like Angel and Rebeca, are only tenuously connected to the larger network. We can also observe that Teresa and Mercedes play crucial roles as highly central figures, functioning to link major sub-groups of the graph.

I calculated harmonic centrality and depth score for each participant following the processes described above. These statistics, reported here in table 6.2, confirm the observations made based on visual inspection of the network graphs. Sasha, with a depth score of 1 and a harmonic centrality score of 0.00, Anna and Pablo, both with a depth
score of 2 and a harmonic centrality score of 1.00, are highly isolated. Mercedes, with a depth score of 15 and a harmonic centrality score of 26.50 and Teresa, with a depth score of 15 and a harmonic centrality score of 25.50, are deeply embedded and highly central.

Table 6.2
Network metrics by participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Harmonic Centrality</th>
<th>Depth Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>22.8333</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nena</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonia</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inez</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alina</td>
<td>16.1667</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>19.0000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>25.5000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>21.8333</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>20.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>21.6667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>13.8333</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>19.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>22.6667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldo</td>
<td>13.8333</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>13.8333</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paco</td>
<td>18.8333</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>19.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>12.0833</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dio</td>
<td>21.6667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manny</td>
<td>18.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebeca</td>
<td>11.5833</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adalberto</td>
<td>19.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>19.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>26.5000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariela</td>
<td>18.5000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosita</td>
<td>21.1667</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A brief review of Sasha, Pablo, Anna, Angel, and Rebeca’s network position may help clarify my methodology for the calculation of depth scores. The first iteration of the cohesive blocking procedure creates two subgroups, one including Anna and Pablo and another including the remainder of the network, excepting Sasha. Sasha, as she is fully isolated, essentially forms her own subgroup, which can be disconnected without requiring the removal of any nodes. Her most cohesive sub-group has a k-connectivity of 0, as it can be fully dissolved without removing any nodes. Thus, as the first iteration of the cohesive blocking procedure creates the two sub-groups described above, it removes her from the analysis. Sasha is assigned a depth score of 1, as she is removed from the analysis at the first iteration of the cohesive blocking procedure. Anna and Pablo form a subgroup, as do Rebeca and Jerry, and Angel and Lily, respectively. Anna, Pablo, Rebeca, and Angel can be fully isolated by removing a single node for each, which happens in the second iteration of the cohesive blocking procedure, where each of these four nodes, being fully isolated, are no longer included in any subgroups. They are each therefore assigned a depth score of 2. The cohesive blocking procedure continues iteratively, removing nodes in order to uncover more deeply embedded, highly cohesive subgroups. At each iteration, fully isolated nodes are no longer included in any subgroups, are removed from the analysis, and assigned the corresponding depth score.

The network methods were then added to the data sets explored in the previous chapter to allow for additional statistical analysis. First, I treated /æ/ by system. I started with a stepwise log likelihood criterion model treating system as a dependent variable and gender, age, generation, education, harmonic centrality, and depth score as
independent variables. This model illustrated that the best fit included significant effects of generation, harmonic centrality, and depth. The regression table for this model is table 6.3.

Table 6.3
Multiple linear regression best fit for /æ/ system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>1.42e-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>-1.10</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm_Cen</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turning to the analysis of pre-nasal /æ/ by token, consider the conditional inference tree treating pre-nasal Bark difference metric Z2-Z1 as a dependent variable and gender, age, generation, education, harmonic centrality, and depth as independent variables. The tree, presented in figure 6.3, allows us to better understand the role of harmonic centrality and depth score.

![Conditional Inference Tree](image)

Figure 6.3. Conditional inference tree for pre-nasal /æ/ by tokens including network metrics.
The figure illustrates that generation continues to be a crucial predictor. However, we also see here the impact of depth score. For second generation participants (generation >1), depth is significant for college and graduate school educated participants. For these participants, depth score inversely correlates with higher Bark difference metric $Z_2-Z_1$ scores. In other words, greater levels of embeddedness in the local Latinx social network predicts less tensed pre-nasal /æ/ for educated second generation participants. Harmonic centrality shapes the variation within the first generation sample. Participants with extremely low harmonic centrality, in particular Pablo, Anna, and Sasha, show significantly more tensed pre-nasal /æ/ realizations. That is, these participants show the most extreme examples of /æ/ tensing. This group also illustrates significant age effects, although due to the small size of this subdivision of participants, it is difficult to make strong conclusions regarding the role of age.

Prosodic rhythm analysis is less conclusive. A stepwise regression model taking nPVI for each comparison as its dependent variable and gender, age, generation, education, harmonic centrality, and depth score as predictor variables, similar to the analysis presented in chapter 5, reveals that the best fit includes only a significant effect for age ($p < .01$). As discussed in chapter 5, random forests are particularly powerful in data sets whose patterns, due to limited tokens, significant collinearity, and missing values, as is common in linguistic data, are obscured in regression analysis. I grew a random forest in order to investigate patterns that may not be clear in the regression analysis. This model, included here as figure 6.4, reveals that age, harmonic centrality, and depth are significant predictors.
Here, predictors to the right of the dashed line are significant. We can see that age, participant, and harmonic centrality are the most highly significant predictors. The random forest does not provide information in terms of directionality. However, exploring the results of a mixed effect multiple linear regression model, included here as table 6.4, allows us to get a sense of the directionality of effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient (B)</th>
<th>Standard Error (SE B)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>1.89e-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm_Cen</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model indicates that both age and harmonic centrality have a negative correlation with nPVI. That is, increased age and harmonic centrality correlates with decreased nPVI, or more syllable-timed prosody. This is further evidence for the value of more
nuanced statistical models, as the random forest reveals patterns of significance that are not clear in the regression table.

6.5 Discussion

Incorporating social network information into our analysis allows for greater nuance in our accounts of linguistic performance by Latinxs in New Orleans. In terms of /æ/ tensing, the analysis in chapter 5 revealed variation in terms of system of /æ/ performance as well as in overall tensing patterns for pre-nasal /æ/. The discussion in chapter 5 indicated the role of generation was a crucial predictor. The conditional inference tree in figure 6.3 allows us to better understand the nature of this variation in this community. Generation is indeed crucial. However, within the second generation sample, education and depth score are significant. The data indicates that the greatest tendencies towards tensing pre-nasal /æ/ within the second generation sample are highly-educated participants who are not deeply embedded in the local Latinx network. Within the first generation sample, harmonic centrality comes to the fore. Participants who are highly isolated, positioned far from the metaphorical core of the local Latinx network, have most clearly adapted the nasal split system.

The social network metrics, in this case, work in concert with the more traditional demographic categories to allow for a more robust account of /æ/ realization in NOLAE. Visual inspection of vowel plots illustrates that different speakers have different patterns of /æ/ variation. Statistical analysis revealed the role of generation and education in predicting performance. The incorporation of social network metrics allowed for additional nuance, revealing that depth of embeddedness is a significant predictor of
variation for second generation participants and that harmonic centrality is a significant predictor of patterns of pre-nasal /æ/ tensing in first generation participants.

The picture is less clear in terms of prosody. The analysis in chapter 5 indicated a slight negative effect of age. Older participants, according to the models developed in that chapter, were more syllable-timed. Incorporating the social network data did not change this analysis. However, the random forest model in figure 6.4 also indicates an impact in the same direction for harmonic centrality. That is, speakers closer to the metaphorical center of the local Latinx network evidence greater tendency towards syllable-timed rhythm. Holistically, my analysis indicates, based on both descriptive and inferential statistics, that there is a strong tendency towards assimilation to local English rhythm. More research is needed, both in Latinx English and Anglo English speaking communities throughout the United States, to better contextualize my data within expected patterns for both groups.

In terms of both linguistic variables analyzed here, depth score and harmonic centrality exert a conservative influence. These effects were in the expected direction. Depth score represents an individual’s depth of embeddedness in the local Latinx social network. In particular, it represents the extent to which a given participant is embedded in highly cohesive sub-groups within the larger network. As Dodsworth & Benton (2017) note, social action in highly cohesive networks is more subject to peer influence, both in positive and negative directions. Norms are more consistently reinforced, and deviance from norms is regularly sanctioned (Friedkin, 2004). Harmonic centrality is, essentially, a closeness metric. It is therefore concerned with a given node’s closeness to all other nodes within a network. In my application, an individual’s harmonic centrality score
represents the given participant’s closeness to the metaphorical core of the local Latinx social network. Both depth of embeddedness and proximity to the network core were expected to exert conservative pressure, and the data confirmed this expectation.

A final point to consider in reference to my analysis here is Sharma’s (2017) claim that structural network metrics may exert a more general influence on linguistic variation. My data did not reflect this. Depth score and harmonic centrality were important to developing nuanced and robust accounts of the linguistic variation observed, but both were highly contingent on generation. In my analysis of pre-nasal /æ/ patterns, for example, depth score was significant for the second generation, while harmonic centrality was significant for the first generation only. In this sense, my results pattern more with those observed by Dodsworth & Benton (2017) who observed a significant effect for depth score in their second generation network but not for first or third generation participants.

To summarize my account of variation in NOLAE in terms of /æ/ realization and prosodic rhythm, several generalizations emerge from considering the interactions of traditional first-wave sociolinguistic variables with locally meaningful constructs in ways more reminiscent of what Eckert (2012) terms second-wave. I will couch these observations in terms of the set of questions identified in section 5.2.3 of the previous chapter. First, local Latinxs adapt three distinct systems of /æ/ realization: nasal split, continuous, and merged. This distinction is reflected in different patterns of realization for pre-nasal /æ/. Generation is highly significant in predicting these patterns, and interacts with education, depth, and harmonic centrality. Latinx patterns of /æ/ realization are in conversation with Labov (2007) and Carmichael’s (2014) claims that the traditional
New Orleans split system is receding in favor of a nasal split. The fact that Latinxs are not acquiring this system, and that the subsets of my participants most amenable to assimilation to local norms are acquiring a nasal system is evidence that the change-in-progress to a nasal /æ/ system is quite advanced. Second, prosodic rhythm among my participants does not appear to match the intermediate patterns suggested in previous work. Average nPVI in NOLAE is closer to figures previously reported for Anglo English that to those reported for Latinx English in other contexts. The assimilation to Anglo English prosody is mitigated, however slightly, by age and harmonic centrality. Older participants and participants nearer to the metaphorical core of the local Latinx network are less likely to evidence English-like prosodic rhythm.

6.6 Conclusion

This analysis illustrates not just my primary claim that social network structure and the position of individual participants with reference to the overall network geometry is active in constraining linguistic performance, but also my secondary claim that sociolinguistics research benefits from an interdisciplinary approach. My approach to network modeling draws on research in sociology and linguistic anthropology that notes the importance of neighborhood ties in network structures and on work in sociology and mathematical graph theory regarding the use of bipartite network structures to represent patterns of shared social space. My network metrics rely on recent innovations in graph theory regarding social network analysis. The statistical models constructed are informed by recent innovations in statistics regarding the usefulness of random forests and conditional inference trees. Holistically, then, this work is informed by a range of
adjacent disciplines, and it is the combination of these insights that allows for the nuanced analysis presented here.

The data described in this chapter illustrates that social network metrics exert a conservative pressure on NOLAE. Both depth score and harmonic centrality are implicated in speakers maintaining markers of Spanish influence and resisting assimilation to local New Orleans speech patterns such as the ongoing change-in-progress to a nasal split /æ/ system. The influence of social networks in my data is in the expected directions. As Milroy (1987) and countless other scholars since have noted, individuals more deeply integrated in a local community network are more likely to conform to conservative linguistic practices. We see this pattern in my data. What is novel about my approach is that, by incorporating recent insights from related disciplines, we are able to develop a more nuanced account. That is, we see not just that network metrics exert conservative pressure, but that these metrics interact with and, in some cases, are contingent upon other social structures such as generation, education, and age.

In her work in a Detroit area high school, Eckert (2000) found that, in order to account for the range of linguistic behavior observed among the students, it was necessary to move beyond large-scale, static demographic constructs like class and gender. Linguistic variation in her data was best accounted for by considering not just gender, but gender as it interacts with locally meaningful social stratification into ‘jocks’ and ‘burnouts.’ In many ways my work here is reminiscent of her insight. Traditional sociolinguistic variables like age, education, and generation function to shape linguistic variation, but a full account of linguistic performance can only be articulated when incorporating locally meaningful patterns of neighborhood affiliation.
This has interesting implications for the larger project I am pursuing in this dissertation. First, it is clear that it is insufficient to rely on large scale categories such as ‘Latinx’ in order to motivate linguistic performance. The internal diversity of the local Latinx community, noted as a source of increased linguistic variation in chapter four, is further emphasized here. Both in terms of prosodic rhythm and /æ/ realizations, local Latinxs can vary widely in patterns of realization based on time spent in the city, age, educational status, and positioning within local social networks. Nuanced accounts of Latinx language use must affirm this internal diversity, while also providing close attention to the role of performance and style. The following section, in its discussion of the role of narratives and discourses in shaping language use, provides attention to this aspect of linguistic performance.

We have observed throughout that local Latinxs appear to be engaged in a process of increasing ‘barrioization.’ Particularly since my approach to modeling participant social networks is operationalized based on neighborhood affiliation, this would be expected to lead to increasingly densely structured networks, increasing the average depth score for network members. If depth of embeddedness truly correlates with maintenance of markers of Spanish influence and with resistance to local speech markers, one anticipated result of the ongoing ‘barrioization’ would be increased linguistic differentiation. However, as we see in the following section of this dissertation, the role of discourses and narratives surrounding the Latinx community is a significant factor in shaping linguistic performance. In addition, the work reported in section 2 notes that the linguistic performance of the pre-Katrina and post-Katrina samples resist easy binary
bifurcation in terms of retention of Spanish influences or adaptation of localized linguistic markers.
SECTION 4.
QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SETTING

CHAPTER 7.
LATINX THREAT IN A.T. NEW ORLEANS

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best…They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems…”

-Donald J. Trump

“Uh, we can (say it) like this, um, BT, and AT, we can call like this way. Before Trump and after Trump age.”

-Juan, Male, 47, 1st generation, Mexico

7.1 Introduction

As noted in previous chapters, the Latinx community of New Orleans has undergone a significant shift in recent years. In the years immediately following Hurricane Katrina, the raw size of the Latinx community increased while the overall population of the city decreased. In addition, as demonstrated in previous chapters, the demographics of the community shifted from a well-established, highly-integrated community to a less-integrated community composed of significantly more recent immigrants. As increased salience of Latinx communities has been noted to correlate with increased presence of LTN discourses, the local Latinx community is an ideal context for the exploration of the role of LTN discourse in shaping the interaction between linguistic performance and identity.
LTN discourses nationwide have proliferated following the 2016 Presidential Election campaign. Political rallies during the election season featured incendiary anti-Latinx rhetoric, such as when then-candidate Donald Trump proclaimed, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best…They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems…They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.” Fears that this rhetoric would lead to a proliferation of anti-immigrant sentiment seem to have been born out in subsequent years. As is referenced in the intro quote to this chapter from Juan, a 47 year-old immigrant from Mexico, my participants regularly affirmed the election of Donald Trump as a salient transition point in the relationship between Latinxs and the broader New Orleans community.

This chapter, drawing on a qualitative analysis of my interviews with local Latinxs, makes three primary arguments. The first is that the Latinx community in New Orleans has experienced significant growth not only in terms of raw numbers, but also, more importantly, in terms of social salience. The second is that the emergence of Trumpism as a dominant political discourse in the United States has had real consequences for local Latinxs and for the relationship of the Latinx community to the broader New Orleans community. The third primary argument is that each of Chavez’ five themes of threat are salient in the local context, having been rearticulated locally both in external and internal perceptions of the Latinx community.

I will begin in section 7.2 with a detailed discussion of the LTN, a construct referenced throughout this dissertation that is drawn from the work of Leo Chavez, and which incorporates the Spanish-as-threat ideology observed by scholars such as Wolford.
Section 7.3 provides a description of the methodology employed in this chapter. The results of my analysis are presented in section 7.4. Section 7.5 provides discussion and section 7.6 concludes the current chapter by introducing the arguments to be developed in chapter 8.

7.2 Latinx Threat Narratives

Leo Chavez, in his insightful text *The Latino Threat*, posits the salience of what he terms the ‘Latinx Threat Narrative’ (LTN), which he argues is a pervasive, if often unspoken, narrative that drives discourses on Spanish, Latinxs, and immigration in the United States. The narrative, he notes, posits “that Latinos are not like previous immigrant groups, who ultimately became part of the nation…Latinos are unwilling or incapable of integrating, of becoming part of the national community” (Chavez, 2008, 3). Within this narrative, Latinxs are conceptualized as an “invading force…bent on reconquering the land that was formerly theirs…and destroying the American way of life” (3). These discourses have become naturalized as ‘truths’ by repetition (Fairclough, 1989). Chavez argues that this narrative forms part of the underlying, unspoken ‘truths’ assumed in public discourse on immigration in the United States. This conception of Latinx as threat, then, can be seen as a naturalized hegemonic narrative, shaping and structuring conversations surrounding Latinxs.

Various scholars have noted that public discourse in the United States constructs the Spanish language itself as a threat to the national order. As Otto Santa Ana elaborates, English monolingualism has emerged as a hegemonic narrative, which is normalized, invisible, and generally unquestioned, in U.S. public discourse. Santa Ana’s (2002) argument focuses on Presidential candidate Bob Dole’s repeated articulation of intentions
to end bilingual education as a defense of U.S. cultural heritage. Santa Ana notes that “for Senator Robert Dole and many other citizens, speaking any language other than English is unpatriotic and un-American” (235). In this discursive articulation, Spanish use, even in the context of bilingualism, is a threat unless it is bilingualism among middle-to-upper class Anglos (Zentella, 2016). This links to the research discussed in chapter 3 illustrating that English monolingualism is discursively articulated as the unmarked linguistic code of the United States (Urciuoli, 1996; Zentella, 1995, 1997, 2003). As Spanish is an icon of latinidad, (Carter, 2014), Spanish as threat is an instantiation of the larger LTN discussed here.

A major example of the Spanish/Latinidad as threat ideology is Samuel P. Huntington’s (Huntington, 2000, 2004a, 2004b) writings on Mexican immigrants (discussed by Chavez, 2008; Wolford & Carter, 2010 and others). Huntington claims that Mexican immigrants in particular resists assimilating to American cultural norms. He compares Mexican immigrants to an invading army, writing

The invasion of over 1 million Mexican civilians is a comparable threat to American societal security, and Americans should react against it with comparable vigor. Mexican immigration looms as a unique and disturbing challenge to our cultural integrity, our national identity, and potentially our future as a country.

(2000, 22)

While Huntington’s rhetoric is extreme, it is certainly not the only example of the discursive construction of Latinxs as threats to American ‘cultural integrity,’ to borrow Huntington’s poorly defined term of choice.

Chavez provides a compelling sense of the extent to which these discourses have become naturalized through repetition. He traces the historical development of LTN
discourses, starting with a “profound new importance placed on the territorial imperative of national borders” (2008, 25) implicated in the creation of the immigration act of 1924.

Table 7.1, adapted from pages 28-44 of Chavez (2008), provides a sense of the ubiquitous nature of LTN themes in American public discourse since the 1970s.

Table 7.1
Examples of LTN discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Expression of Threat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>American Legion Magazine</td>
<td>Cover image of the United States being ‘overrun’ by immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>U.S. News and World Report</td>
<td>Cover headline: ‘Crisis across the borders: Meaning to the U.S.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Article on Los Angeles titled ‘The new Ellis Island,’ warning that “Los Angeles is being invaded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>New Republic</td>
<td>Concerns from former Colorado governor that children of Latinx immigrants would lead “secessionist riots.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>The Disuniting of America,</td>
<td>Harvard professor argues that Latin American immigrants’ failure to assimilate can have a disintegrative effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arthur M. Schlesinger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>Patrick Buchanan column arguing that Latinx immigrants pose the risk of a separatist movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Atlantic Monthly</td>
<td>Stanford historian David M. Kennedy wrote that Chicanxs are a homogenous group that could “preserve their distinctive culture indefinitely.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Cover headline: ‘Welcome to Amexica: The border is vanishing before our eyes, creating a new world for all of us.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The Death of the West,</td>
<td>Chapter titled ‘La Reconquista,’ argues that Mexican immigrants fail to integrate or learn English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patrick J. Buchanan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Business Week</td>
<td>Cover headline: ‘Hispanic nation: Hispanics are an immigrant group like no other. Their huge numbers are changing old ideas about assimilation. Is American ready?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This constant repetition, is part of the process that allows LTN discourses become, via repetition, an ideology in Santa Ana’s sense of an “articulated social order to which people are normally oblivious” (Santa Ana, 2002, 18).

LTN discourses, according to Chavez, are driven by five primary ideological positions or themes, which I list here in table 7.2, adapted from the list presented in Chavez (2008, 53).

Table 7.2
Themes of LTN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latinxs are a reproductive threat</th>
<th>Latinxs are unable or unwilling to learn English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latinxs are unable or unwilling to integrate into larger society</td>
<td>Latinxs are unchanging or immutable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinxs are part of a conspiracy to reconquer the southwestern United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carter (2014) argues that national discourses “link to the local” (236), drawing on Agha’s concept of ‘semiotic encounters.’ The national discourses are rearticulated locally in ways that function to restrict the types of identity work available to Latinx speakers via “dehumanizing and marginalizing discursive practices” (236). One of the goals of this dissertation generally and of section 4 particularly is to answer Carter’s call for
“ethnographies that highlight the language practices and identity challenges of ethnolinguistic minorities” (236). Thus, in this chapter I explore how each theme of the LTN is rearticulated in the local context via external and internalized discursive practices that function generally to mark Spanish and Latinxs, as icons of threat. This chapter functions primarily to illustrate the localized rearticulations of LTN discourses. Chapter 8 further elaborates how these discourses collectively function to mark Latinxs as racialized others with limited access to positive linguistic identities.

7.3 Methodology

The data presented in this chapter is excerpted from the sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the local Latinx community discussed throughout this dissertation. For the analysis presented in this section, I focus on the section of the interview in which participants were asked to speak on the nature of the local Latinx community and on the nature of the relationship between the Latinx community and the broader New Orleans community. The transcribed data considered in this and in the following chapter is included in Appendix B.

The transcriptions were loaded into Atlas T.I., a qualitative research environment that allows for easy coding and analysis. The transcripts were coded for each of the five themes of the LTN, in both external and internal contexts, because, as Carter (2014) points out, it is not uncommon for threat discourses to be internalized by U.S. Latinxs. External contexts refers to expressions of LTN themes attributed to people outside of the Latinx community. Internal context refers to comments that reveal internalized LTN themes, where the participant stated discourses of threat as fact. In addition, the
interviews were coded for evidence of an A.T. shift. Table 7.3 presents the 10 categories of threat narratives that form the bulk of the analysis presented in this chapter.

Table 7.3  
Categories of threat discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwilling to speak/learn English</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Unwilling to speak/learn English</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwilling to integrate</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Unwilling to integrate</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanging/immutable</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Unchanging/immutable</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconquista</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Reconquista</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive threat</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Reproductive threat</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews were also coded for evidence of a ‘Trump Effect.’ That is, participants repeatedly articulated a sense that anti-Latinx discourses have become more salient in New Orleans following the rise of Trumpism as a dominant political discourse in the United States.

7.4 Results

In this section I will start by discussing evidence of the increased size and salience of the New Orleans Latinx community. I will then discuss evidence of the ‘Trump Effect’ alluded to in the quote from Juan presented at the top of this chapter. This will be followed by a discussion of the role of LTN discourses in shaping the local sociolinguistic context. I will start by overviewing the relative frequencies of the various themes of threat before transitioning to a discussion of how each of the five primary themes of the LTN are reproduced in the local context. In each case, we will see that local Latinxs perceive the threat discourse theme as a significant factor in shaping the local sociolinguistic context.
7.4.2 Increased size and salience of the local Latinx community

The fact that the local Latinx community grew significantly in the years following Hurricane Katrina is not debatable. The relevant census data is presented in chapter 3 so I will provide but a quick overview here, focusing instead on the Latinx community’s corresponding increase in social salience. This increased salience, as argued in chapter three, can be in large parts attributed to three factors: first, the Latinx population increased while Anglo and African-American population decreased between 2000 and 2010; second, the nature of the Latinx community changed during this period; and third, Latinxs began, for the first time, to establish specific ‘Latinx’ neighborhoods, developing what Gómez-Herrin, (2018) drawing on work numerically defining ‘barrios’ like Onésimo Sandoval & Jennings (2012), has termed ‘emerging barrios.’ My participants are aware of the increased size of the Latinx community, the increased visibility of the community, and this trend towards ‘barrioization.’ I will provide here representative examples of participant comments on these themes.

Local Latinxs are clearly aware that the community is growing. For example, Angel states outright, “it’s growing. It’s definitely growing” (149). Nelly notes that “after Katrina there was definitely a surge in the number of Hispanics” (45). In (1), Maria further elaborates on the numerical shifts in the Latinx community.

(1) When I came here twenty-five years ago it was just a couple of us around. It was really hard. Especially when you come from another country and you don’t know exactly what to expect. It was hard. It was, for me it was really hard. And my English wasn’t good in those days. Almost like non-existent. Yeah. It was really hard. But then uh, when Katrina came and all this new group of Latinos came to the city.
Further, my participants regularly remark on the increased salience of the Latinx population in New Orleans, such as when Dio states,

(2) I could tell you that before the storm there wasn’t much of a thought. That is to say, that in Orleans Parish proper, the Latino population was so low, um, that no one even bothered to consider it an issue one way or the other. And it wasn’t. Uh, it was rare to run into a non-English-speaking Latino in Orleans Parish before Katrina. When Katrina happened that changed everything and so, you know, there were, there was lots of talk on the news, on the talk shows, on social media about the Latinos which was both a blessing and a curse.

(Dio, 3-10)

This sentiment is echoed by Rebeca, who said, “I think there was a huge shift after Katrina…before Katrina…we were invisible…we weren’t even a part of any conversations” (22-25). Dio, Rebeca, and other participants concur, then, that the increased population of local Latinxs post-Katrina has led to an increased social salience.

In addition to a general increased salience of local Latinxs, my participants note that the post-Katrina influx specifically has a greater social salience that the previously existing Latinx population. Alina notes this specifically, highlighting the salience of the post-Katrina population, stating “I think now if you asked New Orleanians about Latinos in New Orleans they would point to most of the post-Katrina arrivals” (11-12). She further elaborates that the post-Katrina group has effected a change in the salience of the community, claiming “they’re finally taking them into account…I think this post-Katrina

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6 I recognize, as discussed elsewhere in this dissertation (see chapter one), that the term ‘Latino’ is controversial. In my interviews I generally mirrored my participants terminology, using ‘Latino,’ ‘Latinx,’ ‘Hispanic,’ and even ‘Spanish’ as they did. In all quotes in this chapter I accurately represent the terminology used by the participant in question.
group that’s come in…people have noticed it a lot more” (20-26). Marta provides a slightly different perspective, arguing that newly arrived Latinxs themselves are unaware of the history of the community. She states,

(3) Um, I’ve recently, I’ve even encountered certain Hispanics and I’ve asked them, like, ‘oh did you know,’ like they’ll tell me that they are from Colombia too, and I was like ‘oh do you know that we have an association and we get together and celebrate for example the Christmas, we’ll have a Christmas breakfast, or we’ll celebrate the New Year, independence kind of thing?’ I mean I’m not gonna invite em to our personal homes necessarily, but, you know just let them know that there is a group here. They have no idea

(Marta, 2-10)

Her claim is indicative of a perceived lack of awareness by newcomers of the history of the local Latinx community. While there are important differences between the perspectives expressed by Alina and Marta, they are unified in one sense: The salience of the newly arrived Latinx influx has had the effect of rendering invisible elements of the long-standing local Latinx population. This observation may, in part at least, account for claims of divisions in the local Latinx community between the established group and new arrivals. This is articulated best in my data by Sasha. Consider her comments presented here as example (4).

(4) so something that I think about all the time, and something that I see a lot with the kids in school is that the kids who are born and raised people of color, um black and brown bodies from here are like, not ver-just generalizing, not accepting of the immigrants who come to live here.

(Sasha, 2-5)

My participants also express a clear sense of the growing ‘barrioization’ of the local community. Consider examples (5) and (6), from Teresa and Isaac, respectively.
(5) But um, if you, if you look at them from the Uptown point of view
it’s different than if you go to Kenner
it’s a totally different point of view.
TDL: How is it different in Kenner?
010: Kenner is ninety percent Hispanic, you know.
So there like, it’s a different world.
It’s like if you travel to our countries.
When you go there you know the restaurants, everything you know.
(Teresa, 18-25)

(6) TDL: Are there parts of the city that are more embracing?
Isaac: Um, definitely, definitely. I feel like once you, once you go to the more,
some of the more areas where it’s less Hispanic and much more traditional,
there you get kinda some funny looks and, like, what are you kinda doing here?
TDL: What places are the most accepting?
Isaac: Oh, Mid-City definitely.
I mean that’s, I feel like that’s probably the patriarch of Hispanic community in
New Orleans.
(Isaac, 18-24)

Interestingly, the areas of the city identified as open and welcome to Latinxs correspond
directly to the census tracts identified as ‘emerging barrios’ by Gómez-Herrin. My
participants, as illustrated in the above quotes, specify Kenner and Mid-city as loci of
Latinx population. The two census tracts identified by Gómez-Herrin are located within
these two areas.

The data clearly illustrates, based on the above discussion, that local Latinxs are
aware that changes have occurred in the size, visibility, and nature of the local Latinx
community. My participants are aware that the community is growing. They are aware
that the community has become more salient, and they are aware that a process of
‘barrioization’ is in progress in New Orleans. In addition, they are hyper-aware that these
changes have impacted the way Latinxs in New Orleans relate to each other and to the
wider New Orleans community. Another significant factor shaping the relationship between Latinxs and the wider community is discussed in the following section.

7.4.3 The Trump Effect

The 2016 U.S. Presidential election cycle saw the rise of Trumpism as a dominant political philosophy in the United States. Collins English Dictionary defines Trumpism as “the policies advocated by Donald Trump, especially those involving a rejection of the current political establishment and the vigorous pursuit of American national interests.” My use here refers in particular to the rhetorical scapegoating of vulnerable populations, discursively constructing marginalized populations in general and Latinxs, especially Mexicans, as a threat to American national interests. Participants regularly affirm the rise of this ideology as a significant shifting point in the relationship of Latinxs to other population groups in the area.

Juan’s quote, excerpted at the top of this chapter, and presented more fully here as (7), is indicative of the perception of my participants.

(7) Uh, we can like this, um, BT, and AT, we can call like this way. Before Trump and after Trump age. I think for the Latino in every part of the country right now and even outside the United States, now we’ve been target, uh, you know, from this, this kinda way. (Juan, 2-5)

Waldo further elaborates on the ideas expressed by Juan. When asked if the relationship between Latinxs and the rest of the community is improving, he responded,

(8) Actually I think it was getting better until Trump came along. <click> I have seen significant changes from, starting with this rhet-rhetoric on Hispanics. Uh, I’ve seen it in, in my patients. In some of the employees of the hospital. Um, you know, we’ve seen it in, in areas where there’s a white, less educated community.
Which the Westbank is.
Uh, so, we, I have noticed it more deterioration over the last probably year-and-a-half…
I think it’s what they say. Um, their perceptions with Hispanics.
Uh, as I said again, I ask questions to some of my, my patients and,
and they believe that unemployment, even though unemployment is so low
but people not work—not working over here is because of the Hispanics taking
their jobs.
Uh, they believe that the crime, here, is because of the Hispanics that come from
Mexico.
I mean directly taking word-for-word what Trump said.
And I’m sure that what they’re telling me is
what a lot of the other people are also thinking.

(Waldo, 164-179)

Both Juan and Waldo explicitly link the deterioration of the relationship between Latinxs
and other communities in the New Orleans area with the rise of Trumpism as a dominant
national political discourse. Adalberto notes that Trump’s rhetoric “wakes up the worst”
in people. He said,

(9) and when you have a guy that is just standing in the podium
and calling everybody rapists, drug dealers, doing all this and doing all that,
it just wakes up the worst in you, you know, it just wakes up,
well, if you have that in you, it’s gonna wake up. It’s gonna wake up, so, yeah.
(Adalberto, 66-69)

Maria concurs, stating more succinctly, “Since President Trump is in the White House its
worse. People are now not afraid to say what they think” (63-65).

Trumpism, in the eyes of my participants, has discursively positioned Latinxs in
New Orleans and throughout the country, as threat. In many senses it is the LTN
discourses of Huntington, Buchanan, and others writ large, articulated as a main-stream
political ideology and explicitly espoused by the current governing administration. Not
surprisingly, the elevation of LTN discourses to a dominant political philosophy has led
to an increased proliferation of LTN discourses and to a deterioration of the relationship between Latinxs and other local populations.

7.4.4 Localized articulations of LTN discourses

Prior to elaborating a more robust account of the ways in which LTN themes are rearticulated locally and applied to New Orleans Latinxs, I will provide, in table 7.4, an overview of the relative frequency of mentions of the various themes broken down in terms of generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Generation 1</th>
<th>Generation 2</th>
<th>Total Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive threat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to learn English</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to integrate</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanging and immutable</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconquista</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the overview of the data presented in Table 7.4, some initial observations can be made. LTN discourses are noted by participants across both generations. The apparent discrepancy in frequency of mentions across generations is largely a product of the sample. There are more mentions of LTN discourses by first generation participants because there are more first generation participants. Generation one averages 2.18 mentions of threat discourses per participant, while Generation two averages 2.72 mentions per participant. Thus, when articulated in per participant terms, the generational gap is less noticeable. What is particularly salient is that by far the most salient LTN themes to Latinxs in New Orleans are that Latinxs are an unchanging, immutable group and that Latinxs are unable to integrate into larger society. In the discussion below I will
discuss the salient local articulations of these themes. I will begin, for reasons to be elaborated below, with ‘reconquista’ ideologies. I will briefly review localized iterations of the positioning of Latinxs as a reproductive threat and as unable to learn English, before developing a more robust account of the two themes noted as particularly salient in the local context.

In the following pages I will provide examples illustrating local rearticulations of each of Chavez’ five themes of threat. Prior to continuing the discussion, however, it is important to note that the thematic categories listed in table 7.2 are not fully discrete. That is, in many cases the lines between them blur, and it can be difficult to determine where a given rearticulation of threat fits. To give a concrete example, consider the following quote from Waldo, age 59:

\begin{quote}
I mean I have actually patients that will see me not as this Hispanic but as their doctor. And when you talk to them, and I try to do a little bit of impromptu research and see how, what they feel like, whether or not they’re Trump supporters or not. And, and I find out that yes, they’re Trump supporters and they tell me ‘Oh it’s those immigrant Hispanics that come in and take our jobs. Telling me that. <laughter>
\end{quote}

(Waldo, 19-24)

This statement illustrate that, within the local sociolinguistic context, the ideology presenting Latinxs as an economic invasion, pushing locals out of job opportunities, is salient. It also discursively positions Latinxs as a homogenous group, as Waldo observes that his patients fail to see him as Hispanic, because he is a doctor. As we will observe later in this section, the local popular imagining of the Latinx community is as blue-collar service works. This quote embodies ‘reconquista’ ideology, positions Latinxs as a
homogenous group, while also illustrating the Trump effect. Thus, while I will, throughout this section, offer examples that function to illustrate certain themes in particularly salient ways, I recognize that these boundaries are rarely clear-cut.

As articulated by Huntington (2000, 2004a, 2004b), Buchanan (1994, 2002, 2006, 2011) and others, the ‘reconquista’ is Mexico’s attempt to recover the land ‘stolen’ from them by the United States. Arpaio (2008) describes it thus:

“A growing movement among not only Mexican nationals but also some Mexican-Americans contends that the United States stole the territory that is now California, Arizona, and Texas, for a start, and that massive immigration over the border wall will speed and guarantee the reconquista of these lands, returning them to Mexico.” (48)

In Arpaio’s articulation of Reconquista ideology, as well as in that advocated by the other writers such as Patrick Buchanan, Mexican immigration into the United States is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, driving by social factors and transnational politics, but instead part of a conscious conspiracy, aimed at destabilizing U.S. sovereignty.

‘Reconquista’ ideologies are a useful starting point in this discussion because it is perhaps the most encompassing of the five themes. That is, in many senses, ‘reconquista’ ideologies can be seen as an umbrella category. The other themes identified by Chavez can often be positioned as mechanisms for executing the ‘reconquista.’ Huntington (Huntington, 2004a), for example, argues that the ‘reconquista’ is accomplished via unwillingness to integrate socially and an unwillingness to learn English. The oft repeated trope positioning Latinxs as a reproductive threat, thoroughly discredited by quantitative analysis presented in chapter 4 of Chavez (2008), which demonstrates that the category of ‘Latina’ does not significantly predict birth rates, can also be seen as an
instantiation of ‘reconquista’ ideology. That is, the mythical higher birth rates for Latin American women can be painted as a strategy for effecting the ‘reconquista.’

There are some examples of ‘reconquista’ ideologies being explicitly articulated in New Orleans. Junior, a 22 year-old second generation New Orleanian, for example, noted that while Latinxs are accepted in some areas of the city, “in other areas we are seen as invaders” (3). In this observation Junior clearly references ‘reconquista’ ideology, which positions Latinxs as part of an invading force. However, by far the most common local articulation of this theme is the oft-repeated claim that Latinxs ‘steal’ jobs. This links to ‘reconquista’ ideology in terms of Buchanan’s (2006) claim that Mexico is intentionally pursuing a non-military take-over of parts of the United States, aimed at Reconquista via “non-violent invasion and cultural transformation” (132). One aspect of this non-violent invasion is locally articulated in terms of Latinx immigrants taking over the labor force and forcing out Anglo Americans.

Latinxs in New Orleans are strongly aware of ‘reconquista’ ideology rearticulated in this fashion. Pablo, a 36 year-old first generation male, says,

(11) But here, in uh, what do you call it, in uh, in Louisiana since Katrina, the volume has gone up so much, that there is. There, there is a, a bad, and it’s because, I don’t know if they think they took their jobs away. I don’t know if it’s because it’s a different culture they weren’t accustomed to it, but yeah it is. It’s bad.

(Pablo, 36-41)

Importantly, Pablo directly links increased instances of two LTN themes, ‘reconquista’ ideology and an inability to assimilate culturally, with the increased size and salience of the local Latinx community in the years following Hurricane Katrina.
Evidence of ‘reconquista’ ideology can be seen in a story mentioned by multiple participants, reproduced here in the words of Rebeca.

(12) So after Hurricane Katrina,
I think this was like 2006 or 7, was it Orleans or Jefferson? I can’t remember, but you may have heard this. You can find it online. Um, it was Jefferson, yeah. They passed an ordinance prohibiting food trucks. Have you heard about that? Yeah?
And at the time with the idea that, you know there was something about sanitation, some, you know, B.S. excuse, but at the time the only food trucks that were operating in the area were taco trucks that were mainly serving the con-reconstruction workers. So that was a well, well not a well, but yeah it was a well-done from that side, well-done effort to um, to target this community and, because they were, we were perceived as a threat you know, taking away from like, local businesses and blah, blah, blah. There was a whole argument about how they did this and why they did it, um it was then revoked, you know, or amended or whatever. It’s no longer an issue but it was an issue for a while and it was a clear uh, targeting of a community under the pretense of something else, right?

(Rebeca, 144-161)

This story illustrates that local articulation of ‘reconquista’ ideology, euphemized (Scott, 1985) and rearticulated as concern for local business. This is consistent with how this theme is often articulated in the local context. That is, explicit links of Latinxs with ‘invasion’ are rare, at least in my data. However, the discursive positioning of Latinxs as an economic threat, essentially invading and conquering the job market, and forcing out local workers, are significantly more pervasive.

The discursive presentation of Latinxs as unable or unwilling to learn English is salient in New Orleans. A particularly enlightening example from my data is presented here as (13).
When I came down here, um, there was this girl, she asked me, can you go with me and translate?’
because at the time they didn’t have no translators, neither by phone nor, this was after Katrina and she used to work in, in the ship yard, in Nortrup Rootman.
She was um, an electrician.
But she had two kids and they needed, um, to get Medicaid.
so they had laid her off a few weeks after she started working and um, she said ‘Can you come with me so I could, you know, apply for Medicaid or whatever.’
And I was like ‘Ok.’
So we went to the state building in Harvey.
And then um, they, the lady from the Medicaid told her ‘well if you’re not, you don’t have no kinda support you know, then go upstairs and apply for food stamps, um, since she’s with you could translate for you’
because at the time they didn’t have no translators.
So I went with her and the lady told her ‘um, well if you’re here and then you, and you’ve been so many years, um, with your green card, then you should know English.’
And I was like ‘she was in Puerto Rico, in Puerto Rico you don’t have to speak English.’
I was like, ‘correction.’
She was like, you know, and um, I’ve seen a lot of stuff like that, you know, um, I understand people have to, um, they have to try to learn English.
Like, I learned cause I was brought here as a child but not everybody.
You know, it’s hard for them to learn, even if they try.
My father’s been here for more than fifty years, and he doesn’t know.
He understands everything you’ll tell him, but he can’t communicate, like, he won’t be able to respond to you.
He’ll say ‘thank you,’ ‘please,’ you know, like common words, but he doesn’t know how to say a sentence.
And my dad’s seventy-four years old and he got here in his twenties. You know? And it’s hard. It’s easier for an American person to learn Spanish than for a Spanish person to learn English because, it’s harder.
And that’s what people don’t understand.

(Lily, 3-34)

This narrative is particularly useful because it illustrates both external and internal articulations of the discursive positioning of Latinxs as unable or unwilling to learn English. The state building employee’s comments are clearly driven by belief that Lily’s
friend had chosen to not learn English. Lily’s defense of her friend later in the narrative, however, evidences the internalization of the articulation of Latinxs as unable to learn English in her claims that her father doesn’t speak English because it is more difficult to learn English than to learn Spanish. In this single passage we see external positioning of Latinxs as unwilling to learn English and internal positioning of Latinxs as unable to learn English. Other mentions were primarily in passing, such as when Rebeca mentions the belief that Latinxs “fail to learn the language, which is bullshit” (106).

The ideology positioning Latinxs as a reproductive threat has been shown to have significant salience in U.S. popular discourse. However, much like in Carter’s (2014) work in North Carolina, this discourse is largely absent in my data. The single mention of this ideology was by Laura, a 23 year-old second generation female, who said “we’re a growing population…we’re a community that loves having kids” (18-19). Future research in a larger variety of settings is likely needed to investigate the true impact of this theme. However, in my data at least, it has a negligible role.

Chavez (2008) argues that one component of the discursive articulation of Latinxs as threat is the stance that Latinxs fail to become part of the larger society. One particularly salient iteration of this ideology claims that Latinxs self-segregate. To use Pat Buchanan’s words, “rather than assimilate, they create Little Tijuanas in U.S. cities” (2002, 125). Carter (2014) notes that in the North Carolina middle school where he worked, this was articulated terms of beliefs that Latinxs students intentionally self-segregate. In New Orleans the ideology that positions Latinxs as unable or unwilling to become fully assimilated into the larger local cultural imagining is typically euphemized in terms of ‘truths’ about ‘barrioization.’
As discussed above, there is real evidence that Latinxs in New Orleans are now congregating in specific parts of the region more so than in the past. Importantly, Latinxs feel that this segregation is, in some sense, socially enforced. Latinxs “band together…and create this insular community” (Sasha, 12-13) in reaction to social pressures. Latinxs articulate a clear sense that certain parts of the city are more ‘open’ or ‘welcoming’ than others. Several participants willing provided lists, which in large parts coincided across participants, of the areas where Latinxs are welcome. The most welcoming areas include Kenner, Mid-city, and the Westbank. Thus, internalized iterations of this theme are typically couched in terms of welcome. Rebeca notes, for example, that “the city of Kenner is, which, where the majority of the community is, is probably one of the most welcoming cities” (Rebeca, 129-130). Conversely, Latinxs choose not to live in certain areas because “once you go to the areas where it is…more traditional…you get…some funny looks…like, what are you doing here” (Isaac, 18-21), or because “if you go to…some Uptown areas they might perceive you as…the…cleaning lady or…babysitter” (Sara, 48-49). Nelly, a 25 year-old second generation New Orleanian summaries the situation as follows:

(14) TDL: Are certain areas more closed off to Latinos? 
Nelly: Yeah, I’d, yeah, Uptown, Lower Garden District, Old Metairie would be kind of most, the closed, and I would assume, I would, I think the Westbank because there are more Hispanics on the Westbank, Kenner, there’s a lot of Hispanics in Kenner. Places like the Marigny, and the Bywater are just more, kind of hipster folk, which tend to be more left-leaning anyways, yeah 

(Nelly, 15-21)
In essence, the claim made by Nelly and by various participants throughout my data, is that areas like Kenner, the Westbank, and Mid-city are perceived as welcoming to Latinxs, while ‘traditional’ or ‘wealthy’ areas like Uptown and the Lower Garden District are less-welcoming.

External discourses on ‘barrioization,’ unlike the internalized articulations discussed in the previous paragraph, link to threat because the congregating of Latinxs in certain areas is positioned not as a natural reaction to the sociocultural environment, but as a conscious effort whose ultimate impact is detrimental to the neighborhood in question. As Maria, a 48 year-old Guatemalan immigrant, notes, the discursive positioning of Latinx congregation is negative.

(15) Every time that you move to any neighborhood they have the idea that the whole neighborhood is going down. <laughter> And people are very open to say that to you. Oh yeah, Latinos are coming to the city, or the neighborhood, it’s like, ‘oh, not good.’

(Maria, 141-144)

Thus, the perception becomes that Latinxs are “taking over certain communities” (Junior, 3). In this sense, the ongoing ‘barrioization’ of the local Latinx community becomes a site of conflict, perceived by Anglos as an intentional choice to avoid assimilation but articulated by Latinxs as enforced by local social structures.

This theme is also locally articulated in terms of cultural practices. In addition to the above claims that Latinxs are occupying different physical spaces from the larger community, it is also claimed that Latinxs occupy a different cultural space. This is linked to threat via the belief that “we (Latinxs) are trying to impose our ways of life” (Rebeca, 108). Internalized articulations of this theme take the form of ‘victim blaming,’
in which individual Latinxs personal choices are to blame for the discrimination they experience. In (16) Angel, a 64 year-old first generation male, discusses why he experiences less discrimination that other Latinxs.

(16) Do I see needs for Latinos to do different things? I look at the situation a different way.
When in Rome, you do like the Romans. So, I, I don’t want uh, United States to change their ways for me. I just adapt. And, and, I’m not confrontational.
I’m not here to confront anybody or change anybody so.
Um, I respect the neighborhood, I respect the, the streets. I re-you know. Don’t throw things out the window.
I don’t drop the wi-uh, window down and put loud music.
That’s not me. Uh, just, live my life and I don’t mess with anybody, nobody messes with me.

(Angel, 111-119)

The implication of his rationale is that other Latinxs fail to, in his terms, “do as the Romans.” That is, mistreatment and discrimination experienced by other Latinxs results from their refusal to integrate to local cultural norms. This discourse is echoed by Paco, who states,

(17) If you do what you have to do you never have problems.
If you come into the, the, the place is not your home and try to make you rules, you gonna have problems.
You know, the American people is very patient.
If, if, if all these people go to another country they might kill half of them, you know?
American people is have very good patience.
And if you do good things and integrate with them, they respect you and love you and they, they embrace you like you own, like you know, one of them.
So it’s what I feel over here, you know?
I always, um, when I come here, my English it was, well it’s not that good anyway now, but it was worse.
And many people tried to help me, ya know?
I always tried to be, be, uh, in the middle of the American people.
It’s the only way you gonna learn.
If not, you know, you go to another country you have to learn the culture of that country and integrate with them. If not, you gonna be miserable.

(Paco, 3-18)

In both Paco and Angel’s statements, blame for discrimination is shifted to the victim. Both statements shift responsibility for avoiding discrimination onto Latinxs, making the argument that individual decisions to avoid integrating are responsible for discrimination experienced by Latinxs.

Chavez (2008) notes that LTN discourses present Latinxs as an immutable, unchanging group, “reproducing the own cultural world,” and “not subject to…the transforming social forces around them” (Chavez, 2008, 53). Carter (2014) connects this theme with Zentella’s (1995) description of what she terms the ‘Chiquitafication’ of Latinxs in the United States, referring to the process by which the internal diversity of the Latinx community is erased (Irvine & Gal, 2000). In Zentella’s account, this ideological positioning “reduces Hispanics to an undifferentiated and uncomplicated but huge and threatening mass” (Zentella, 2003, 52). That is, the LTN presents Latinxs as an intractable monolith, erasing the internal ethnic, national, linguistic, and social diversity of the Latinx community. This is a particularly pertinent area of exploration because, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the New Orleans Latinx community is notably diverse.

This point is not lost on my participants. Rebeca, a 37 year-old first generation immigrant originally of Peru states, “we’re diverse. We’re not one. We are from many different races. We speak different languages” (16-17). Dio, a 47 year-old second generation Latinx, concurs, arguing that the local Latinx community is composed of many smaller groups and is not necessarily dominated by any given sub-group.
(18) Cause it’s more mixed, very mixed, actually. Even though our population is small, there isn’t, there’s one largest group, which is the Honduran group, but it’s, all groups are here, even in small numbers, you know? (Dio, 311-314)

As Dio notes, the local Latinx community, unlike in many other U.S. contexts, is not dominated by a single group. Note however, his comment regarding the Hondurans as the largest group, which is indicative of the most common local rearticulation of this threat narrative. Latinxs in New Orleans are often conceptualized as a single, homogenous entity based along national origin lines. Interestingly, as we will see, external articulations of this theme generally present all New Orleans Latinxs as ‘Mexican,’ while internalized versions typically refer to Honduran dominance.

Participants often report being called ‘Mexican.’ Even participants who strongly claim to have never experienced discriminatory treatment will note this process of erasure as salient in New Orleans. Monica, a 28 year-old first generation immigrant who stated “I personally don’t recall negative reactions” (2) to a question regarding local perceptions of the Latinx community later noted “The only thing that I’ll…sometimes encounter is that they call, they think I’m Mexican but I’m not” (38-39). A more detailed elaboration of this discursive theme, which explicitly links the articulation of all Latinxs as ‘Mexican’ with Trumpism-driven positioning of Mexicans as threat, is presented in (19).
and I’ve heard this, they believe that the Spanish language is actually Mexican language and they say, they will ask people ‘Do you speak Mexican?’ They, they really have, they’re ignorant in terms of the culture of the Hispanics and, and therefore they’re afraid of, of the culture and they believe as Trump indicated in his speeches that most Hispanics are rapists and criminals that come from Mexico.

(Waldo, 11-16)

In this quote Waldo explicitly articulates the complex ways in which the Spanish language, *latinidad*, and Trumpian fearmongering interact to present Latinxs as threats in New Orleans A. T.

Internalized rearticulations of this theme, as noted above, often presents the local Latinx community as Honduran. In addition to the above quote, (20) illustrates the internalization of narratives regarding the local Honduran community.

(20) I definitely feel like if you’re Honduran this is home. Home away from home. Definitely the biggest, to me the biggest Honduran population outside of Honduras. It’s, I got to, uh, I go to restaurants, I go to any store, I go to Ideal, speak Spanish and it’s automatic, hey, hey you, make, you know, conversation. Or, you know, it’s, it’s funny, I go to, even if I go to practice, or go to any event, or just going shopping at Wal-Mart, especially in Kenner, there’s a lot of Spanish people. So for me, it’s friendly, it’s at home, the food as well helps.

(Isaac, 133-139)

This articulation specifically aligns Latinxs with the local Honduran community, which is an established, long-standing, traditionally well-accepted community. The Honduran community has actually served as a point of pride for New Orleanians, such as when U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu claimed in a congressional session that New Orleans was the third largest Honduran city in terms of population of Hondurans. While this is not an
accurate statement, it illustrates the positive affect locally attached to the Honduran community.

Another form in which this theme is articulated in the local context is in the idea that, as mentioned by several participants, all Latinxs are lower-class service workers. In example (21) Maria, 48, talks about being mistreated while visiting a local upper-middle-class school.

(21) Because when I went to Newman, with my kids, they really treat us like the maid and the gardener. It’s not, it’s not uncommon. That they think that all of the Latinos in this community are doing the hard work. TDL: That’s an attitude I’ve heard before… Maria: And we do it, and very proudly. We are not afraid, we are not ashamed. But you cannot treat all of us the same.

(Maria, 30-35)

Similar views were expressed by several participants. One particularly enlightening articulation of this theme was noted by Waldo, an upper-middle-class medical professional who noted that people often express anti-immigrant ideologies to him. For example, he discussed buying a house and having the real estate agent tell him “Now Dr. [redacted], you gotta be careful over here because a lot of minorities are moving in” (Waldo, 147-148). The implication here is that because he does not fit the popular imagining of Latinxs as lower-class, service industry workers, people “lose track of the fact that you’re Hispanic” (Waldo, 150). The erasure of Latinx diversity then, is so firmly engrained that anyone who does not fit neatly into the stereotypical mold is seen as not Latinx.

The data presented in this section demonstrates that threat discourses erasing the superdiversity of the Latinx community in New Orleans are perhaps the most salient of
the LTN themes operating in New Orleans. In spite of the considerable diversity of national, linguistic, and ethnic heritage of the local community, outsiders articulate local Latinxs as ‘Mexican,’ and thus linked with Trumpian articulations of Mexican heritage immigrants as the primary prototypes of Latinx threat. This is consistent with views expressed by various writers, in which Mexican and Mexican-Americans are particularly emblematic of threat (see the discussion of Reconquista narratives in this chapter). Internalized rearticulations of this theme stand in opposition to the portrayal as Mexican, instead linking all New Orleans Latinxs with the Honduran community which, importantly, is a long-standing and generally well-regarded local immigrant community.

In both cases, however, the internal diversity is erased. As data presented in Fussell & Diaz (2015) notes, while Mexicans and Hondurans are indeed the two largest groups, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Nicaraguans, and Guatemalans each make up at least five percent of the local Latinx community. In addition, external narratives regularly position Latinxs as low-class service workers. In all cases, these localized articulations of the LTN function to erase internal diversity, presenting New Orleans Latinxs as one homogenous group, externally conceptualized as low-class, blue-collar, Mexican service workers.

7.5 Discussion

It is evident, from the data presented above, that localized articulations of LTN discourses are salient factors in shaping the sociolinguistic context of New Orleans. This is significant because these discourses shape the sociocultural space that Latinxs must navigate on a daily basis. The nature of the local public space and its’ impact on the linguistic practices of local Latinxs will be further elaborated in chapter eight. It is worth
noting here, however, that my participants generally affirm the belief that education can have a transformative impact on this context. Consider (22),

(22) we have a lot of bigger problems.
Like, we're talking about uh, cultural appropriation, segregation, discrimination, racism, a lot of different factors that I would like to change. And the way I think you would change it is bringing more awareness to people and teaching, not only bringing awareness but telling them, ‘okay, well, this is what’s happening, and this is how it works, and this is what you can do to help that change.’

(Adalberto, 107-113)

Here Adalberto, expressing an opinion that is not uncommon throughout my data, advocates for “teaching” and “bringing awareness” to people as a way to effect positive change in the community.

While the data reveals that in many cases, external and internal articulations of LTN discourses coincide in their ultimate positioning of the community, in some areas there is an element of resistance implicated in the internalized discourses. For example, the ‘barrioization’ of the local Latinx community, reflected in localized articulations of the discursive positioning of local Latinxs as unable to integrate, takes two forms. In external terms, Latinxs are seen as choosing to self-segregate in order to avoid assimilating to the larger community and to, to borrow Buchanan’s phrase, ‘create little Tijuanas’ in Kenner, for example, where a drive down Williams Blvd reveals, as noted by Manny, “tons of Latino businesses…that eighteen years ago, twenty years ago, were not there” (Manny, 85-86). Internal articulations, however, focus more on social forces enforcing segregation, similar to how Carter (2014) found that structural forces were often more responsible for the perceived segregation of Latinxs. In addition, internalized realizations of this idea often position ‘barrioization’ in a positive light, as when Sara
states, “if I want something Latino, I would go to Kenner… I know where… to find it” (Sara, 222-224).

The potential for reclaiming threat discourses as resistance is also illustrated by the localized articulations of the Latinx community as a homogenous, intractable monolith. External articulations position New Orleans Latinxs as Mexicans, discursively aligning local Latinxs with national discourse driven by Trumpist ideology that links Mexicans with threat. Internal articulations, however, align the local Latinx community with Hondurans, a well-established, generally well-regarded local community. It is important, however, to be cautious about claims that LTN discourses can be reclaimed as “weapons of the weak,” to borrow a phrase from Scott (1985). In the case of the above example, both internalized and externalized articulations both serve a similar underlying function in that both serve to erase Latinx superdiversity.

The local discursive alignment of Latinxs with Mexicans illustrates the importance of carefully considering how localized discursive positioning reflects national ideologies in ways reminiscent of Carter’s (2014) adaptation of Agha’s ‘semiotic encounters.’ National discourse construct Mexicans as particularly emblematic of Reconquista ideologies. In New Orleans, LTN positing of Latinxs as an intractable, homogenous monolith this is rearticulated in pervasive discourses that erase the internal diversity of Latinxs, positioning all Latinxs as Mexican. Thus, in New Orleans, all Latinxs are Mexican. Nationally, all Mexicans are invaders. The result is that localized discourses function to link all Latinxs in New Orleans with national discourses positioning Latinxs as invaders, plotting to reconquer vast areas of the United States.
This discursive positioning of Latinxs as invaders can be tied directly to many of the cases of direct, explicit racism or discrimination in my corpus. Consider the following example from Sonia.

(23) once in Mardi Gras. We were watching a parade and I don’t know, we were being loud and like, this guy, he was like ‘oh these Mexicans or blah,’

(Sonia, 25-27)

Juan provides another example, noting that people have linked him personally with illegal immigration from Mexico,

(24) some people, they been asking me you know, or uh, saying something in the store or in any restaurant, or in um, even in some parties I go sometimes and uh, so, I have some people from, from, from here, uh, they asking me about the wall

(Juan, 7-10)

Other participants directly recognize the implicit linking of Latinx to Mexican to threat. For example, Nelly notes,

(25) I guess now, um, yeah, with all the quote, violence, drug war issues that they feel is just coming from Mexico, I feel like everyone just, all Hispanics get bunched up into the same, uh, and the stereotypes that you see, too.

(Nelly, 41-43)

This discussion provides an example of how local articulations of LTN discourses interact with national discourses in order to discursively position Latinxs in New Orleans as threat. In this sense, the underlying thread discursively positioning Latinxs as threat to American interests moves across national, local, and official governmental levels. LTN discourses are intertextual, in a Bakhtinian sense, as iterations of the discourses are in conversation across levels.
7.6 Conclusion

The current chapter has supported three major arguments. First, the local Latinx community has increased significantly in social salience in the years following Hurricane Katrina. Second, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and the concurrent rise of Trumpism as a dominant political ideology in the country has had a salient, tangible impact on the relationship between local Latinxs and the broader New Orleans community. Third, localized rearticulations of the five themes of the Latinx Threat Narrative are salient components of the sociolinguistic context in which Latinxs participate. The following chapter builds on the evidence presented here, drawing on previous sociolinguistic work as well as work in cultural studies and critical theory in order to articulate how LTN discourses function to perpetuate existing power hierarchies in the city of New Orleans.
CHAPTER 8.

SPANISH AS PUBLIC THREAT AND THE ARTICULATION OF ANGLO PUBLIC SPACE IN NEW ORLEANS

“I mean, it’s, it’s funny. As soon as I switch on the English it’s like, oh, okay, you’re from the city and I’m like, yeah, I am.”

-Isaac, 2nd generation, Honduras

“For Senator Bob Dole and many other citizens, speaking any language other than English is un-patriotic and un-American”

-Otto Santa Ana

8.1 Introduction

The body of literature introduced in chapter 3 argues that discourses surrounding Latinx communities in the United States are often grounded in what Chavez (2008) has termed the ‘Latino Threat Narrative’ (LTN). Additional scholarship has explored the ways in which these discourses are implicated in the positioning of public space as Anglo space and by establishing Anglo linguistic performance as unmarked performance. As argued by Carter (2014), these discourses function to artificially restrict the linguistic choices available to Latinx actors. Crucially, as Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores have articulated, the racialization of non-Anglo speakers as marked performers rests more heavily on the perception of the listener than on the performance of the speaker. Thus, Latinx speakers are racialized as non-white, attributed non-standard performance, and articulated as threat in ways that function to artificially restrict the linguistic choices
available to the speakers regardless of the extent to which the speaker’s performance does or does not conform to expected standard performance.

This chapter explores how the LTN discourses demonstrated in chapter 7 to be a significantly salient component of the current sociolinguistic context in which New Orleans Latinxs live and speak function to constrain access to unmarked linguistic identities and to restrict the linguistic choices available to Latinx speakers in the city in ways that perpetuate existing power hierarchies. The primary argument developed in this chapter is that the iconic linking of Spanish to threat in New Orleans functions to position Spanish as marked in the city. This leads to local Latinxs abandoning Spanish in attempts to access unmarked, positive linguistic identities. These efforts are subverted, however, by the racialization of Latinxs in the city meaning that, effectively, unmarked, positive linguistic identities in public spaces in New Orleans are reserved for Anglo actors. The data considered in this chapter supports this argument in terms of three major claims regarding sociopolitical markedness in the city. First, the data illustrates that the Spanish language, as well as English perceived as ‘influenced’ by Spanish, is highly marked in New Orleans. Second, English in general and English perceived as ‘standard,’ in particular, is unmarked. Third, local Latinxs bodies themselves marked, as local Latinxs are racialized based on phenotypical perceptions.

Section 8.2 establishes the theoretical framework for the current analysis, exploring how the concepts of public space, marked linguistic identities, direct and indirect indexicalities, and linguistic racialization have been observed to shape linguistic performance in U.S. Latinx communities. Section 8.3 briefly summarizes the methodology responsible for the data presented in this chapter. Section 8.4 applies this
framework to the local community, drawing primarily on quotations from my interview corpus to illustrate the three primary points noted in the previous paragraph. The primary arguments developed both in this chapter and in section 4 of this dissertation are summarized and reinforced in section 8.5.

8.2 Literature Review

As Carter (2014) notes, Spanish is an icon of *latinidad*, in the sense of Irvine & Gal’s (2000) conceptualization of iconization as a mechanism whereby indexical relationships between signifiers and signifieds are reconceptualized as iconic relationships. In this sense, Spanish is conceptualized as resembling *latinidad* in some inherent way. The linguistic performance of Latinxs, then, is seen to be inherently tied to conceptions of *latinidad*, and via what I am referring to as ‘chain iconization,’ as ultimately an icon of Latinx threat. Importantly, as my participants in New Orleans affirm, this chain iconization extends to also include English with Spanish influences. Thus, English with Spanish influences is an icon of Spanish, which is an icon of *latinidad*, which is an icon of threat. Although she does not make the connection as explicitly as Carter (2014) does, the idea of Spanish as an icon of *latinidad* emerges throughout Urciuoli’s (1996) work on Puerto Rican experiences in New York City. She argues that the “ideologically unmarked American citizen” is “the white, Anglo, middle-class, English speaking male” (138) and that the unmarked language of the U.S. imaginary community is “an English as unmarked as the white, middle-class heart of the nation-state itself” (37). She notes that racialized individuals “try to control prejudiced perceptions of themselves by editing the ways in which they may be seen as marked, through their name, hair or skin color, behavior, or language” (144). The social action of
‘acting white,’ in her account, is the result of an attempt to access an unmarked identity within public space, or in her terms, the ‘outer-sphere,’ where unmarked identities are restricted to Anglo identity performance. Spanish as an icon of *latinidad*, while not as explicitly stated as in Carter (2014), emerges from her analysis, as she notes that the “English-Spanish boundary” is mapped onto the articulation of race as ‘ethnic-American’ (Urciuoli, 1996, 174). The boundary between Spanish and English is, in this view, mapped onto the boundary between Latinx and Anglo, meaning that access to an unmarked racial identity requires the rejection of Spanish.

The unmarked linguistic identity in the imagined community of the United States, then, is English, and specifically, ‘standard’ English. Latinxs are driven to reject Spanish and Spanish influenced English in public space as a way to attempt to access unmarked linguistic identities. Drawing on Urciuoli’s account of ‘acting white,’ these efforts can be seen as a form of ‘acting English’ in order to access unmarked, positive linguistic identities. This is reminiscent of what I’ve observed among Puerto Ricans in Lorain, OH. The community strongly connects Spanish to the Puerto Rican identity and argues that Spanish-English bilingualism is highly beneficial. However, second generation Puerto Ricans mostly fail to transmit Spanish to the third generation, leading to wide-spread participation in the oft observed trigenerational process of heritage language attrition. This perceived tension, I argue, results from Puerto Rican reactions to the sociopolitical contexts in which Spanish is an icon of *latinidad* and *latinidad* is an icon of threat. The failure to transmit Spanish to subsequent generations results from the effort to gain access to unmarked, positive linguistic identities within these contexts.
Mock Spanish, as first articulated by Jane Hill (1998), posits that the use of a disorderly Spanish by outgroup members is inherently derogatory, establishing a white public space (Page & Thomas, 1994) in which Anglo linguistic behavior is naturalized, while Latinx linguistic performance is highly monitored. This monitoring, in her account, can range from individual comments to official legislation (Hill, 1998, 682). This is accomplished via a dual mechanism, in which Anglo speakers directly index a jovial, good-natured persona while indirectly indexing derogatory, racist stereotypical images of Latinxs as lazy and ignorant (683).

Hill’s (1998) analysis is built on Urciuoli’s earlier observations of Puerto Ricans’ efforts to ‘act white’ in order to access unmarked identities in the public sphere. She notes that while Puerto Rican’s language use in the outer sphere is monitored and subject to sanction, “Whites permit themselves a considerable amount of disorder precisely at the language boundary” (682). The public sphere is white space precisely because Latinx performance is marked, while Anglo performance is naturalized, invisible. I argue that Mock Spanish is itself a reaction to the Latinx Threat Narrative, creating and maintaining white public space and perpetuating existing social power hierarchies. That is, Mock Spanish is a mechanism for preserving public space as Anglo space, which is seen as necessary in reaction to the chain iconization that links Latinx language use with threat.

Scott (1985), drawing on Bourdieu’s work, elaborates on the role of euphemization on perpetuating and naturalizing social hegemony. As Goldstein (2003) argues, “euphemization, the cleaning up of the official or public transcript…serves to hide domination” (89). In terms of U.S. Latinx communities, euphemization applies by rearticulating racist narratives of Spanish as an icon of Latinx threat in terms of
discourses regarding the need for English in order to function adequately within American society. That is, English is conceptualized as the unmarked linguistic code within American society, and thus as cultural capital. This allows Anglos to maintain a positive self-image, as the rejection of Spanish and Spanish-influenced English is reconceptualized as beneficial for Latinxs because the acquisition of ‘pure’ English, devoid of Spanish influences, is seen as providing valuable cultural capital in the form of unmarked linguistic identities.

This is reinforced by Silverstein’s (1996) observation that English is publically articulated as rational, logical, unbiased force towards progress. This hypothetical ‘standard’ English becomes a crucial form of social symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). As Urciuoli (1996) notes, within this narrative, “impurities interfere with progress, so everyone should want to rid their English of impurity in accent, word, or grammar” (38). By rearticulating racist narratives that position Spanish as ‘Latinx’ and ‘Latinx’ as disorderly and threatening in terms of narratives positioning (standard) English as progress oriented cultural capital, Anglos retain positive positioning via a euphemizational operation. However, as we will see in the following section, even fully anglicized linguistic performance does not guarantee access to an unmarked identity, as the hegemonic social structure prevents Latinx access to unmarked linguistic identities, regardless of linguistic performance, along phenotypically demarked boundaries.

Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores articulate a ‘raciolinguistic perspective’ that emerges from their observation that “despite decades of sociolinguistic research debunking deficit perspectives and challenging racializing discourses, they remain as pervasive as ever” (Rosa & Flores, 2017, 1–2). They seek to challenge ideologies that
position racialized speakers’ “mastery of code of power,” (22) to borrow a term from Delpit (2006), as a solution to the stigmatization of minority linguistic codes. The code of power in the United States is a ‘standard’ English, or to borrow Urciuoli’s term, an ‘unmarked’ English. However, as Flores & Rosa (2015) effectively demonstrate, ‘standard English’ is not a constellation of linguistic features, but rather an ideological construct, what Silverstein (1996) describes as a ‘cultural emblem.’ Thus, ‘standard’ English is defined within the ideologies of the ‘listening subjects’ (Inoue, 2006).

Unmarked linguistic performance is, therefore, imparted by the listener as opposed to earned by the speaker. In other words, for racialized speakers, “altering one’s speech might do little to change the ideological perspectives of listening subjects” (Flores & Rosa, 2015, 152).

What emerges from this discussion is that it is effectively impossible for Latinxs to linguistically assimilate their way to ‘unmarked American.’ As Rubin (1992) shows, Anglo perceptions will attribute racialized linguistic identities even in situations of fully standard linguistic performance based on phenotypical perceptions of racialized features. Thus, as Rosa & Flores (2017) contend, the focus must shift from solely investigating the linguistic performance of minority communities to querying and problematizing the underlying sociopolitical structures and mechanisms that serve to reify and perpetuate power hierarchies. One of the goals of the type of work I am doing here is to participate in this shift of focus by exploring not just Latinx language use in New Orleans, but the ways in which the sociopolitical context shapes linguistic performance by restricting access to unmarked, positive linguistic identities. In this articulation, Latinx language use
in New Orleans is positioned in context and understood as a reaction to the ideological, systemic forces structuring markedness and unmarkedness in the city.

8.3 Methodology

The analysis presented in this chapter builds on the discussion in the previous chapter. The methodology employed here, therefore, is a continuation of the methodology employed in chapter 7. Excerpts from the contemporary sample were transcribed, loaded into Atlas T.I., and coded for discussion of the three primary themes discussed in the introduction to this chapter. The three themes discussed here are:

1. Spanish as marked performance
2. (Standard) English as unmarked performance
3. Racialization of Latinxs

This chapter discusses evidence in my data for each of these above themes and illustrates how these three themes, each of which is fundamentally grounded in the articulation of latinidad as threat, function to restrict the types of linguistic performance available to Latinxs in the city.

8.4 Results

In this section I provide the results of the coding described in the previous section. I first demonstrate that Latinxs in New Orleans are aware that linguistic performance carries markedness implications. Spanish use, and the use of English that listeners perceive as ‘accented,’ is marked and is subject to social sanction. English use in general, and particularly English use perceived as ‘standard,’ is unmarked and functions as a type of cultural capital, granting access to less marked linguistic identities. Using data from my corpus, I illustrate that this perception leads Latinxs to abandon Spanish use in
attempts to achieve unmarked status via linguistic assimilation. However, racializing discourses problematize these efforts. I illustrate, again based on the discourses reported by participants in my sample, that local Latinxs are aware of differential treatment based on phenotypical characteristics.

Spanish as marked linguistic performance

My participants regularly note that Spanish use in public spaces is marked and subject to social sanction. For example, Spanish use in public space is also explicitly articulated as secretive or threatening. Anna, in example (1), elaborates,

(1) It’s just, one, everybody always thinks that they’re talking about them. That’s usually, if anybody ever hears somebody speak Spanish, they’ll turn to me automatically and say, ‘Ohh! Are they talking about us?’ ‘No, they’re just talking about, the burger they’re eating, you know, <laughter> Has nothing to do with you.

(Anna, 4-9)

This quote illustrates that Spanish is conceptualized by non-Spanish speakers as threatening. Propositional content is rendered irrelevant. The form of the utterance renders it, ipso facto, threatening.

My participants report social sanctioning of Spanish use in several ways. Three important variations are: looks, subtle differences in treatment, and outright comments. Junior, for example, notes that “people make faces” (26) when he speaks Spanish in public. Nelly, in example (2), describes being treated in different ways based on language use.

(2) TDL: What kinds of experiences do you have speaking Spanish in New Orleans? Nelly: Oh yeah, if you go in, if you go in, if I go in somewhere and I’m speaking Spanish I definitely getting treated differently than if I go in and I speak English.

(Nelly, 22-25)
Both cases represent a subtle social sanctioning of Spanish use in public space. While the criticism takes an implicit form, the message is still clear: Spanish is marked in public space.

Other participants report experiencing explicit sanctioning when speaking Spanish in public in New Orleans,

(3) TDL: Do people comment negatively if you speak Spanish in public?  
Maria: Oh yeah. Yes. Yes. I remember one time I was like buying something at this store and the lady behind is like, ‘English only.’ It’s like, TDL: Really?  
Maria: I was not talking to her. She was not part of the conversation and she was just like, okay.  
(Maria, 55-59)

Another example of explicit sanctioning, couched in outright racist terms, is reported in the narrative provided by Tony in example (4).

(4) Uh, but yeah, right here, right here on, I was walking, I was once walking on Magazine Street and I was talking to my mom on the phone in Spanish and this guy was like, you know, ‘go home Spic,’ and I’m like, ‘yeah, ok…<laughter> ‘Mami te llamo ahora. Dame un break.’ I took, hung up the phone and I told him to, you know, I cussed him out. I was mad. I was, frustrated. I was like ‘no, not okay.’  
(Tony, 16-21)

In yet another illustration, presented here as example (5), Pablo discusses experiences speaking Spanish in public space in New Orleans. This quote is particularly illustrative of the extent to which Spanish is marked, because it illustrates that the linguistic dynamic can supersede other social dynamics.

(5) TDL: What about if people hear you speaking Spanish?  
Pablo: Completely negative. It doesn’t matter if, like, for example if I’m at work and my sibling calls me, my little sister calls me and I speak, or my mom, and I speak Spanish, even people that are my subor-subordinates uh, take it personally. Like they, they get mad at it or they even think that I’m talking to
them. It doesn’t have to do anything with them, especially when I use Spanish so little, but it, it. And I’ve always wondered if it makes them nervous, or what it is, but yeah.

TDL: Has anyone ever said anything to you?

Pablo: Oh yeah, multiple times. And not, not in a, some, some, some, they have to be careful the way that they speak about that cause they could get in trouble being that I’m their supervisor, but, uh, they have, they would prefer if I wouldn’t do that.

(Pablo, 12-31)

As Pablo indicates, the supervisor/subordinate dynamic is superseded in this case, resulting in his occupational subordinates feeling comfortable explicitly sanctioning his linguistic performance. This illustrates the depth of the social stigma attached to the Spanish language in public space.

Linguistic marking occurs not just when speaking Spanish in public spaces, but also when speaking English with perceived Spanish influences, as described by RN here.

(6) So I, I do believe there is cause, I mean, I’ve, I’ve seen it, people make jokes about my accent, and me not pronouncing the words correctly and, and stuff like that. So yeah

(RN, 54-56)

The pattern established in the data then, is that Latinxs in New Orleans perceive their use of Spanish, or of English with Spanish influences, is marked. In the following set of examples, we see that the opposite is also true. English, and particularly English perceived by the listener as ‘standard,’ is unmarked.

Participants report being aware of the unmarked status of English in public space. For example, Isaac, a 25 year-old second generation, notes that he can avoid discrimination by using English, as articulated in example (7).

(7) I mean, it’s, it’s funny.

As soon as I switch on the English it’s like, oh, okay, you’re from the city and I’m like, yeah, I am.

(Isaac, 41-43)
This quote not only illustrates that English is unmarked, it illustrates that, in ways reminiscent of Santa Ana's (2002) discussion of discourses surrounding Senator Robert Dole’s presidential campaign, New Orleanians construct English as a marker of local identity. That is, being able to speak English becomes a marker of local identity. The implication here is that in order to be New Orleanian, one must speak English.

As in the examples related to Spanish use provided above, perceived accent is relevant. Participants who self-describe as being able to speak ‘unaccented’ English note that this, in some instances, allows them to avoid being linguistically marked. Isaac continues his account from example (7) in example (8).

(8) I mean as soon as they even think about approaching me English just, just automatically turns on and it’s sorta like a gasp, like, oh, okay, you speak really, really well, no accent so.
TDL: So speaking English without a notable accent defuses the issue? Isaac: Yeah, yeah, most of the time. Uh, funny story my brother was at barber shop once, Spanish barber shop. Raided by ICE. And uh, everyone were flying out the windows, you know, most of them didn’t have paper. They asked my brother and my brother with the most pristine American accent, well, no accent actually, um, was asked, you uh, you uh, you illegal? And he was like ‘no.’ And it was like, okay, you’re fine. So. Things of that nature.

(Isaac, 46-55)

Ideologically this quote illustrates that Isaac has internalized the unmarked status of ‘standard’ English to the extent that he self-corrects his use of the term ‘American accent’ to ‘no accent.’ He has internalized the hegemonic discourse that positions ‘standard’ English as invisible or natural. Additionally, this story is powerfully indicative of the ideology that equates English use with true American identity, in that his brother was able to effectively prove his legitimacy in the eyes of the I.C.E agents by speaking what they perceives as ‘standard’ English.
Other participants also note that the lack of a noticeable Spanish accent allows access to a less-marked public identity. For example, Dio claims his lack of an accent allows him to avoid discrimination. He claims, “as an adult I’ve lost most of my accent, so I haven’t had a problem” (88). Anna claims, 

(9) I don’t have an accent  
I mean, I have an accent but not as strong as other Spanish speakers so,  
It’s, it’s never affected me as much as I’ve heard other people being affected by it.  
(Anna, 28-30)

These quotes illustrate that in New Orleans public space English, and specifically English perceived as ‘standard’ by the listener is required to access an unmarked linguistic identity. In other words, the result of the marked nature of Spanish is that English with ‘no accent’ functions as cultural capital, allowing access to unmarked linguistic identities.

The result of this discursive positioning of English and Spanish is the restriction of linguistic choice for local Latinxs. In particular, my participants report avoiding the use of Spanish in public in order to avoid the markedness associated with the language. In example (10) RN discusses his choices to use English in most public settings.

(10) I do believe people have a negative impression on it.  
And I don’t judge them, honestly,  
cause, if you don’t understand what they’re telling you,  
you can, you can start assuming a bunch of stuff,  
so, umm, I’m, umm, you shou-that’s the reason why  
I spend more time speaking English than Spanish  
cause I wanna make sure that everyone understands what I’m saying  
and we’re all on the same page.  
(RN, 17-24)

RN articulates his English use as a choice he makes to avoid confusion and to be certain that everyone is “on the same page.” Pablo articulates his choice as ‘respect for people’ in (11).
(11) and I try not to cause, you know, out of respect for people,
but at the same time it kinda bothers me cause why, why, why do I have to speak
differently?
I know English.
It’s not like I’m not doing, I’m not cultured and I’m not part of the United States,
part of being American.
I don’t know, I don’t get it.

(Pablo, 27-31)

Both RN and Pablo present euphemized articulations of their respective choices to avoid
Spanish use in public. For RN, the motivation is to avoid misunderstandings. For Pablo, it
is to avoid being disrespectful. However, in both cases the surrounding comments clarify
that these choices are made in a specific social context and represent a reaction to this
context. Both men recognize that Spanish use produces negative reactions and choose to
use English as a way to avoid the markedness and sanctioning associated with Spanish
use, even, in Pablo’s case, in spite of the realization that the reactions to Spanish use are
illogical. Junior is more explicitly, couching his choice to avoid Spanish as a direct
consequence of social sanctions, as seen in example (12).

(12) And I think part of the reason why I don’t speak so much Spanish is
because of that.
Like I know, like, I don’t want people to, to react a certain way.
So I don’t wanna put myself in that situation.

(Junior, 27-29)

Junior claims that he chooses not to speak Spanish specifically in order to avoid
the markedness associated with Spanish use. This, as we have seen, is consistent with
choices made by other participants. What the above discussion of the choices made by
RN, Pablo, and Junior illustrate is that Latinxs in New Orleans make choices about
linguistic performance within a specific social setting. Their choices represent a reaction
to that setting. As Spanish links ideologically to threat, it is heavily marked in New
Orleans public spaces, resulting in local Latinxs attempting to use unmarked English as a mechanism for avoiding being articulated in terms of threat discourses. The following section, however, illustrates how racialized articulations of the Latinx community complicate these efforts.

The traditional Black and White U.S. racial binary was originally problematic in New Orleans because it failed to account for the free people of color (Campanella, 2006). It is perhaps indicative of the extent to which New Orleans has been Americanized in the roughly two centuries since the Louisiana Purchase that New Orleans Latinxs are now racialized according to this binary. Bailey’s (2000) work with Dominican-Americans in New York City illustrates that the U.S. racial binary is inadequate for application to Latinx communities, as it fails to properly account for the internal diversity of Latinxs populations. Of course, as many scholars have pointed out, a Black and White binary also functions to erase superdiversity in U.S. African-American communities as well. For my participants, phenotypical marking is a powerfully salient force in their daily experiences. Participants report both experiencing racial marking based on their phenotypical status as well as recognition of the privilege enjoyed on the basis of a more Anglo appearance.

RN provides an example of racial marking of New Orleans Latinxs in an account of an experience while visiting a client. He said,

(13) and I went into a customer.
The lady was white Caucasian, a female, and um, I was with my counterpart and he is, he’s, he’s Mexican and we in this, into the store to a kinda introduce to the my partner and what not and the lady, the first thing that came out of her mouth was “so when is [redacted], referring to the company, umm, going to send me out a white employee?”

(RN, 38-43)
Other participants also reported being racially marked. Junior describes visiting a store that he describes as “predominately for white people,” and notes that “no one will come help me” (13). Maria reports that her son was recently invited to a function for alumni of color (12-19). Another example comes from Dio, who said,

(14) because of my skin tone and the texture of my hair I kind of look like, um, the creole community here, and so, there’s a, there’s, I’ve had a lot of acceptance, because people always think I’m their cousin or something, and it, that’s a real thing because people are always saying it out loud. Uh, and, and, the first question they always as me when they see me is not what country are you from, is you know, ‘who your people?’

(Dio, 89-94)

The unifying theme across these narratives is that many local Latinxs report being racialized based on phenotypical criteria. In each of the cases here, Latinxs report being positioned as members of the local racialized African-American community.

Other Latinxs, particularly those who are “whiter” (Alina, 58), describe recognition of the privilege afforded to them due to phenotype. Sasha, a second generation Cuban-American, describes herself as “a white Latina woman,” and notes the role she believes this plays in shaping her experiences in New Orleans.

(15) And um, something that I’m constantly um, thinking about because I am a white Latina woman who’s born in the United States. And so, in Guatemala they call me ‘gringa.’ And at first it was really horrifying because I never considered myself a ‘gringa’ ever. It’s like kind of a bad word in Miami, um, like to be considered ‘gringa.’ But it was a part of my identity that I’ve been having to really work with lately because I get to choose when I’m seen as white and when I’m seen as Latina and a lot of people don’t get that same choice.

TDL: Have you experienced discrimination for being Latina?
Sasha: I have not. Um, and I think that is because, um, I’m like a tiny white woman.

(Sasha, 45-54)
Essentially, my participants are describing how local Latinxs are racialized along the typical American White/Black binary in ways strongly reminiscent of the experiences of Dominican-Americans in B. Bailey (2000). Tony, a 25 year-old first generation transplant from Puerto Rico, highlights the distinction in (16) and (17).

(16) I guess I don’t meet the Latino stereotype when people look at me. I’m, I’m not brown looking, I don’t have the, the dark, dark eyes, like what people imagine of, you know, oh that guy’s Latino.

(Tony, 13-15)

(17) I was with one of my best friends. He’s uh, <clears throat> he’s more brown than I am.
Uh, so I guess he fits the more Latino stereotype that people think about.
And we were both speaking, speaking in Spanish.
And, uh, I think they were, frat kids from LSU or something, or, University of Lousiana-Lafayette, ya know?
Um, uh yeah and they just, yeah, “go home we don’t speak that in American speak American”

(Tony, 27-32)

Here Tony notes that the fact that he doesn’t necessarily fit the stereotypical Latinx phenotype has served to shield him from discrimination, while at the same noting that his friend, who does fit the stereotype, is more likely to be racialized and experience negative reactions.

Recall, however, that Tony, in a narrative reported earlier in this chapter, has been targeted by explicitly racist comments for speaking Spanish while walking down a local street. In this instance the act of speaking Spanish in public space was sufficient to mark Tony as racialized. This leads us to an important observation. In New Orleans, either language use or racial phenotype is sufficient for the ‘othering’ of Latinxs. This is reminiscent of Rosa’s (2016) observation that “language use and race come to be constructed and interpreted in relation to one another” (67). This means that New Orleans
Latinxs can be racialized and constructed as other either on the basis of phenotypical marking regardless of linguistic performance or on the basis of linguistic performance regardless of phenotypical appearance. In both cases, the end result is the racialization of local Latinxs.

8.5 Discussion

This chapter has presented data illustrating that within the local sociolinguistic context linguistic performance carries significant consequences in terms of relative markedness. Spanish is heavily marked, iconically linked with Latinx threat, and is subject to sanction; an idealized, naturalized ‘standard’ English is unmarked and treated as a sort of cultural capital providing access to positive linguistic identities in public space. In other words, Latinx threat is implicated in Spanish markedness because this markedness results from fear of the other. As Mercedes notes, these ideologies are grounded in “Fear. Fear…it’s just fear of the unknown” (38-39). In keeping with Zentella’s admonition to position analysis of linguistic choice within the sociopolitical context in which they occur, I understand my participant’s choice to reject Spanish and pursue ‘standard’ English phonology as a direct reaction to these hegemonic language ideologies.

These hegemonic ideologies function to reify supremacy in ways reminiscent of Rosa & Flores’ (2017), which illustrates that discourses about linguistic practices can be traced to an underlying ideology that re-articulates colonial categorization of people as ‘European’ and ‘non-European’ as a justification for supremacy. English and Spanish are articulated as discrete, bonded codes, associated with particular racial categories. The perception of one code, Spanish, as threatening illustrates the raciolinguistic
enregisterment (Agha, 2005; Rosa & Flores, 2017) of Spanish as iconic of threat. As these ideologies are implicated in the formulation of public space as ‘Anglo’ space, the ultimate result is the reification of supremacy.

Furthermore, I have demonstrated that the local Latinx communities are often racialized and subjected to monitoring based on either component of the race and language coarticulation, that is, based on either phenotypical observation or linguistic performance in ways reminiscent of Rosa’s (2016) discussion of looking like a language or sounding like a race. An important additional component to the racialization of Latinxs in New Orleans is the community self-conceptualizes as existing in opposition not just to the socially unmarked Anglo community, but also to other minority groups, in particular African Americans. For example, Teresa claims “…the African-American community doesn’t like Hispanic women…because they say the guys are attracted to Hispanic women, and that is big competition” (8-10). Other participants discussed the perception that African-Americans target Latinxs for muggings. In many senses, the animosity between Latinxs and African-Americans can be traced to the characterization of Latinxs in political and media discourse in the immediate aftermath of the storm as a force that displaced African-Americans, irrevocably altering the demographic make-up of the city (Trujillo-Pagan, 2007). Positioning minority communities in opposition to each other is obviously the result of a complex set of circumstances, but can, in itself, be seen as a tool for reinforcing hegemony.

These observations have important implications for the semiotic process by which LTN discourses function to restrict identity work in New Orleans. In essence, what I have demonstrated is that the markedness of Spanish results from the chain iconization that
links Spanish accents to Spanish, Spanish to *latinidad*, and *latinidad* to threat. The marked nature of Spanish leads Latinxs in New Orleans idealize the “pristine American accent” as “no accent actually” (Isaac, 53-54), aspiring to this type of linguistic performance as the cultural capital that will allow them to access unmarked linguistic identities. In this way, raciolinguistic ideologies linking Spanish to Latinx threat narratives are euphemized and rearticulate as linked to ‘being on the same page’ or ‘being respectful.’ However, the local co-articulation of language and race complicates Latinx efforts to achieve unmarked public identities, as local Latinxs are marked as other based on either phenotypical or linguistic information. This is further complicated by Flores & Rosa’s (2015) recognition that racialized linguistic features are attributed even in their absence if the speaker is perceived as racialized. Unmarked linguistic identities are reserved for Anglo linguistic performance, that is, for language use by phenotypically Anglo speakers whose speech contains no markers, real or imagined, of Spanish. Latinx speakers, therefore, cannot linguistically assimilate their way to unmarked status.

Hegemony also reinforces existing power hierarchies by dictating what is marked/unmarked in public space. Within the US, Spanish and Spanish-accented English is marked and perceived as an icon of *latinidad*, linked inextricably with Latinx threat. Articulations of LTN discourses, then, are mechanisms for reinforcing hegemony as they function to mark Latinx speech as substandard and restrict access to unmarked linguistic identity. Because perceptual distinctions between standard and racialized speech are not based solely on a constellation of linguistic features but can also be imparted by the listener, Latinx speakers cannot access unmarked linguistic identities via assimilation.
8.6 Conclusion

Latinx speakers in New Orleans, as well as in other parts of the United States, face a debilitating catch-22. Spanish and English with Spanish influences are marked, subject to monitoring and sanction, while ‘standard’ English is naturalized and invisible. However, as language and race are co-articulated in U.S. popular imagining, racialized speakers such as New Orleans Latinxs are conceptualized as exhibiting nonstandard linguistic performance regardless of the objective constellation of linguistic features present in their speech. As Flores & Rosa (2015) contend, “the question of whether members of racialized communities are accepted as appropriately engaging in” unmarked “linguistic practices continues to be determined by the white listening subject, not by the speaker’s actual practices” (167). This necessitates a shift of focus from solely describing minority communities’ language use in terms of linguistic features to also querying the underlying sociopolitical structures that are represented in dominant language ideologies.

This section of my dissertation, including chapter 7 and chapter 8, represents an attempt to pursue this type of work. While sections 2 and 3 presented a variationist account of linguistic performance in the local Latinx community, this performance does not occur in a vacuum. It must be understood in terms of the sociocultural context in which it occurs. This section elaborates the ways in which New Orleans Latinxs’ language use is locally situated. I have illustrated that both shifts in the local Latinx community as well as in the dominant national political discourse has had important implications on the ways in which Latinxs in New Orleans are perceived and on the relationship between local Latinxs and other local communities. Chapter 7 described how the five themes of the LTN as articulated by Leo Chavez (2008) are salient factors in the
sociolinguistic context in which local Latinxs function daily. These discourses function to articulate *latinidad* as threat. The iconic linking of Spanish and *latinidad* then functions to render Spanish (and Spanish-flavored English) as marked in public space in New Orleans. Local Latinxs react to this reality by rejecting Spanish. However, as racialized linguistic performance can be attributed by listeners, it is impossible to fully access unmarked linguistic identities by modifying linguistic performance. Unmarked identity in public space is reserved for Anglo linguistic performance, because markedness is constructed in the perception of the observer. This highlights the need to shift our focus from analyzing Latinx language performance to analyzing Anglo listening performance.
9.2 Review of the major claims and conclusions

Section 1 provided an introduction to the current project. In this section I situate the project, both in terms of theoretical and spatial orientations. The work is framed primarily within Zentella’s call for an anthropolitical linguistics (Zentella, 1995, 1997,
2003), or a research program within sociolinguistics with the stated aim of increasing access to unmarked, positive ethnolinguistic identities for speakers of traditionally marginalized linguistic codes. Section 1 also established the research setting, positioning New Orleans as a city with a unique ethnolinguistic heritage among American cities, and as a city defined by its linguistic and cultural diversity. Finally, section 1 introduced the population and methods explored throughout this dissertation.

Section 2 considered the evolution of NOLAE, investigating the extent to which vowel realizations have diverged in the current sample from the vocalic patterns established in the pre-Katrina New Orleans Latinx community. Two samples of vowels were compared. The first sample is excerpted from oral history interviews conducted with Latinxs in the city between 1986 and 1996. The second sample is excerpted from the corpus of sociolinguistic interviews considered elsewhere in this dissertation. Four vowels, /ai/, /er/, /a/, and /ei/, were shown to have diverged most significantly between the samples.

While the data did not neatly allow for characterizations of one variety as more highly influenced by Spanish influence, the overall pattern of the data illustrated more consistent realizations of these four vowels in the pre-Katrina sample and a greater range of realizations in the post-Katrina sample. These shifting patterns of linguistic performance follow from the shifting nature of the sociolinguistic context (Fussell & Diaz, 2015). As the local Latinx community becomes more socially salient (Sluyter, et al., 2015), speakers are subjected to greater pressures to conform to local norms. However, the increased diversity of the community allows some speakers to be more
sensitive to these pressures. The greater diversity of the community in terms of socioeconomic status, ‘barrioization,’ is reflected in greater linguistic diversity.

Section 3 elaborates on the linguistic diversity within the contemporary Latinx community in New Orleans, noting synchronic variation in NOLAE in terms of rates of retention of linguistic markers of Spanish influence as well as in rates of acquisition of localized identity markers. Chapter 5 noted that variation in terms of prosodic rhythm and /æ/ realization could be partially explained in terms of traditional sociolinguistic variables like age, gender, and educational status. Chapter 6 expanded this analysis, noting that additional nuance could be incorporated by considering social network geometry and the positioning of a given individual within this network structure.

The primary conclusion motivated by this section is that metrics positioning individuals within that local Latinx social network geometry, particularly depth score (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Moody & White, 2003) and harmonic centrality (Marchiori & Latora, 2000; Rochat, 2009), interact with traditional sociolinguistic variables in order to account for synchronic variation. In particular, pre-nasal /æ/ tensing appears to be predicted most strongly for highly educated second generation participants who are not deeply embedded in the local Latinx social network and for first generation participants with very low harmonic centrality. Thus, both depth of embeddedness and harmonic centrality predict low rates of pre-nasal /æ/ tensing to a statistically significant degree, but these constructs function differently within different demographic subsets. This argues for greater attention to the superdiversity of communities that are objects of sociolinguistic research, as well as for continued incorporation of advanced modeling
mechanisms, both in terms of population networks structure (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017) and statistical analysis (Tagliamonte & Baayen, 2012).

A further point that emerges from the discussion in section 3 relates to the role of social networks in the pre-Katrina sample compared to the contemporary sample in section 2. The comparison in section 2 did not focus on the role of social networks, as the archived data available for the pre-Katrina samples did not include the necessary information for constructing the types of social network models I construct in this project. However, the sociolinguistic literature allows for certain predictions about the impacts of networks in this community. The sociolinguistic literature affirms that dense and multiplex networks exert a conservative impact on language use. The ethnographic data discussed in chapter 4 indicates that the Latinx community in New Orleans prior to Katrina likely did not participate in dense, multiplex social networks. This would predict more innovative performance, or a greater tendency to lose linguistic markers of Spanish influence. More dense, multiplex social networks in the post-Katrina population should predict more Spanish influence in the linguistic performance. However, as we see in section 4, this impact is mitigated by the fact that the increased diversity of the post-Katrina population means that different members of the Latinx community experience different degrees of pressure towards assimilation.

Section 4 expands the analysis by incorporating a discussion of the role localized discourses and narratives surrounding the Latinx community are implicated in linguistic performance. The data shows that local Latinxs are acutely aware of the presence of discourses related to Leo Chavez’ construct of a Latinx Threat Narrative. This narrative positions Latinxs in the United States as a cultural, linguistic, demographic, and
economic threat. As Spanish and Spanish influenced English are iconic of Latinidad, linguistic performance becomes emblematic of threat.

The data presented in section 4 illustrates how the salience of these narratives functions to restrict the linguistic choices available to Latinxs. Participants report avoiding Spanish in an attempt to ‘talk white’ (Baugh, 2018), that I argue is an instantiation of ‘acting white,’ as described for Puerto Ricans in New York City in Urciuoli (1996). This represents an attempt to linguistically assimilate in order to access an unmarked linguistic identity. However, in ways reminiscent of what is described in recent raciolinguistic literature, (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017), Latinxs in New Orleans are marked based not only on linguistic performance, but along phenotypical lines as perceived by the listener. Thus, unmarked identities are reserved Anglo speakers. This highlights the need to expand sociolinguistic analysis to incorporate greater attention to listener ideologies as loci for the preproduction of linguistic inequalities.

Additionally, the work in section 4 illustrates the necessity of ‘third-wave’ approaches to sociolinguistic research (Eckert, 2012, 2018), as second-generation participants in particular discuss the ways in which they manipulate linguistic resources, shifting not just between Spanish and English but also between rates of realization of Spanish influences in English performance in order to perform chosen identities. This illustrates that Latinxs in the city are skilled linguistic performers, and are socially aware of the role linguistic resources play in identity construction. Mercedes, for example, makes this claim explicitly, stating “I do Spanglish…I will speak standard English if I have to…I can go into a neighborhood and speak their dialect” (031, 306-311). Latinxs in
New Orleans demonstrate a keen awareness of the role of linguistic performance in identity construction and note that they invoke this knowledge in shifting between sociolinguistic contexts. A robust account of NOLAE requires attention to this intentional application of a variety of linguistic resources to identity construction.

The various sections of this work are not, however, disconnected. Rather, each section links to the other in crucial ways. Sections 2 and 3, in concert, work to establish NOLAE as a linguistically salient ethnolinguistic repertoire. NOLAE exhibits many of the linguistic characteristics we expect to find in linguistic codes. The variety is evolving, as statistically significant variation in vowel spaces can be articulated between the pre-Katrina and the post-Katrina sample. NOLAE also exhibits synchronic intra-code variation, as speakers realization of /æ/ and prosodic rhythm varies in ways that I showed are predictable along metrics of sociolinguistic characteristics, including generation, age, education, and social network embeddedness. Section 4 builds on this analysis, illustrating that not only is NOLAE linguistically salient, it is socially salient and targeted for marking based on its articulation in terms of LTN discourses. Thus, sections 2, 3, and 4 function holistically to establish the viability and salience of NOLAE as an ethnolinguistic repertoire in the city of New Orleans.

Another important link between the sections concerns the potential impact of ‘barrioization.’ The analysis of linguistic variation in section 3 illustrates that NOLAE speakers exhibit unique patterns of variation in respect to both markers of local linguistic identity and markers of Spanish as a heritage language. These patterns, crucially, are constrained by the overall network geometry of the local Latinx social network. Participants who are more deeply embedded in the local Latinx network and participants
who are closer to the metaphorical core of the network are more likely to resist assimilating to local linguistic norms.

As the network model relies on shared neighborhood affiliation, these observations come into conversation with the analysis in section 4, which notes that increased social salience of the local Latinx community is connected with increased ‘barrioization,’ as the Latinx community appears to be in the process of consolidating in specific neighborhoods. This will alter the network geometry, creating denser, more highly cohesive sub-blocks within the network. The result of this process will be higher average depth scores across the sample. If the correlations of network depth and centrality with more distinct linguistic performance hold, we would expect the local Latinx linguistic patterns to become more distinct over time, eventually focusing as a distinct dialect of American English, influenced by Spanish and by locally salient linguistic varieties.

This prediction interacts with the discussion in chapter 7 of the role of the ascent of Trumpism as a dominant political ideology in the United States. If this trend continues, it would predict an increase in the salience of LTN discourses in New Orleans. This seems likely to lead to greater ‘barrioization,’ as local Latinxs increasingly avoid marked spaces. As my model of social networks depends on the orientation of the community to physical spaces, my results then predict that future generations of Latinxs would evidence a more distinct variety of English, featuring greater retention of Spanish influences.

The analysis in section 2 partially challenges this prediction, however. To this point, at least, there is not clear evidence of a shift in NOLAE towards greater retention of Spanish influences. Instead, there is evidence of a greater range of realization of
linguistic resources in the post-Katrina sample. This interacts with the above claim in several ways. First, it is important to note that the ‘barrioization’ process is in nascent stages. It is unclear to what extent ‘barrioization’ will occur in the region. Second, as the Latinx population has become increasingly salient locally, and LTN discourses have propagated, social diversity in the Latinx community becomes increasingly meaningful from a linguistic perspective. That is, the extent to which an individual interacts with Latinxs and non-Latinxs, and the extent to which an individual encounters LTN discourses regularly, appears to crucially impact linguistic performance. Future research should pay close attention to the ongoing evolution of NOLAE as a variety of English in the area, particularly in light of the development or lack of development of local ‘barrios’ as influenced in part by the impact of Trumpism.

9.2.2 Major conclusions

This project allows for several important conclusions to be drawn. First, NOLAE is a distinct ethnolinguistic repertoire, forming an important part of the linguistic landscape of the city. Second, this code incorporates linguistic resources from a group of Spanish markers as well as a group of localized identity markers. Third, as is the case with all well-documented linguistic codes, NOLAE exhibits diachronic change, exhibits considerable synchronic intra-code variation, and exhibits style-shifting processes. Section 2 demonstrates that statistically significant shifts in vowel realizations have taken place for at least four vowels. Furthermore, section 3 illustrates that speakers in the current sample vary in the rates to which they incorporate different linguistic resources. Section 4 illustrates that speakers of NOLAE are profoundly aware of the social repercussions of linguistic elements, and for some speakers at least, are able to shift
performance of linguistic variables to perform a chosen identity. Fourth, Latinxs in the city recognize the salience of LTN discourses, and perceive these discourses as external pressure towards abandoning Spanish as well as Spanish influenced English. This implies that NOLAE is a socially salient, marked linguistic repertoire in the city.

The primary conclusion of this project is that NOLAE is an ethnolinguistic repertoire that incorporates influences of Spanish as a heritage language and of the local patterns of English use, and that this ethnolinguistic repertoire is used by Latinxs in New Orleans in order to perform a linguistic identity. Variation in patterns of linguistic performance, both in terms of divergent patterns of vowel realization and in terms of differential rates of the retention of syllable-timing influences and the acquisition of a tensed variant of pre-nasal /æ/, can be best understood in relation to differential experiences of pressures to assimilate linguistically. These pressures towards linguistic assimilation result directly from the discursive positioning of Latinxs as threat in the city of New Orleans. That is, participants whose social network positioning leads to greater interaction with local Anglo culture and less daily interaction with the local Latinx networks are more likely to acquire localized Anglo speech patterns precisely because they are most likely to experience daily exposure to the results of the Spanish as threat ideology.

As a whole, my work argues for NOLAE as a well-articulated, socially salient ethnolinguistic repertoire in the city of New Orleans, which is negatively marked, resulting in the social marginalization of its’ speakers. I advocate for the demarginalization of NOLAE and its speakers along at least three vectors. First, academic attention to English use in the area must account for this variety. Second,
linguists should lend support to projects intended to increase awareness and understanding of NOLAE among non-Latinxs both in city leadership and the general populace. Third, and most critical, linguists should be at the forefront of efforts to illuminate the impact of underlying threat myths on the sociocultural context currently existing in the city, for it is only through the exposure and problematization of these ideologies that true change can occur.

9.3 Implications

9.3.2 Implications for the study of Latinx Englishes

Latinx Englishes in the United States is one of the most extensively researched ethnolinguistic varieties of North American English. My work contributes to this research tradition by introducing a distinct community to the conversation. This work represents the first attempt to provide an account of Latinx English in post-Katrina New Orleans. Future work on Latinx Englishes must account for this variety of language. In addition, my work is in conversation with the existing research tradition, which has primarily focused on linguistic codes spoken by particular national groups in specific locales, such as Chicanxs in California (Fought, 1997, 2003; Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004) and Texas (Thomas, 2001), or Puerto Ricans in New York City (Wolfram, 1973; Poplack, 1978; Zentella, 1997). My work advocates for the validity of a more generalized approach, similar to work on New York Latino English (Newman, 2003, 2010; Newman & Slomanson, 2003; Slomanson & Newman, 2004). This burgeoning research tradition indicates that in certain contexts, a Latinx ethnolinguistic repertoire functions as a resource for shaping a pan-national latinidad (Negron, 2014).
Finally, an additional implication for the study of Latinx language use in the United States is the applicability of the ethnolinguistic repertoire (Benor, 2008, 2010) framework to Latinx communities. Again similar to what has been observed in New York City (Negron, 2014), Latinxs in New Orleans apply socially marked features in the process of negotiating identity. Second generation participants in particular are skilled in the process of linguistically self-editing in order to navigate a sociolinguistic context fraught with biases and prejudices. This variable performance within a given individual is evidence for the viability of my claim that NOLAE is an ethnolinguistic repertoire and argues for increased use of Benor’s framework as mechanism for both positioning Latinx Englishes as unique codes while still accounting for the ways in which individuals style-shift in the process of negotiation linguistic identities.

9.3.3 Implications for the study of language in New Orleans

As discussed in chapter 2, the city of New Orleans has been understudied in sociolinguistic literature. However, an increasing amount of attention has been granted the city in recent years. Much of this research has focused on the Y’at variety, while other researchers have explored lingering effects of the city’s French heritage on the linguistic context. My research shows that Latinxs in New Orleans are a distinct ethnolinguistic minority in the city whose linguistic practices incorporate influences from local speech varieties as well as retain contact induced influences of Spanish. This implies that research into language use in New Orleans cannot afford to ignore Latinxs. This variety of English is a critical component of the linguistic context.
9.3.4 Implications for sociolinguistics

Eckert (Eckert, 2012, 2018) argues that variationist research can be classified in terms of three waves. The first wave took large scale demographic categories as predictors and illustrated that these predictors correlated with linguistic variation in predictable ways. The second wave moved beyond predetermined large-scale categories, applying ethnographic principles to explore how meaningful social categories were locally constructed. The third wave makes explicit the ways in which speakers function “as stylistic agents, tailoring linguistic styles in…projects of self-construction” (Eckert, 2012, 97-98).

The work presented in this dissertation can be conceptualized as existing in conversation with the tradition of research described in the previous paragraph. In chapter five I analyze the two linguistic variables in terms of large scale demographic categories as was common in much of the first wave work. I demonstrate that while some of these categories are relevant, a full picture requires a more nuanced approach. In chapter six I explore the role of social networks in constraining variation, in an approach reminiscent of the second wave focus on locally meaningful configurations, albeit using more sophisticated modern statistical strategies. A more complete, more nuanced picture of language use in the community emerges. Section 4 of my project, including chapters 7 and 8, takes a third wave approach. That is, in section 4, I focus specifically on social consequences of performing a Latinx identity, both in terms of public Spanish use and in terms of use of linguistically marked indexes of *latinidad* in English speech. The qualitative analysis reveals that Latinxs in New Orleans are highly aware of the social markedness attributed to Spanish and Spanish-influenced English and often make
conscious choices to deploy markers (or a lack of markers) of Latinx English in order to affiliate or orient towards a sociolinguistic identity. Thus, my work notes the importance of incorporating insights from work across the tradition of sociolinguistics. Robust accounts of linguistic performance in a given context will likely require, as my analysis does here, incorporating a range of constructs, including age, generation, education, network geometry, and stylistic performance.

However, the work described here also highlights the importance of incorporating constructs and methods from beyond sociolinguistics. My analysis of linguistic variation in the contemporary community illustrates that more modern approaches to social network modeling, drawing on insights from graph theory and statistics. In particular, my work is evidence that sociolinguistic research can benefit from incorporating advanced social network modeling mechanisms from ongoing work in graph theory, as well as evidence for the value of conditional inference trees and random forests in addition to the regression models typically applied in sociolinguistic research.

Another key implication of my work is the importance of sociolinguistics as activism. The earliest work in American sociolinguistics was often driven by principles like Labov’s (1982) Principle of Error correction and Principle of Debt Incurred and Wolfram’s (1993, 1998, 2018) Principle of Linguistic Gratuity, which highlighted the responsibility of the linguist to serve the community. Zentella’s anthropolitical linguistics was an expansion of work in this direction, as she noted that combining the approaches advocated in American sociolinguistics with ethnographic methods from linguistic anthropology could allow the linguist to more effectively advocate on behalf of marginalized communities. More recently, work on the role of raciolinguistic ideologies...
in shaping the types of linguistic identity work available to marginalized speakers (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Baugh, 2018; Flores, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; M. C. Lewis, 2018; Rosa, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017) has effectively argued that sociolinguists must move beyond simply describing the linguistic practices of marginalized communities to querying how social structures are implicated in maintaining marginalization, linguistic and otherwise. M. Lewis (2018) offers a critique of traditional sociolinguistic activism, noting that focusing on the correction of errors fails to inspire social change. Wolfram (2018) concurs, noting that the public, both in terms of individuals and institutions, have been proven resistant to and dismissive of sociolinguistic fact.

My work is in conversation with these scholars. Adapting, and expanding on, Zentella’s advocacy of interdisciplinary approaches, I seek to not just describe the linguistic performance of Latinxs in New Orleans, but to query how localized discourses function to shape public space in the city in ways that constrain the types of linguistic identities available to Latinxs. Sections 2 and 3 demonstrate that NOLAE, as an ethnolinguistic repertoire, is evolving and, in the current sample, varies along many of the same axes as other languages and language varieties. However, recent advances in sociolinguistics require us to go further. If the goal is to demarginalize NOLAE, it is not enough to illustrate the viability of NOLAE as an expressive code. We must query and problematize the underlying mechanisms that position NOLAE and Latinxs in the city as marginalized. To this end, I explore how the articulation of public space as ‘Anglo’ space restricts Latinxs, in many cases regardless of linguistic performance, to marginalized linguistic identities. In this sense, my work is both an answer to calls for linguistics as advocacy and a call in itself. I intend this work as a call for future linguists, working in
New Orleans and elsewhere, with Latinxs and other communities, to expand the object of our analyses. We must not be content with describing language use, but must also incorporate a critical exploration of the (often localized) structures that function to shape and constrain linguistic performance. We must show how these underlying ideological constructs shape linguistic performance.

9.4. Avenues for future research

This work is intended to be an initial account of NOLAE. One of the major goals of my work is to position NOLAE in particular and the language use, including English, Spanish, and additional languages, in general of Latinxs in New Orleans as a focus of future work. Several avenues of future work present themselves based on the discussion in this dissertation. In this section I detail several potential avenues for additional work in this community.

First, further insights into the evolution of NOLAE could be gained by a more in-depth contrastive analysis of pre-Katrina and post-Katrina NOLAE. My work focused on the vowel space, but it is possible that a contrastive analysis in terms of prosodic rhythm would yield additional insights. In addition, several consonant markers of Latinx English have been proposed (see table 3.2 in chapter 3). Comparisons of linguistic performance in the pre-Katrina and post-Katrina communities in terms of these consonantly variables would likely yield important insights.

A second avenue of future work would involve a more complete account of the linguistic variables used in the negotiation of Latinx identity in the city. I have argued here for NOLAE as an ethnolinguistic repertoire, highlighting how individual speakers manipulate a range of linguistic variables in the process of self-articulating. I have
focused here on three linguistic variables: vowel space, /æ/ realization, and prosodic rhythm because previous work in New Orleans and among Latinxs in the United States has suggested that these are likely to be highly salient resources in identity construction in the local Latinx community. However, there are, without doubt, additional salient linguistic markers. A large-scale linguistic exploration of NOLAE would provide useful information about the overall structure of NOLAE, which then increases the range of our understanding of varieties of American English and of language use in Latinx communities in the United States.

A third avenue of future work could include comparisons of NOLAE realizations with both other Latinx communities in the United States as well as with other locally salient ethnolinguistic communities. While this type of comparative analysis is impossible currently due to a lack of a well-detailed account of the various linguistic varieties salient in the local community, as the large-scale documentation of New Orleans English currently being pursued by Nathalie Dajko and Katie Carmichael proceeds, detailed, large scale accounts of the relationship between NOLAE and other locally salient varieties of American English will become increasingly viable. The data I have collected could conceivably provide an initial corpus of Latinx language use to be applied to such analyses.

Future work could also focus on the role of ‘barrioization’ in the evolution of the local Latinx community. As referenced earlier in this chapter, as well as elsewhere throughout my work, census data has been argued to indicate a nascent process of ‘barrioization’ in the New Orleans Latinx community (Gomez-Herrin, 2018). My work predicts that increased ‘barrioization’ will have linguistic impacts, as the social network
construct I apply here relies critically on the distribution of the local Latinx community in the physical space of the city. Future work should consider this process in the city as it progresses across the next several decades.

A fifth area of future focus includes the role of social network forces in shaping linguistic performance in this community. The network model I have developed is easily expanded to include additional participants, and the greater the corpus of speakers incorporated, the more viable the model of the local Latinx network that is constructed becomes. This model, and the various metrics that can be calculated based on the network model, can be applied to additional linguistic variables among the Latinx community, both in English and in additional languages. Furthermore, ideally this construct would be applied to ethnolinguistic groups beyond Latinxs. This would allow for two potentially important approaches to the sociolinguistic investigation of language use in New Orleans. First, modeling individual networks for various locally salient ethnolinguistic demographics in the city would allow for the type of whole network analysis suggested in recent work (Dodsworth & Benton, 2017; Sharma, 2017). That is, the impact of the overall geometry of each distinct network can be investigated. Second, a full model of the New Orleans social network in terms of the network construct I have developed here would likely be a powerful tool in accounting for linguistic performance in the city.

9.5 Conclusions

In chapter 1 I outlined three general research questions that shape the work presented in this dissertation. I am now prepared to return to these three general questions and briefly discuss the answers to these questions as suggested by the data and analysis included here. The three questions were as follows: First, how does English use among
Latinxs in contemporary New Orleans compare to English use among the same population pre-Katrina? Second, can social networks account for patterns of synchronic variation in contemporary NOLAE? Third, are LTN discourses a salient component of the New Orleans sociolinguistic context, and, if so, what role do these play in shaping linguistic performance in the city?

In terms of the first question, the discussion throughout this dissertation illustrates conclusively that the sociolinguistic context in which Latinxs in New Orleans operate on a daily basis has shifted significantly. The post-Katrina population is larger, less linguistically integrated in terms of English fluency, more diverse in terms of national origins, and more socially salient. This has important consequences linguistically. The data and analyses detailed in section 2 illustrates that, for each of the four vowels that demonstrate significant divergence, the post-Katrina sample exhibits a greater range of realizations. That is, when plotted visually, the area of space occupied by the contemporary sample exceeds that of the pre-Katrina sample. This illustrates that the contemporary sample exhibits, at least in terms of these four vowels, a greater degree of synchronic variation. I posit that this reflects the increased diversity of the local community. Some Latinxs are highly linguistically integrated, others less so. Some members of the current sample are long-standing New Orleanians, others much more recent arrivals. Some members of the local Latinx community are engaged in the process of ‘barrioization,’ operationalized here in terms of social network metrics, others interact primarily with local Anglo community members. This subverts efforts to determine, for example, which sample exhibits greater retention of Spanish influences or greater adaptation of local linguistic markers. Instead, the most salient linguistic difference
between the two samples, at least according to my data, is that contemporary NOLAE, as an ethnolinguistic repertoire, is highly variable, and speakers skillfully draw on these linguistic resources to foreground or background their latinidad.

The second question was primarily considered in section 3, although the implications of the analysis in section 3 can be felt throughout the dissertation. According to the analysis presented here, metrics designed to account for the positioning of local Latinxs within the overall geometry of the local Latinx network, interact with additional demographic categories in order to motivate the observed patterns of /æ/ tensing as well as the observed variation in prosodic rhythm. This suggests that my concept of social network modeling is a useful tool in the sociolinguistic toolbox in providing robust, nuanced accounts of linguistic performance in New Orleans.

In regards to the third question, it becomes clear through the qualitative analysis of the data in my corpus that LTN discourses are a highly salient component of the local sociolinguistic context. Local Latinxs overwhelmingly report being aware of all of the five major themes of Latinx threat identified by Chavez (2008). These discourses are revealed to play an important role in shaping local language use. My participants widely affirm a sense that Spanish and Spanish-influenced English are highly marked and perceived as threat in public spaces in New Orleans. This leads to ‘talking white,’ or an increased rejection of Spanish among some participants and intentionally manipulating the rates of linguistic markers of Spanish influence in their speech in certain contexts, both in order to avoid the negative marking associated with Spanish. Further, as the data indicates that local Latinxs are racialized based on phenotypical information as well as linguistic performance, in many cases even full linguistic assimilation fails to access
unmarked positive linguistic identities. These identities are reserved for Anglo performance.

My work accomplishes several important goals. First I illustrate that a social network model graphed along neighborhood affiliation lines interacts with traditional sociolinguistics variables to account for certain patterns of synchronic variation in NOLAE. This implies that this network approach can be adapted and applied more broadly not just in New Orleans, but in additional sociolinguistic contexts throughout the world. Second, I illustrate that underlying ideologies of Latinx threat are present and active in the New Orleans sociolinguistic context and that these function to constrain language use in the community. This implies that future efforts towards demarginalizing this community need to carefully interrogate the ideologies of the wider New Orleans community. Furthermore, this suggests that these discourses and ideologies are likely implicated in shaping linguistic performance in other Latinx communities throughout the United States. Holistically, this dissertation functions to position NOLAE as a linguistically and socially salient ethnolinguistic repertoire spoken by Latinxs in New Orleans. This suggests that any fully elaborated account of language use in New Orleans must account for this variety of language use. This contributes to the demarginalization of the local Latinx community as it illustrates that the linguistic impact of Latinxs on the linguistic reality of New Orleans can no longer be ignored.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Interview Guidelines

Part One:

What is your age?
What is your year of birth?
What is your gender?
What is your national background?
What is your highest level of education completed?
What is your occupation?

Do you work with other Latinxs or Spanish-speakers?

How long have you lived in New Orleans?
Where, if anywhere, did you live prior to New Orleans?
What neighborhoods in New Orleans have you lived in and for how long?
Why did you move to New Orleans?

Part Two:

What do you do in your free time? Tell me about the things you like to do on the weekend.

Tell me a little bit about the people you spend time with. Do you hang out with people from work? Do you hang out with other Latinxs?

What percentage of your friends are Latinx?

Do you speak Spanish regularly? Who, if anyone, do you speak Spanish with?

Do you speak to family/friends in other countries often?

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7 These are guidelines. Additional follow-up questions may be asked.
What percentage of your time is spent speaking Spanish?

How do you think Latinxs are viewed by native non-Latinx New Orleanians?

Why do you feel this way?

Do people in New Orleans feel threatened by Latinxs?

Have you ever experienced mistreatment because of your nationality or because of your use of language?

Can you give me an example?

Tell me about when you first came to New Orleans? What was your first experience here like?

What is the happiest or most enjoyable experience you have had in New Orleans?

What is the most upsetting or frightening experience you have had in New Orleans?

What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?

What is one thing about New Orleans you would like to change?

Part Three:

Do you consider yourself New Orleanian?

Is there a specific New Orleans way to speak? What does it mean to speak like a New Orleanian?

What does it mean to speak like a Latinx?
APPENDIX B.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

001: RN
1. TDL: How do you think the Latino community is viewed by people in New Orleans?
2. 001: Honestly, and this is something that I was talking about with a couple of friends not too long ago.
3. Ahh, I think that, ahh, outside the New Orleans area, umm,
4. there is some negative connotation attached to it.
5. And the reason me, for me saying this is, you know, I’m a sales representative.
6. I’m all over the state.
7. I go up all the way to Lutcher, Paulina, that’s part of my territory.
8. So over there, northern part of, of the city,
9. um I have seen some instances in which you could see some racial discrimination and what not.
10. Umm, but, but that’s outside the New Orleans area.
11. I would say that in the city, in the Orleans Parish itself,
12. I don’t see a negative connotation attached to, to Latinos.
13. I think everyone’s very welcoming, in the city.
14. Um, but that’s just my personal opinion. <laughter>
15. TDL: What about, what about language wise?
16. 001: Um, yes. I, I do believe people have a negative impression on it.
17. And I don’t judge them, honestly,
18. cause, if you don’t understand what they’re telling you,
19. you can, you can start assuming a bunch of stuff,
20. so, umm, I’m, umm, you shou-that’s the reason why
21. I spend more time speaking English than Spanish
22. cause I wanna make sure that everyone understands what I’m saying
23. and we’re all on the same page.
24. But yeah, I do believe there is some negative connotation attached to it.
25. TDL: What about English with, like an accent, like accented English.
26. 001: I feel the same way.
27. I mean, there might be some negative connotation attached to it.
28. Umm, you know, last, last couple of years, or maybe up to a year
29. we’ve seen an increase in that hatred towards Hispanic people.
30. And, and, so yeah, I would say that people are somewhat negative towards that.
31. TDL: Have you had any personal experiences that you can think of?
32. 001: Yeah, yeah, I mean, it happens all the time.
33. People giving you comments, making funny jokes about you, uh, um, about what was it?
34. I would say about six months ago <clears throat>
35. I went up to uh, Jesus, Garyville, Louisiana, um,
36. you know, further north about an hour driving from here, fifty minutes, um,
38. and I went into a customer.
39. The lady was white Caucasian, a female, and um,
40. I was with my counterpart and he is, he’s, he’s Mexican
41. and we in this, into the store to a kinda introduce to the my partner and what not
42. and the lady, the first thing that came out of her mouth was
43. “so when is Cintas, referring to the company, umm, going to send me out a white
   employee?”
44. TDL: Ohh god…
45. Yeah, uh huh…
46. TDL: Wow.
47. So, uh, and honestly I’m not very concerned about that.
48. I’m pretty, I’m a pretty strong person, and I, I’m very strong in my beliefs,
49. but, uh, it was kinda rough.
50. TDL: Um, you see kinda similar things actually in New Orleans, or even Jefferson
   Parish?
51. 001: I wouldn’t be able to point out a specific situation in which it, its happened,
52. but, but like, you know, its just, it's a topic of conversation now-a-days, um,
53. for, for whatever reason.
54. So I, I do believe there is cause, I mean, I’ve, I’ve seen it,
55. people make jokes about my accent, and me not pronouncing the words correctly and,
56. and stuff like that. So yeah
57. TDL: Can you tell me a little bit about when you first, uh, moved to New Orleans?
58. 001: Oh, yeah, I mean, it was, it was very welcoming, mostly cause I was, I was a
   student,
59. so I was very involved in the student campus, you know,
60. and, it’s a whole different situation when you’re at the university
61. and you got counselors
62. and you got uh, orientation partners
63. and what not that are welcoming you to the student center,
64. and I mean, it was, it was very welcoming,
65. I was very happy and honestly, I love this city,
66. that’s the reason why I’ve been living here almost six years.
67. So, uh, um, in my personal opinion it resembles a lot San Juan, Puerto Rico.
68. Like it’s very, very similar.
69. Everything from the architecture to the people, it, it’s very neat.
70. So, <laughter> going, going back your question, um,
71. I, I can’t really remember a whole lot about it but what I do remember,
72. people were very welcoming, um,
73. and I didn’t have many situ- negative situations to be honest with you.
74. It was kinda like a utopia at the time you know? So yeah.
75. TDL: This was at Loyola?
76. Yes sir.
77. TDL: Um, did you live on campus?
78. 001: I did for two years.
79. Uh, I lived in, in the student dorms, and then I moved out.
80. Lived right around Calhoun Street, down Calhoun Street for a good two years
81. and then ended up moving to South Johnson street, for a year.
82. TDL: What’s the most enjoyable thing that you’ve experienced in New Orleans?
83. 001: Woof…That’s a good one.
84. TDL: You can take a second to think about it.
85. 001: Most memorable moment in New Orleans.
86. Um, oh man, uh, I wouldn’t be able to pinpoint one.
87. I mean, its been so many of them.
88. This, this city’s fantastic.
89. It’s beautiful.
90. The people here are beautiful,
91. but um, I- I-, like I said I wouldn’t be able to pinpoint one,
92. but just, just meeting life-long lasting friends.
93. Meeting my, my ex-girlfriend.
94. We had a wonderful relationship for three years and I met her over here
95. so it, its, it’s a great place, yeah.
96. TDL: What’s the most frustrating or upsetting or frightening experience you’ve had here?
97. 001: One of them was that, that uh, uh,
98. the story I told you about not too long ago with the lady up, up north
99. and um, there was one time I got robbed at gunpoint about, yeah that was my freshman year.
100. In the French Quarter.
101. That wasn’t really fun at all.
102. Yeah, so that was, that was another negative experience.
103. TDL: Um, can you tell me about that, like what happened that night?
104. 001: Umm, yeah, it was, it was around one thirty a.m.
105. I was leaving the French Quarter.
106. We were, we were drinking, were having a good time down there
107. and um, I was with a friend of mine and we were waiting on a, on a cab,
108. or trying to walk towards Canal street to get a cab
109. and this was, I would say Royal street, Carondolet, around that area,
110. I really can’t remember which street it was,
111. but um, two, two males approached us and basically robbed us, at gunpoint, um,
112. they ended up stealing my watch, my wallet,
113. and my friend’s, I didn’t have a cell phone at the time,
114. and my friend’s cell phone and wallet.
115. So, yeah. At, at, at least we ended up safe and sound.
116. That’s all I’m concerned about. <chuckle>
117. TDL: Did they ever catch them or did you ever get any stuff back?
118. 001: No. Gone.
119. We um, no we, we walked, there’s a police department on Royal street.
120. It was a couple of blocks down so we walked there
121. and, you know, we filed a complaint and what-not, but you know, it’s uh, its lost.
122. There was no way they were gonna grab em.
123. TDL: What would you say’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
124. 001: The people. Hands down.
125. Just use, I mean its very,
I’ve had, I’ve had the opportunity to travel to a bunch of places in my young, in my young life. So honestly, the people over here I think are very culture, culturally aware of, of other stuff and very smart people and very welcoming people and happy people its, its just…

TDL: When you say they are culturally aware what do you, what do you mean by that?

001: Um, I think people are very, in, in the city itself, like I said earlier today, people are very aware of cultural differences, very understanding about culture-cultural differences and, very willing to learn more about other people and welcome people to, to the, to the city and, and I think that’s a, that’s a fantastic thing.

TDL: Would you say Jefferson Parish is the same way?

001: Very similar, yes, yes sir. I mean, but, but uh, but obviously you can see a difference in it. Um, uh, I would say over there it’s a little bit more traditional than over here it’s a little bit. I, I honestly like Orleans Parish more in that sense than Jefferson Parish but yeah, I don’t see it being too bad, over there. Yeah.

TDL: What’s one thing you would like to change?

001: <laughter> Potholes. Too many potholes. But uh, nuh, I’m just messing with you, in terms of uh, oh man, like, crim-crim-criminality honestly, um, I think that’s, that’s crucial. That’s the biggest thing that we gotta. And even the whole state needs to work on it, but, but uh, but New Orleans, uh, needs to uh, re-focus their uh, their strategy on crime. The war against crime cause it’s, it’s getting out of control.

TDL: Not that you’re a police officer or an expert,

but do you have any ideas like, what kinda things they should be…

001: Uh man, I don’t, I don’t know,

I think it, I think it all starts with the war on drugs, <clears throat> uh, in my personal opinion. <clears throat>

Um, you know, most of the, most of the crimes are, or a high percentage of them are related to the drug world, um, whether we like it or not that’s just the way it is. Um, so I think we gotta start working on decriminalizing uh, drug users, um and working to rehab them and that’s gonna start, um, I think just changing the perspective on people and making people more aware, that it, you know, its, it can be treated and after that uh, it, it all falls in the cycle where criminality just drops significantly. A lot of cities have seen it you know and, and I think it uh, it’s worth it.

002: Anna

1. TDL: How do you think that Latinos and the Latino community are viewed?
2. 002: I think there’s a very negative connotation, uhh, towards Latinos here.
3. Just, from what I can see.
4. It’s just, one, everybody always thinks that they’re talking about them.
5. That’s usually, if anybody ever hears somebody speak Spanish,
6. they’ll turn to me automatically and say,
7. ‘Ohh! Are they talking about us?’
8. ‘No, they’re just talking about, the burger they’re eating, you know, <laughter>
9. Has nothing to do with you.
10. Umm, and also, most people think that they’re illegal, or undocumented, the co- you know.
11. But everybody’s always like ‘Oh they’re, you know, everybody’s illegal.’
12. No they’re not, but that’s most, ah, I mean, I deal with it just listening to people I meet
13. but also my students.
14. That’s a perception that I have to change on a regular basis and say,
15. ‘no, a lot of the people that are Latino does,
16. just because they’re Latino doesn’t mean they’re undocumented.’ So.
17. TDL: Have you ever had any personal experiences with people directing those attitudes?
18. 002: Yes. I’ve been called a Mexican before, although they think it’s a derogatory term.
19. It never bothers me.
20. like, uh, you, but, it, one its never bothered me and all I say is,
21. ‘well, you sound kinda ignorant, <laughter>
22. but let me tell you about Puerto Rico.’ <laughter>
23. Uhhm, but, yeah, I’ve, I’ve, exp…but not that much.
24. I, I guess, I’ve, I’ve said that like, I’ve discussed this with my brother before,
25. and, I feel, in my case, because, I’ve, mostly dealt with, I guess educated peop-,
26. like I’ve mostly been in education like, at school or teaching.
27. It’s never been a…as bad as it is for other people.
28. Like, just people see me as educated and I don’t have an accent as,
29. I mean I have an accent but not as strong as other Spanish speakers so,
30. it’s, it’s never affected me as much as I’ve heard other people being affected by it.
31. TDL: Can you think of any specific examples of situations?
32. 002: The first week that I started teaching in high school,
33. uhh, lets, about four years ago I had just graduated from my Masters
34. and <laughter> I, it was the first day.
35. I was subbing for somebody, so I, I subbed for a maternity leave
36. and that first, I had shadowed her for a week and then she went on, uhh, to have her child
37. and so that first day I started talking about myself
38. and I had one of the students, uh, just whisper something
39. and, the girls around her were just, were like ‘huh! Oh my gosh!’
40. and I just said ‘just tell me, you know, what just happened.’
41. And they said, ‘ohh, no, no, no.’
42. And I said, ‘I promise I will not be mad, just, let me know what happened.’
43. And the, she, the student said,
44. ‘Okay, I’ll tell you. I was wondering if you were, uhh undocumented.’
45. And so, I had to go, cause I had just sa-, I had just said I was from Puerto Rico.
46. And so I had to explain, first, think about the fact that I was hired by your school,
47. which means that they won’t hire an un- <laughter> -documented person
and two, I’m from Puerto Rico and Puerto Rico’s part of the United States.
And so, up to this day, I’m ac- <laughter> -ually, she graduated last year,
and she’s always said ‘I’m so sorry,’
but it’s perceptions that they get from their parents, you know they,
so I’ve seen it reflect on kids that grow up in the env-you know, they hear their parents
say it.
Umm, and just, I’ve gotten it, like at LSU, a few people would be like
‘ohh,’ ya know, ‘ohh you speak Spanish so you’re Mexican,’
and I’m like ‘no, not–’ but most of them are usually drunk,
and <laughter> I just keep walking and ignore it, so-
TDL: Can you tell me a little bit about when you first moved to New Orleans?
002: Uhm, in the past five months or, ten years ago?
TDL: In the past five months.
002: Okay, uhm...Decision making. Honestly, cam-wanted to come to New Orleans,
one, because, I mean, I come from a very conservative island,
but, I also came to the south which is very conservative as well,
and, I am, much more open-minded than a lot of people that I have been acquainted to
and Baton Rouge is very conservative
and one of the reasonings that I wanted to come to New Orleans was
because it is so open-minded and so,
I, and I mean, I still see it but it’s jus,
I don’t know, everybody, it’s a little more open-minded than Baton Rouge
even though its more south,
but it’s New Orleans <laughter> so, yeah, it’s a, it’s a different culture altogether.
But um, yeah, that was one of- it really was one of my reasonings for it.
I just, wanted to be in a place,
if I’m gonna stay in Louisiana for a little bit longer, um,
I wanted to be in a place that was as open-minded as I am, in some ways.
TDL: When you moved here did you move in immediately with your brother or...
002: No. so I live in my own, I have my own apartment.
Um I was gonna live with my brother
and then found this just kinda small apartment slash studio <laughter>
I don’t know how to explain it and just fell in love with it.
And was like okay, I’m gonna.
And it was a friend that owns so it was just a great price so I just decided to go over there.
TDL: Okay. And then, as far as finding a job, was it difficult to find a job or...
002: Um, I ap, honestly, I applied to, I just sent my resume to a few schools,
whether they had an opening or not
and I turned down one in Covington because I just did not wanna do the uh, bridge.
And then [retracted] called me and said we have a part-time opening
and I said, ‘that’s perfect.’
I don’t need that much.
I just want a job and I’m okay with not being full time right now.
TDL: What’s the happiest experience you’ve had since you’ve lived in New Orleans?
002: Hm. I went out with my friends.
I have, my best friend actually just moved down here from Rhode Island.
93. And he had one of his friends come in this past week.
94. And, I don’t know, I, I love dancing.
95. And so, uh, there’s not a lot of places to go dancing I guess.
96. And so we went to one of the gay bars.
97. They’re both gay, so they prefer going to gay bars.
98. Um, and we went, it was just, we just had a blast just,
99. we went to the dance floor and just danced for, I don’t know, an hour?
100. And it was just fun.
101. It was just very, I don’t know, if no body judges anybody, everybody’s just
having fun.
102. So it was, I, and I remember thinking, I was like, ‘oh I’m like actually,’
103. not that I’m sad but it was just like I really was happy at that moment.
104. And I even thought about it, so…
105. TDL: Can you tell me about the most frightening or upsetting experience
you’ve had in the city?
106. 002: Em in the last five months?
107. Okay. Uhm. Let’s see. Frightening or upsetting.
108. Um, I don’t know that I’ve had any frightening experiences in the, since I’ve
moved here.
109. I’ve had experiences in New Orleans in the past ten years
110. but not in the past five... <laughter>
111. TDL: So, any in the past ten years?
112. 002: Um, uh, let’s see.
113. Just walking down the quarter at night
114. and just, running into people that you’re not really trusting, I guess.
115. Uh, as a single female it’s just kinda scary.
116. Which is, and that one of the uh eh, I’ve started taking self-defense classes
117. because I knew that when I moved here just because previous experiences just
walking,
118. like not that anything has ever like, really happened.
119. But just, having the feeling of walking down and somebody following you and
not,
120. even though they didn’t do anything
121. but just, the fact that they were following you has made me kind of leary of…
122. but I mean, that can happen in any city.
123. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
124. 002: Uh, the history.
125. Uh just, I mean yes, its French, but I just love that it was also Spanish.
126. Like, I just love the history.
127. And mo-if you go to most cities in, or a lot of cities in the U. S.,
128. everything has been torn down
129. but there’s something about the Quarter, and like some areas in New Orleans too,
130. just that still have its, like it still keeps its history
131. and I just love it.
132. TDL: What would you like to change about the city?
133. 002: Um, I mean I know that it is open-minded, but I would like to see, some of,
I, I would like to see it changed towards the minority groups.
I just, I think there’s a lot of injustice.
I mean it’s all going all over, but just, there’s a lot of racism here,
even though New Orleans is, has a lot of minority groups,
but I feel, I’ve also seen um, a lot of people that are racist without even knowing it.
Like it’s not even that they’re openly ant-ant-trying to antagonize anybody
but they’re just, it’s ingrained in them to be racist
and I just, that’s something that I’d like to change, or see changed.

003: Nena
1. TDL: How are Latinxs perceived in New Orleans?
2. 003: Hmm. There’s, I think it’s a little polarized,
3. and, ya know, I mostly have the opportunity to interact with this level of academics,
4. more educated people, but you can see that,
5. there’s a default that, ee, Latinos are workers.
6. Latinos or Latinas are the, you know, cleaning ladies
7. and they work in the restaurants so it’s service, is the,
8. I think that that’s how people perceive the Latino community, ya know, workers,
9. service, but then for other academics it’s flavor,
10. no its, ah, yeah, it’s, it’s a mix.
11. But I think that, I, I will say in the general sense there’s no,
12. I don’t, I don’t think there’s hate towards Latin.
13. Ya know, it’s, it’s welcoming, but it’s still not equality.
14. I don’t know how to, how to put it.
15. TDL: Do you think there’s discrimination based on being Latino in New Orleans?
16. 003: Ohh, I wouldn’t say discrimination in the bad sense of discrimination.
17. But there is certainly a difference, ya know, in treatment and…
18. ya know, there’s extra friendly when they think you’re, you’re Latin.
19. Or when they assume.
20. Yeah, extra friendly.
21. Ya know, no, Latins are extra friendly.
22. TDL: So have you ever experienced any kind of mistreatment or discrimination?
24. Or you know, not in the city, ya know.
25. You always get funny treatment in airports.
26. But, ay, not even in New Orleans airport.
27. TDL: Just in other airports?
28. 003: Oh yeah.
29. TDL: Do you have any examples you have of experiences
that you can tell me about where you say you get strange treatment in airports?
30. 003: Oh yeah. I mean, even, even though I travel with eh, an American passport
you still get always selected in the automatic <laughter> select <laughter>
for double, double check,
and, ya know, you, you get that.
35. And when you look around you see that, it’s all immigrants. <laughter>
36. TDL: Even though Puerto Ricans aren’t immigrants, Puerto Ricans are American citizens.
37. 003: Yeah. And, and then you look to the side and you see yeah,
38. most of them are looking Middle Eastern,
39. and, in all honesty, we look Middle Eastern too,
40. I mean, because, ya know, it’s all this mix, no?
41. TDL: Have you ever had any experiences where people look at you strange for speaking Spanish?
42. 003: No. It’s the opposite, again, it’s like Latinos are friendly.
43. They are friendly to Latinos.
44. It’s like you’re speaking Spanish, they will throw any kind of Spanish they know.
45. Ya know, it’s, it happens, even in an Uber.
46. Ya know, you’re just speaking Spanish with your friend and they will throw some Spanish.
47. I think it’s, it’s pretty well identified.
48. I mean, they can, they can tell you’re speaking Spanish.
49. TDL: Yeah. So, can you tell me about when you first moved to New Orleans?
50. 003: Well, so, first of all I couldn’t understand a lick of, of southern English.
51. I was absolutely lost, and it was, not only the difference in dialect, no?
52. It’s just, totally different. I couldn’t understand.
53. But their verbal, their, their gestures cues were, not helping either.
54. Ya know, everything was different, ya know,
55. like, like the whole, um, language experience, than in Vegas.
56. Or, I first time I lived, I lived in the states was in New York, Upstate New York
57. they just, it’s just, different.
58. Um, so, yeah I was pretty lost, but everybody’s so friendly,
59. and they will try,
60. and they will speak slowly to you, <laughter> like that helps. <laughter>
61. Yeah, but…
62. TDL: When you first came to the city did you have a place to live already set up
63. or did you have to find a place?
64. 003: No, no I had, I had to go find a, a place.
65. But first um, I stayed in a hotel.
66. Then, uh, I first started looking at ya know, um, what was that web page?
67. Uh Craigslist. It was the, the Craigslist, Craigslist time.
68. There was no Facebook for, for, um,
69. like now there’s a Facebook for students that, uh, off-campus residence.
70. Um, so I did a lot of Craigslist, it didn’t work out.
71. I mean, funny thing, I went with my mom, um, all these apartments marked,
72. and my mom, and I got into the bus.
73. And, since I didn’t know anything I asked the bus, the, the driver,
74. ‘okay, so I need to go to this place.’
75. And he looked at me and said like, like what, what, what business do I have going to that place.
76. And I said, ‘well, I’m going to look at an apartment.’
77. And he’s like ‘nope.’
And he took the map from me and he said, ‘no, no, no, no.’
He marked all these places where, and then he was like ‘you’re just looking in the wrong places.’
So, he directed me ‘you want to live here,’
you know, or Uptown, close to Tulane or all these areas where a girl like me should be living.
I was like ‘okay.’
‘Fine lady like you should be living in these areas.’ <laughter>
So that’s, that’s how I found the, the first place.
I mean then, and you know he told me, uh just walk around and look at the, at the signs and call.
Don’t just go from the map. That’s not safe. <laughter>
TDL: So then you found, you found a good place?
003: Yes.
TDL: Um, what’s the happiest, most enjoyable experience you’ve had living in New Orleans?
003: Ohh, there are so many.
But, um, I’ll tell you that going to Mardi Gras parades were the most bonding experiences.
You know, like that’s how you, your, you know, you know people, ya know,
you know other students by name
and you don’t think some of them there’s the party some blah blah blah,
but it’s not until Mardi Gras everybody becomes friends. <laughter>
Like, seriously. I even met my boyfriend in Mardi Gras parade.
So it, I think that those, those, those are very magical moments, I mean, it’s like.
TDL: Do you remember which parade you met him at?
003: Muses.
TDL: Muses?
003: Yes.
TDL: Was that your first year here or was it…
003: No, no, no. It was three years ago.
Yeah. I mean he come to, to the parade, and everybody was there. Yeah.
TDL: Can you tell me about maybe the most frightening or most upsetting experience you’ve had since you’ve been here in New Orleans?
003: Well I never like to walk <laughter> to walk alone at night.
That was always eh, and I remember one time my, my bike had a flat,
when I get off the, the, library at night and you know we pulled the, the all-night, all-nighters, no?
So it would have been past two a.m. and there was nobody around.
And I say, ‘oh look at this,’ it’s like, ‘ugh, do I have to walk?’
And that’s how I found that they had a safe ride.
So I was walking all frightened and I was like, ‘oh my god, this is it,
I’m gonna get raped, <laughter>
I’m gonna die.’
And there was this bus, the safe ride, it was, I don’t know how it’s called now,
and, the lady was like, ‘what are you doing walking around this hour?’
And I was like, ‘oh, I had a flat tire.’

‘Hop in, tell me where you live.’ <laughter>.

And I, I was living in Clara Street.

It was not a long walk but it was not nice, to, to walk around at night.

I think that, yeah, it’s you know it’s not safe. <laughter>

TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?

003: I don’t know. I like a lot of things about New Orleans.

Um, let’s, let’s go for music.

TDL: If there was one thing you could change about New Orleans, what would it be?

003: Hm, infrastructure, yes, streets, ya know, potholes <laughter>

It would be so much safer.

Oh yeah, there was that time the, we had a hurricane

and there was no power in Uptown,

so ya know, biking in the sunset was the most dangerous thing here <laughter>

Just you don’t know if you’re gonna survive a pothole

yeah it’s like it’s so dark so,

yeah, infrastructure is something that they should take care of.

004: Sonia

1. TDL: How do you think Latinxs are perceived in New Orleans?
2. 004: Yeah. I think uh both,
3. I think some people uh, they’re really, uh especially in New Orleans
4. since there’s a lot of culture here and everything
5. they’re really open with other cultures and all
6. but I also feel like, uh, like the Latino, uh, the Latinos have like a negative connotation,
7. and you can like sense that in a lot of people.
8. Especially with the politics and all that, and, and, like.
9. I feel like some of them are, are ashamed to,
10. that for example to ask about all the immigration and all that.
11. But um, you know, not ashamed but they’re like,
12. uh, they don’t like to like ask questions about that.
13. And um, others just, I don’t know, I, I feel like there’s kind of a negative view towards…
14. TDL: Do you have any examples?
15. 004: I’ve never been like, uh, like personally affected let’s say, uh, by anything,
16. but we’re always really loud.
17. That I can feel like whenever we’re at a place we’re really loud
18. and I can feel people are like, ‘uhh…’
19. Like, even if it’s four of us we’re luh, we’re loud <laughter>
20. and I can feel like people,
21. you can sense when people are like ‘woah, like, these people are loud.’
22. Uh, but I’ve never really been, I mean,
23. oh, and then they call us as a group, like ‘you Mexicans’ or whatever when we’re not.
24. I’ve never felt, been like insulted because I’m Latina.
25. Maybe once in Mardi Gras.
26. We were watching a parade and I don’t know, we were being loud
27. and like, this guy, he was like ‘oh these Mexicans or blah,’
but never like personally, like ‘you Mexican’ or yeah, I don’t know, or Latina.
I’ve never felt, yeah, like mhm.
TDL: Can you tell me a little bit about when you first moved here?
Yeah, uhm, let’s see…
I had never taken the bus, the New Orleans bus <laughter> the New Orleans bus.
And um, I started taking it.
I commute to work cause its really expensive the parking uh in downtown
and I wasn’t sure if I should get a car or not
but then I don’t know how long I’m gonna be here
so I didn’t know if I should invest in a car or not.
And uhm, usually people have been really nice, uh,
yeah I haven’t had many trouble.
The people from my work were super nice.
My grandma passed away like two weeks when I started working
and they let me go home without any problem and they were super nice.
And uhm, then I don’t know, all my friends helped me move my stuff, um,
I found a house in, after like three weeks.
TDL: It was easy to find a place to live?
Yeah. I found a house after like three weeks through Tulane classifieds.
Yeah and my landlord was pretty nice.
People are really relaxed I feel and they’re very lively
like everybody at work there’s always something to do in the after office and an excuse to
drink.
I like it I don’t there, I never get bored here, yeah.
TDL: What is the happiest or most enjoyable experience that you’ve had
Uhm, I really like Mardi Gras.
Like my first Mardi Gras and my, my twenty-first birthday I spent them here
and I don’t know it was so much fun.
I’ve never been to Bourbon Street and walking around French Quarter like the first time
I did all that I loved it and like,
I knew after college that I wanted to come, live here
cause there’s so much like, music and people are so full of like, joy here.
I like it. Yeah.
And I think my, my twenty-first birthday here was like, unforgettable.
And also cause two other friends came from Charlotte and Boston
and then I had a, my other two friends here.
We were like a big group so, yeah, it was a lot of fun.
Yeah. We went down to the quarter, uptown, it was like a birthday weekend so. Mhm.
Yeah.
TDL: Can you tell me about an upsetting experience?
Yeah, I haven’t really been sca, uh, had any scare…
but uh, my friends have told me many stories like uh,
my friend’s sister lived uptown and she almost got raped
so I’m like super uh, paranoid about that.
I try if it’s after five-thirty now that it’s getting dark I avoid like walking.
I Uber straight to the door of my house cause uhm,
72. I’ve heard a lot of stories that uh, about violence,
73. nothing’s happened to me but my friends also got mugged uh,
74. a guy walked into their house and he stole everybody’s phones and everything with a gun
so uh, yeah.
75. I try to stay away from…
76. And then I’ve just seen Bourbon Street like drunk people getting arrested and everything
77. but I’ve never, I’ve never been scared like myself, I think. Yeah.
78. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
79. 004: My favorite thing…
80. Just the food and the music and people, yeah.
81. Yeah. I like the lifestyle they have.
82. They’re relaxed and fun.
83. TDL: And if you could change anything about the city, what would that be?
84. 004: Maybe that it’s too dirty. <laugh> <laughter>
85. It smells bad sometimes, yeah.
86. TDL: Bourbon Street always smells.
87. 004: All downtown smells like <laughter> Yeah.
88. And maybe yeah, the transportation system. It’s unreliable. I would change that. Yeah.
005: Mia
1. TDL: How do you think people in New Orleans view the Latinx community?
2. 005: I mean, Uptown’s a little bit different cause it’s mostly college students
3. so it’s a little bit more accepting.
4. Downtown I still don’t think there’s a problem
5. but I mean, there’s always that, person who’s not very friendly
6. but I’ve never had personal problems with it.
7. I just ignore it, generally.
8. TDL: So nobody’s ever said anything to you?
9. 005: No. I just keep walking. <laughter>
10. TDL: What about going outside of New Orleans?
11. 005: Um, no not really. Not even Baton Rouge.
12. I mean, we’ve never had problems in Baton Rouge or anything, or Metairie or anything.
13. TDL: So you’ve never had any kind of mistreatment for speaking Spanish?
14. 005: I mean no, sometimes like,
15. like not badly they just ask like where you’re from and if that’s Spanish or yeah that we’re loud.
16. But that’s it. I mean, it’s nothing bad.
17. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first came to New Orleans?
18. 005: I moved in to a dorm so it was easy my first semester.
19. I didn’t have a problem.
20. And then when I was looking for a house
21. I moved in with a friend that already had a house and her roommate was leaving
22. so it just, was very easy.
23. TDL: How did you get here?
24. 005: Um, I drove back, yeah. Miami to here.
25. TDL: What’s the happiest experience you have had here?
26. 005: Um, Halloweens are always fun.
27. You get a lot of other Latinos coming, staying at our house.
28. so it’s a lot of friends from like everywhere and other schools so we all hang out.
29. TDL: What’s the most frightening or upsetting experience you have had here?
30. 005: When I got mugged.
31. Um, I was, it was a Halloween, it was my first Halloween here actually.
32. Um, and I was coming back from downtown and it was by Calhoun and Saint Charles.
33. So, um, I just saw a guy, didn’t feel comfortable.
34. I tried walking the other way around to go into Loyola
35. but he caught me and that’s as far as I remember,
36. cause I ended up in the hospital so that’s, that’s it.
37. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
38. 005: The lifestyle, I mean everybody’s just very relaxed and always partying,
39. always in a good mood generally
40. and it’s really good food.
41. TDL: Do you think New Orleans is more like Latin America?
42. 005: Definitely.
43. Especially like Guatemala, cause we have that, kinda same spirit we’re always partying,
44. we always find an excuse for it.
45. TDL: What would be something you would change about New Orleans?
46. 005: Nothing really. I love it, I love it. I love it. <laughter> I love it.
47. TDL: It could be cleaner…The roads could be a little…
48. 005: No, after Mardi Gras they do a great job cleaning.
49. Cause cleaning after Mardi Gras is not easy.
50. I mean the streets, yes. I do drive around and I hate the streets, but I think I’m just used to it.
51. It’s just, I just live with it.
52. It’s never been different, not even since my cousin was here in college so,
53. I just, you know, potholes and everything it’s part of New Orleans, yeah.

006: Pablo
1. TDL: How do you think Latinxs are perceived in New Orleans?
2. 006: It depends on the person’s background.
3. It depends on their, where they came from, and the amount of, uh, education they have, actually.
4. So when I’m speaking with my crew members, uh, it’s very negative.
5. Very, not necessarily for, for me.
6. They respect me really good and they treat me really good.
7. but when you hear em talk after Katrina the amount of Hispanics that moved here,
8. it was very ugly, it is very ugly.
9. So in that perspective I say it’s bad.
10. But, uh the majority of people they’re my close friends and stuff like that, there,
11. it’s like there’s no difference.
12. TDL: What about if people hear you speaking Spanish?
13. 006: Completely negative.
14. It doesn’t matter if, like, for example if I’m at work
15. and my sibling calls me, my little sister calls me
16. and I speak, or my mom,
17. and I speak Spanish,
18. even people that are my subor-subordinates uh, take it personally.
19. Like they, they get mad at or they even think that I’m talking to them.
20. It doesn’t have to do anything with them, especially when I use Spanish so little, but it, it.
21. And I’ve always wondered if it makes them nervous, or what it is, but yeah.
22. TDL: Has anyone ever said anything to you?
23. 006: Oh yeah, multiple times.
24. And not, not in a, some, some, some, they have to be careful the way that they speak
   about that cause they could get in trouble being that I’m their supervisor,
25. but, uh, they have, they would prefer if I wouldn’t do that,
26. and I, and I try not to cause, you know, out of respect for people,
27. but at the same time it kinda bothers me cause why, why, why do I have to speak
differently?
28. I know English.
29. It’s not like I’m not doing, I’m not cultured and I’m not part of the United States, part of
   being American.
30. I don’t know, I don’t get it.
31. TDL: Do you think it’s worse in different parts of the area?
32. 006: Uh, yes. In Texas it wasn’t an issue at all.
33. When I was in the Houston, Galveston, Dallas, all that area.
34. There wasn’t a but its because there was, there are a lot more Hispanics over there.
35. But here, in uh, what do you call it, in uh, in Louisiana since Katrina,
36. the volume has gone up so much, that there is.
37. There, there is a, a bad, and its because,
38. I don’t know if they think they took their jobs away.
39. I don’t know if it’s because it’s a different culture they weren’t accustomed to it,
40. but yeah it is. It’s bad.
41. TDL: Have you had experiences with discrimination or mistreatment here?
42. 006: It’s an interesting question, cause I think it’s been bad and it’s been good.
43. And this may sound crazy,
44. but like for example sometimes when you go to a job
   like the one that I have being bilingual sometimes helps you.
45. Or when you’re talking to a female they actually sometimes like that.
46. So in those perspectives, yeah it’s good.
47. But yeah, I think it would also affect me with my, <click> uh,
48. co-workers sometimes cause they may look at you differently. So it does.
49. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first got to New Orleans?
50. 006: Um, <click> it was, very fluent very, very, uh, get here, get my condo or apartment
   at the time.
51. Get my apartment then interview for a bunch of jobs.
52. Uh, so, yeah…
53. TDL: Did you drive over?
54. 006: Yes I did. I, I drove from Texas A & M, uh, with all my stuff with another friend.
55. And I brought it all over here uh, to Old Metairie.
56. And I lived at the time with uh, my girlfriend, and, yeah.
59. TDL: Was it hard to find a place to live?
60. 006: No, it...before I got over here I already had a place to live.
61. TDL: What is your happiest moment in New Orleans?
62. 006: Uh, there’s so many. This place is so awesome.
63. Uh, cause, uh, you can pick from so many things.
64. Culture-wise I like, uh Jazz Fest, Voodoo Fest, uh, Mardi Gras, uh, French Quarter Fest, uh, New Years.
65. Uh, but something that I actually, something that I like is, uh,
66. I have this really close friend of mine, uh, that we dated forever.
67. And going to their family activities.
68. Uh, the way that that family was, uh, doing Thanksgiving.
69. And I always, and I still go to it.
70. That was, that’s actually one that I like.
71. The, the, the, the family structure that they have in New Orleans or Louisiana is something I like.
72. TDL: What about an upsetting experience?
73. 006: <click> Uh, a lot of people would say Katrina.
74. But it, it wasn’t.
75. Uh, it was more seeing people suffer during Katrina.
76. It didn’t affect me, personally, but it affected me seeing the,
77. the amount of people suffering during Katrina.
78. TDL: What was your experience of Katrina?
79. 006: Uh, it was easy because I, I moved, uh I,
80. I left before Katrina and went to Baton Rouge to a girlfriend’s uh, brother’s house.
81. And I stayed there for a day-and-a-half and that next day I was in contact with my company
82. and I was back on the river working for the next month-and-a-half.
83. It wasn’t ‘til I got off that I went to my apartment and thankfully nothing had happened.
84. I only had to throw away my fridge and that was about it.
85. So it, it didn’t, personally it didn’t affect me but it was again,
86. see-seeing the amount of people suffering.
87. Yeah I don’t, don’t like that.
88. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
89. 006: Diversity, culture, culture, definitely the culture and the diversity that we have here.
90. TDL: What is something you wish you could change?
91. 006: Uh, <sigh> it’s kinda, uh, there’s a certain entity of people here
92. that they been raised in such uh, a manner.
93. Uh, and, uh, I think its depicted from the slavery, uh, days,
94. uh, and both sides that they,
95. to see, to see that still being a subject today is kinda crazy.
96. And to, to see people they go like,
97. “well, you know, I was a slave and it still affects me, this and that and…”
98. I find that incredible to, to still be a subject, so that one.

007: Inez

1. TDL: How do you think Latinxs are perceived in New Orleans?
2. 007: Um, I think probably more, maybe more positive view than anything.
3. I think, especially after Hurricane Katrina, a lot of Latino people came to help rebuild.
4. So maybe they associate kind of the rebuilding of New Orleans with Latino people,
5. which is important I think.
6. Uh, and so, I think they were definitely crucial in helping bring back the city.
7. TDL: Is that something you have heard people say?
8. 007: Um I’ve heard some things.
9. Yeah, like, without Hispanic we, you know people our houses wouldn’t be built again,
10. cause who else would do it for such cheap labor, I heard, so,
11. TDL: Have you heard any negative comments?
12. 007: Um, I have heard some things.
13. Just like, especially the, I guess recent political climate.
14. Just everyone, um, you know, thinking that Latinos are just here for the free ride, maybe.
15. Uh, just trying to use up everyone’s resources, um, so.
16. TDL: Have you seen that kind of attitude in New Orleans?
17. 007: In New Orleans, I’d say not so much, no.
18. Um, I think because if anything, Latinos just kinda do the jobs that people don’t wanna do.
19. Um, so, in that way I feel like people don’t really complain that much even though I see em,
20. maybe they’re still thinking it. <laughter>
21. TDL: Have you ever felt mistreated for being Latina?
22. 007: No, not really. I haven’t noticed it, yeah.
23. TDL: What about for speaking Spanish in public?
24. 007: Um, no. So my mom definitely has the thickest accent of,
25. and, she’s never been mistreated but a lot of people make assumptions,
26. like ‘oh.’ Like I remember one time we were out somewhere
27. and someone said ‘oh, I need a good recipe for…’
28. I can’t remember the exact dish, but like, something.
29. And then my mom was just like, ‘Oh, I don’t know, I don’t really cook,’
30. but it was kinda funny that they just like assumed that she was Hispanic, because of that.
   <laughter>
31. TDL: What’s your favorite thing to do here?
32. 007: I would have to say Mardi Gras.
33. Um, it’s definitely an experience like no other.
34. And it’s so much fun just, um, I’m so excited to take my friends here.
35. I say you’re gonna see the distinct smells and the taste.
36. And it’s just something unbelievable.
37. TDL: I love taking friends around the city.
38. 007: Oh, it’s so much fun. <laughter> Yeah.
39. TDL: What’s the first Mardi Gras you remember?
40. 007: Um, I remember, let’s see, first Mardi Gras I can remember.
41. I don’t remember how old I was was,
42. but I remember being on the ladders uh, when I was younger
43. and just listening to the bands and watching them go on St. Charles.
44. Um, but I don’t remember how old I was.
45. Probably, definitely before Katrina, though, so it's been a while.
46. TDL: How old were you when Katrina hit?  
47. 007: Um, so I was in first grade so, yeah, seven, yeah. <laughter>  
48. TDL: Can you tell me about a frightening experience in the city?  
49. 007: <click> Um, probably not scared but more upsetting.  
50. Um, I, this is kinda recent.  
51. I recently found out that my ex-boyfriend, um,  
52. was cheating on me multiple times, yeah,  
53. so, um, just dealing with that has been kinda rough, but uh, it’s whatever. <laughter>  
54. TDL: I’m sorry to hear that  
55. 007: Yeah, no, it’s okay <laughter>  
56. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?  
57. 007: My favorite thing would probably be that there’s always something to do.  
58. Um, whether it be a festival or um, <click> just,  
59. all the different parts of New Orleans are so unique, too.  
60. There’s always, something to do.  
61. TDL: What is something you would like to change?  
62. 007: I would probably have to be, <click> maybe like the sea levels.  
63. I know that, like the erosion’s a big deal and if we don’t do something about it, um,  
64. you know, could be really bad.  
65. So maybe either like changing the location or just bringing awareness to that  
66. and showing people that we really need to do something about it  
67. cause it could be really bad for us in like a hundred years. <laughter>  
68. TDL: Why did you choose to study what you’re studying?  
69. 007: Um, so public health I really wanted to something still related in the health field, um  
70. but still doing things for others, still like helping other people.  
71. And then, marketing, so my parents own a restaurant.  
72. And so over the summer I helped them out and like this past summer  
73. I really was interested in um, like the marketing  
74. and shit like seeing how to get people through the door  
75. and so like I did the social media and stuff  
76. and so I said “well this is super cool, I wanna learn it the correct way.””  
77. So I said, ‘why not?’  
78. I can’t, I couldn’t double major in it, um, because of some crazy things  
79. but I said, ‘well let me minor in it.’ <laughter>  

008: Alina  
1. TDL: How do you think Latinxs are perceived in New Orleans?  
2. 008: Well, okay. I think Latinos are, I think Latinos confuse people in New Orleans.  
3. Um, first of all, we’re, it’s a, it’s a, it’s not a, we’re not a big presence necessarily.  
4. I mean the conversations always in New Orleans have been black and white, never brown.  
5. So, um, even though New Orleans historically has had very been big, you know,  
6. Honduran population, post-revolution there was a Cuban community here,  
7. pretty important Cuban community.  
8. Um, but in general, like most groups in New Orleans is a pretty segregated,  
9. they’re a pretty segregated group.  
10. So I think, um, I think I’m not sure, I don’t,  
11. I think now if you asked New Orleanians about Latinos in New Orleans
12. they would point to most of the post-Katrina arrivals, right?
13. So the, the men, mostly men that are,
14. that are sitting outside of gas stations in the morning waiting to be picked up.
15. Um, and, um, mostly from Central America.
16. They might not so much talk about uh, there’s a Hispanic heritage foundation
17. that’s been around for twenty-five years.
18. They might not talk about them necessarily, um, so, yeah.
19. So I think it’s, I think it, I think we might be a little confusing to New Orleanians.
20. TDL: Do you think the way people see the community has shifted?
22. I think it, they’re finally they’re taking them into account, right?
23. In, in a, especially I think pre-Katrina, again I don’t,
24. the Honduran population that was here before was also a working class population.
25. Um, but I think, I think this, post-Katrina the groups that’s come in has been, has,
26. people have noticed it a lot more.
27. So you’ve got in Kenner that they’re trying,
28. they’re thinking about doing a,
29. they were talking about doing like a Hispanic uh, recreation center that,
30. that the mayor had said they were gonna do and he ended up not doing it,
31. but you know, seventeen percent of that population is Hispanic, like,
32. and that’s a mixture of old and new.
33. Um, so I think people are just noticing it more, perhaps.
34. TDL: Have you noticed any language based or racial discrimination towards Latinos?
35. 008: Personally I have, I’ve experienced, I’m not one to,
36. I’m very oblivious to that, those kinds of things.
37. I always feel like it’s, they’re doing, they’re doing,
38. I always give people the benefit of the doubt. <cough>
39. But I have been in, I’ve been in a situation once where I was speaking Spanish with my
niece.
40. And somebody, and we were at a concert, but there no music going on, nothing,
41. the person hadn’t started yet, um,
42. and we were just speaking in Spanish.
43. And the old man next to us, even though everybody around us was speaking,
44. and not on-lots of white people,
45. lots of drunk white people speaking
46. it was French Quarter Fest, he only went to us.
47. And tugged on my ?? He was like, ‘you need to be quiet.’
48. And we were the only ones he told we needed to be quiet.
49. Um, and I was just like ‘oh.’
50. And my niece was like, she got very upset,
51. and I was like ‘oh, you think it was because of that?’
52. And she was like ‘of course, look at everyone else around us.
53. Nobody else was speaking Spanish.’
54. Um, so that’s the only thing I’ve experienced but I think,
55. I think, um others I’m sure have experience the idea that,
56. the idea that they don’t understand, right,
57. like what’s going on just because they speak with an accent or the way they look.
58. Um, I’m, I’m, I’m whiter so I’ve never had that,
59. but I do, I do know that if I’ve given my ID, people have looked at my ID,
60. been like, ‘oh, I didn’t expect somebody that looks like you to have that name.’
61. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first arrived in the city?
62. 008: We arrived, well my husband actually moved a year before I did
63. so, um, he moved in 2007 and I was down here for a couple of months before we moved
   back,
64. so, and that’s when we lived in Mid-City.
65. Um, what was the experience like?
66. It was two years after Katrina, we lived in Mid-City,
67. the, the grocery, there was one, two grocery stores open in the entire city,
68. uh, there was no, basically no electricity yet in that part of town,
69. like still, like just, minimal lights.
70. Uh, not much, not very vibrant at all, in Mid-City, very dark.
71. Um, but, and, oh, but at the same time, I didn’t,
72. I said it wasn’t very vibrant but at the same time it was completely different from
   Colorado.
73. It, it reminded me a lot of Latin America, still, because of,
74. compared to what it’s like now, it wasn’t vibrant then.
75. But it was still people walking down the streets, it was,
76. it was people saying ‘hello’ to each other everywhere.
77. It was um, you know, roosters blocking the road as you were trying to drive by.
78. It was, um, um, it was music, it was noise, right?
79. And it was a big change from Colorado for sure.
80. Um, and, you know, just, we got to know neighbors and stuff immediately while,
81. you know just, mostly comparing it to Colorado, I think.
82. Um, and, it seemed very cozy to me.
83. And, and my husband and I have spent a lot of time in Latin America,
84. so we’re both like, ‘oh this is very familiar in a really nice way.’
85. Yes, mhm.
86. TDL: New Orleans reminds me of Latin America.
88. And the interactions and the smells and the noise and the everything.
89. TDL: Even like the architecture.
90. 008: Exactly, exactly. And the way people look, as well.
91. You know, there’s a lot of, uh, different colors.
92. Not necessarily very integrated, but there are a lot of different colors. Yes.
93. TDL: What’s your most enjoyable experience in New Orleans?
94. 008: Oh my god. Just one?
95. TDL: Or two…
96. 008: I think well, I can, I give you an example.
97. And this has happened more than once but, but, um, this evening was memorable.
98. This past Saturday, in fact, was Krewe de Viewe…continue
99. TDL: What was your most upsetting or frightening experience in the city?
100. 008: I have been, I like to walk…continue
101. TDL: What is your favorite thing about the city?
102. 008: continue
103. TDL: What would you change about New Orleans?
104. 008: I think the violence, um, violence product of this inequality, um,
   that is structural, it’s institutional.
105. Um, um, I think I would like to wake up certain sectors of the New Orleans elite.
Um, yes, to, to, to wake up and be like, that you know, you can be part of the solution or part of the problem. And a lot of them are part of the problem because they ignore, right? They’re like ‘oh, that’s them,’ and it’s like, ‘no, but it’s them because of what, what’s been happening,’ right? Or what you’re a part of. Or how this has grown.’ So yes, I think, I think I would like people to be more, aware of each other, yeah.

Jerry

1. TDL: How do you think Latinxs are perceived in New Orleans?
2. 009: Um, it really all depends.
3. Uh, sometimes you see like a lot of the Latino people um, near Lowes and stuff.
4. And then you hear people make jokes like, ‘oh look at those Mexicans trying to get work.’
5. And that’s a very negative stereotype, um,
6. but I don’t really hear besides that like off-hand people saying negative things
7. about Latinos in New Orleans.
8. TDL: Has anyone ever said anything to you?
9. 009: <click> Um, not really, no.
10. TDL: Why do you think those attitudes come from?
11. 009: I think it’s just a ignorant mindset and a lot from uh, media and what they know already, just, like these stereotypes coming into their head. And so they want to be, funny or they have this, like dumb idea so they just say what-so-ever, whatever’s on their mind.
12. TDL: Do you think things are changing for the Latino community?
13. 009: Um, I would say a lot now uh, with the newer generation, um, people speak Spanish, uh, obviously.
14. However, um, they don’t really speak it as much.
15. Um, even when I go to the Bible studies, sometimes like, uh,
16. if the, if the leader asks a question in Spanish sometimes one of the kids might answer in English.
17. Like it’s a, it’s not that they don’t know Spanish but I guess just like, primarily growing up in an English setting, they just prefer English.
18. TDL: So do you feel like Spanish is fading in the community?
19. 009: <click> Yeah, I feel like it’s becoming more of a Spanglish kind of a, environment.
20. TDL: Can you tell me about a really happy experience here in the city?
21. 009: Yeah. So um, for Lundi Gras I was with a lot of my friends and we all um, we just all stayed up all night and um, had fun, went to clubs, to parties and, had a really good time.
22. That was one of the best Mardi Gras experiences I’ve had.
23. TDL: This past year?
24. 009: This past year, yeah.
25. TDL: Can you tell me about a frightening experience in the city?
26. 009: Can’t really think of one off hand.
27. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
28. 009: Oh the food. Love the food. (TDL: What kind of restaurants do you like?)
29. 009: Uh, I love to go to Vietnamese restaurants. Get the pho, the bahn mi, those are, those are the best.
30. TDL: What’s your favorite Vietnamese restaurant?
38. 009: Um, I like this one on the Westbank called Pho Bang.
39. TDL: I don’t think I’ve been there.
40. 009: Oh you have to go. You have to go. Yeah. Pho Bang.
41. TDL: What would you like to change about New Orleans?
42. 009: <click> Um, just this overall mentality of preservation.
43. Um, a lot of what makes New Orleans great is the culture and the history, everything.
44. Um, but I think that’s the main thing that hinders us from growth, really.
45. Uh, there’s not a lot of opportunity in New Orleans, there’s not a lot of change going on.
46. And I mean, <click> yeah gentrification is bad, but also,
47. I think we need that type of progression in a beneficial way that effects the city.

010: Teresa
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 010: Depending on what part of the community are you talking about?
3. If you talking about educated people I think they might be seen as an asset
4. that will make this community more diverse and better.
5. If you’re talking about non-educated people
6. they look at them as a competition, you know, for different reasons.
7. For jobs, even for like, lovers, you know, like,
8. you know the African-American community doesn’t like Hispanic women.
9. And, because they say that the guys are attracted to Hispanic women <sniffle>
10. and that is a big competition.
11. That’s among non-educated people.
12. But among educated people, um, I think they are, um, they see it as an asset.
13. They are more open-minded.
14. Like in the Uptown area, you know, um, I see them everywhere.
15. But they also perceive as, just the labor, the labor, you know, part, you know.
16. They are the ones that clean, that haul, all this manual jobs, labor intense,
17. which is kind of true, you know.
18. But um, if you, if you look at them from the Uptown point of view
19. it’s different than if you go to Kenner
20. it’s a totally different point of view.
21. TDL: How is it different in Kenner?
22. 010: Kenner is ninety percent Hispanic, you know.
23. So there like, it’s a different world.
24. It’s like if you travel to our countries.
25. When you go there you know the restaurants, everything you know.
26. So they are, I think they feel more comfortable there.
27. I think that the ones that come Uptown are mostly to work, either to work or to study.
28. But you don’t have a lot of Hispanic people living even Uptown
29. I found it with my daughter and my daughter’s classes, schools.
30. None of her classmates, you know, eh, Hispanics live here in Uptown.
31. They mostly live in Kenner or the Westbank.
32. TDL: Have patterns of where Hispanics lived changed since you have been here?
33. 010: Um a little bit. Not too much. I think uh, just a little bit.
34. I think…it’s unfortunate but, the change is not happening as fast as we wish.
35. And um, you know, they are just, you know, it’s not.
36. Sure, it’s not um, too, it’s not happening as fast as we wish, you know.
37. Because they are going mostly um. It is very hard really to…, break that cycle.
38. You know, like in our case. Thank God I was able to go to college, you know.
39. And we have been able to keep our daughter in a good environment, that we think, you know.
40. And now she’s the first one from the family going to a university like Tulane, you know.
41. So hopefully she will be the first one who will break that pattern, and…go further, you know.
42. TDL: Have you ever seen people being mistreated?
43. 010: I see here every day. Even with me. When I come in, you know.
44. So they, they ask me like, if I’m the cook, I did a great job.
45. Or they ask me to speak to the owner, the manager.
46. I could never forget this guy came in one time.
47. And my husband was there. And he thought that he was the manager.
48. And then he told him uh, ‘look you, I wanna speak to your boss’
49. or something like that in a very demeaning way, you know.
50. So my husband said ‘oh, you know, um, my boss is not here right now.’
51. He meant me, right? Just to mess with him. And said ‘okay.’
52. And then, I mean, his behavior was like, so bad, that my husband said, ‘well, I am the owner.’
53. And he was like, ‘oh, I’m sorry.’ He start fixing his tie and everything.
54. Like, we experience it every single day. My husband and I.
55. Experience it almost every single day here at the restaurant.
56. But, you know, we don’t, we don’t care. <laughter>
57. TDL: Where do you think those attitudes come from?
58. 010: Well number one I think it’s probably TV.
59. You know, Hispanic people are always portrayed as the help. You know.
60. Um, <click> I would say, ignorance too.
61. Because a lot of people have never spoken to a Hispanic person.
62. And their, like, people in Metairie, you know, mostly.
63. They are just Metairie people. They don’t have a lot of other, you know.
64. Like Uptown, it’s a melting pot. Metairie is Metairie. It’s a white community, just like that.
65. So they have never interact with anybody else who’s not, you know, Hispanic, I guess.
66. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first came to New Orleans?
67. 010: Oh my God I was in shock. <laughter> I was so young, you know.
68. I was, I was what, twenty-two or something like that.
69. I didn’t speak one word of English. Not even like ‘hi’ or ‘bye.’
70. I remember the shuttle bus just drop us off right there on Broadway.
71. And I guess they said “that’s where you gonna go,” Calvert Hall, you know, Loyola.
72. And that’s where we went. And um, <click> that was it.
73. You know, um, I was in shock to see African-American people.
74. Cause we don’t have it at home mostly, especially back then, you know? I had never seen one.
75. So I was in shock. And um, it was shocking to see that, you know, some…
76. I remember, you know like people have like little shorts and stuff like that.
At home we don’t dress like that. We cover a little bit more. So to see the girls.
I remember, I will never forget, seeing this nun, with shorts, and a shirt.
The nuns at home they wear their, yeah, the whole thing.
So I was like, “oh my gosh, how did that happen?”
Especially at Loyola, you know, it’s catholic, cause, you know, we’re catholic.
But um, so yeah, so that was, very different.
You know. I remember the abundance. Seeing the abundance. Seeing the choices.
I mean, so many types of ice cream. You know.
And seeing all that. It was kind of shocking.
TDL: Did you live at the school?
Yes. I had to. The three years. Yeah because I was an international student.
So we couldn’t even go on holidays or anything like that.
We always stayed at home. I mean, at the, at the school.
Can you tell me about the happiest experience you have had in New Orleans?
Probably, um, well I’m a mom. That’s why, you know.
Probably it’s, uh you know, having my daughter, you know,
when she was born, probably, you know.
You know, knowing that she will be better, you know, that. You know, that she wouldn’t have to.
Because at home even though it has progressed a lot, women are not seen as equal.
Women are not treated as equal.
So I was so happy to know that guess what,
she’s in a place that she can wear whatever she wants,
she can go wherever she wants, she can do whatever she wants.
Once it’s respectful, you know, in a respectful way and when it’s in a decent way,
you know she can compete for the same job that a guy,
she can be prepared, she can go to a college,
she has the opportunity to travel, you know, that.
TDL: Can you tell me about something frightening or upsetting that has happened to you since you’ve been here?
Mmm…<click> I think it kind of happened lately.
I think it was realizing how culturally different we are to other people.
She started dating this guy from Jesuit. And I was just blown away by you know, the family.
They dated for a year and a half and they were really nice and sweet
and he was nice and sweet kid,
but just the cultural differences, you know.
Like, I can’t help it. I can’t help it you know, like,
we told her like if he wants to date you he has to come to the house and he has to talk to us.
He was like “ahhh” <laughter> Well, he came anyway.
But those things that, you know. Here it’s so free, so different.
And we raising her, so, I hadn’t realized this until lately.
Like um…like how do we keep…I think our culture is gonna be gone and lost with her.
You know, because she doesn’t see it. Because she has been raised in an American school, with American friends, she’s going to an American college, so she doesn’t see why, you know. For instance, I don’t know its kind of privat control. My daughter is not in birth control. We don’t believe that. ‘We are Catholic,’ I told her, you know. So, all those differences. That has been the saddest experience for me. To see how liberal this place is. And I had never experienced it because I had never had a daughter, I had never had the opportunity. I had, you know and she was telling me these guys wanna like, friends with benefits? My daughter is not in birth control. We don’t believe that. ‘We are Catholic,’ I told her, you know. So, all those differences. That has been the saddest experience for me. To see how liberal this place is. And I had never experienced it because I had never had a daughter, I had never had the opportunity. I had, you know and she was telling me these guys wanna like, friends with benefits? I said, ‘what is that?’ You know, we <laughter> don’t have friends with benefits at home, you know. You either are boyfriend and girlfriend or you’re nothing. Here is very, common, so, to see that has been devastating to me. To see culturally how, how nobody takes seriously anymore loyalty and you know those basic principles that we were taught. You know, respect for each other, you know, we’re gonna be boyfriend and girlfriend and when it doesn’t work out it doesn’t work out. But we’re not gonna be like, friends with benefits, you know? That’s shocking to me. <laughter> TDL: Can you tell me about your church? Is it bilingual? We go to Mater Dolorosa. On Carrolton. American. And I had to sit way in the front. But I still say the God father and everything in Spanish, because I haven’t learned it in English. You know, so the creed and everything I say it in Spanish. They say it in English, say it in Spanish, and then, at the end, it works out. But um, those are the things that, you know, I haven’t, I guess I haven’t paid attention or you know, really make a conscious effort to learn, but no, no it’s not bilingual. They have the bilingual one in Kenner, I think. But it does conflict with my schedule here, because they have it like at Sunday at noon, and that’s when we are the busiest here. So we go Sunday, and also we try to go Sunday at night because that’s when my daughter is available so we can go together as a family. We try to. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans? 010: Um...<sniffle> I love New Orleans because it’s uh, to me it’s such a noble city, that has allowed me to grow.
It has allowed me to have what I possibly wouldn’t be able to have in Guatemala.

It has given me the opportunities to work hard,
because my husband and I have worked eighty hours a week for years.
But is has paid off. At home I could work eighty hours
and couldn’t do what I have done here.

TDL: What would you like to change about New Orleans?
010: I would probably try to accommodate all the homeless people
that we’re having under the bridges.
That’s becoming a city, you know. And our, our city’s so beautiful. We don’t
need that.
I would really tackle that problem. You know, I would try to,
to clean up, up downtown, the bridges, the homeless, you know,
and, and take, take advantage of all the properties that have that is empty.
You know. Do something. Like we have had this Audobon School empty for, six
years?
Right across from here. You know, empty.
People have wanted to buy it. Sell it. ‘No. It historic, we want it.’
For what? Who is there? Eight years collecting rats and everything.
Let somebody build something, make houses, apartments, rent them,
do something, move on.

Laura

1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 011: I think it’s a mix, depending on who your ask.
3. Um, sometimes, overall, I think maybe we’re still viewed as a hindrance or like a,
4. I think we’re viewed in a negative light.
5. So it’s kinda like uh, I feel like we’ve, we don’t blend in, at all.
6. We’re like, uh, <laughter> very visible, and all at the same time it’s like, uh,
7. even though we’re very visible we’re like that white elephant kinda deal,
8. like we’re, you know, people don’t want to acknowledge that we’re ever present
9. and that we’re there.
10. Um, but I think there’s a growing generation of proud Latinx who are bilingual like I
    am,
    so, I don’t know. I have mixed feelings about how we’re viewed.
12. But overall I know we’re seen, I don’t know how,
13. I don’t think we’re fully embraced as a community.
14. TDL: Do you think that has changed since Katrina?
15. 011: Yes. I think there’s an increasing uh, openness and like, uh, welcomeness now.
16. Like, not a hundred percent there, we’re not a hundred percent <laughter> embraced yet,
17. but I think it is growing.
18. Like I said, we’re a growing population.
19. We’re a community, we’re a <laughter> community that loves having kids
    and like, we love family.
21. And uh, so yes, I think that there are people now who even want to learn Spanish.
22. More than in the nineties, when I was growing up.
23. And I think also schools, there are more bilingual schools than when I was growing up.
24. So yeah, it is changing.
TDL: For the better?
011: I hope so.
TDL: Have you ever been mistreated for speaking Spanish?
011: Yes. I have. I remember in school,
I had to not speak Spanish at all or I would be punished for it.
I remember one time, I think I was in first grade and I was, we were, I don’t remember,
I think we were learning vowels or, we were learning how to pronounce words, bigger
words.
And I remember I was saying, I said out loud, um, the vowels in Spanish like ‘a, e, i, o, u’
and uh, a classmate she got so angry and she-the teacher got angry too
and it was just, bad, but um.
Yeah also I’ve had times where my mom was made fun of.
And so I had to speak up for here and I just.
There have been various times where um, I’ve overheard people say things.
But now that I’m older, I, of course I defend myself and I get angry
and worked up about it <laughter>, so…
TDL: Why do you think people have these attitudes?
011: That’s, that’s what was taught.
That’s what they learned from there family, from past generations.
And perhaps they experienced some kind of bias in their own lives
so they live by these rules, mm.
TDL: Can you tell me about your happiest experience in New Orleans?
011: <laughter> Okay. Uh, okay, I’ll tell you something that just happened.
Um, uh, my father-in-law, he came to New Orleans for the first time this past weekend.
So he, it was, it’s kind of funny how like when we took him to Café du Monde.
I think, my husband and I thought he would like, be like ‘wow, these beignets are so
good,’
or you know, ‘like what a unique culture.’
And when he tried it, he’s like, he’s like, ‘oh,’ he’s like
‘you brought me here to eat matsefatas?’
And we’re like, ‘what, what are you talk…?’
And matseteadas are like this very simple sweet bread in Honduras.
And I’m like ‘great.’ Like, like, uh.
And um, I don’t know, we just had a great time with my father-in-law.
And I grew up without a father, so having him there, like, it was really nice, and like,
when he left, I told my husband, I’m like, ‘woah, I felt like I experienced, like,
having a father for the first time.’ I even had like a little lump in my throat, almost crying.
And my husband’s like, with his head down, driving, he’s like, ‘yes.’ <laughter>
He’s like, ‘that is what it’s like to have a father.’ So that was one of the happiest
experiences.
TDL: He’s from Honduras?
011: Honduras. And he came here. So it was like having an alternative reality. <laughter>
Come home, like, yeah.
TDL: Can you tell me about something upsetting or frightening that has happened here?
011: Uh, frightening experience here. Yes. So I was pregnant, like, I was pregnant.
68. I found out I was pregnant in August of 2017, and uh, in September I was about ten weeks along.
69. and one of the most frightening experiences was when I started bleeding
70. and I thought I was going to lose my baby.
71. And um, I went to Ochsner on the Westbank and the emergency technician, the, ultrasound,
72. I don’t know what they’re called, ultrasound person? <laughter>
73. TDL: I don’t know either.
74. 011: Yeah, well she, she didn’t let my husband come in, so I was all by myself, I was scared.
75. I thought I was losing my baby.
76. And she told me, ‘oh,’ she’s like, ‘don’t worry, you’re still young, like,
77. you can have another baby.’ And I just, that just made me wanna ball and cry so hard.
78. But, thankfully, as you may know now, uh, it was just a subcerebral hemorrhage.
79. And they didn’t know why that happened, but luckily the baby was fine and all was well.
80. TDl: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
81. 011: Mm, mm, I don’t know, but, my favorite thing about New Orleans is that,
82. it’s like that, you know what I like about it?
83. I love that I feel like I’m home when I’m in New Orleans.
84. And uh, if you ask me something about New Orleans,
85. I can be like ‘oh yeah, that’s so New Orleans,’ like, I, I can’t really.
86. It’s not something tangible but it’s just like the way I feel here is different.
87. TDl: What would you change about the city?
88. 011: Um, my first thing was gonna be, I was gonna say the potholes <laughter>
89. But really, really, if I really could change it, I had the power to change something it would be the,
90. the education system and the way politicians interact with the people
91. and the whole uh, bureaucracy and…

012: Lily
1. TDl: What are people’s perceptions of Latino community?
2. 012: I’m gonna give you an example.
3. When I came down here, um, there was this girl, she asked me,
4. ‘can you go with me and translate?’
5. because at the time they didn’t have no translators, neither by phone nor,
6. this was after Katrina and she used to work in, in the ship yard, in Nortrup Rootman.
7. She was um, an electrician.
8. But she had two kids and they needed, um, to get Medicaid.
9. So they had laid her off a few weeks after she started working and um,
10. she said ‘Can you come with me so I could, you know, apply for Medicaid or whatever.’
11. And I was like ‘Ok.’
12. So we went to the state building in Harvey.
13. And then um, they, the lady from the Medicaid told her
14. ‘well if you’re not, you don’t have no kinda support you know,
15. then go upstairs and apply for food stamps, um, since she’s with you could translate for you’
16. because at the time they didn’t have no translators.
17. So I went with her and the lady told her ‘um, well if you’re here and then you,
18. and you’ve been so many years, um,
19. with your green card, then you should know English.’
20. And I was like ‘she was in Puerto Rico, in Puerto Rico you don’t have to speak English.’
21. I was like, ‘correction.’
22. She was like, you know, and um, I’ve seen a lot of stuff like that, you know, um,
23. I understand people have to, um, they have to try to learn English.
24. Like, I learned cause I was brought here as a child but not everybody.
25. You know, it’s hard for them to learn, even if they try.
26. My father’s been here for more than fifty years, and he doesn’t know.
27. He understands everything you’ll tell him, but he can’t communicate, like,
28. he won’t be able to respond to you.
29. He’ll say ‘thank you,’ ‘please,’ you know, like common words,
30. but he doesn’t know how to say a sentence.
31. And my dad’s seventy-four years old and he got here in his twenties. You know?
32. And it’s hard. It’s easier for an American person to learn Spanish
33. than for a Spanish person to learn English because, it’s harder.
34. And that’s what people don’t understand.
35. TDL: Do you think people see Latinos as a threat?
36. 012: Oh, um, there’s, I see it this way.
37. They, everybody has good and bad people, you know.
38. There’s, there’s a little bit of everything. You know?
39. There’s Americans, there’s Spanish, there’s all kinds of people.
40. You know, um, just like the Arabics.
41. We can’t judge every Arabic because they’re bombers. They’re not. You know?
42. That’s just like the Latinos.
43. Even though there’s always gonna be discrimination, you know,
44. and there’s always gonna be a lot of racism, which there is, and it hasn’t stopped. You
45. know?
46. Um, I’m the kinda person that when I go with my kids, I stay shut.
47. I let them speak their minds out.
48. When they to the point I be like, “excuse me?” You know?
49. Cause they think I don’t know how to speak English and I’ll just stay there like a moron,
50. quietly,
51. ya know, like I don’t know anything.
52. But then I won’t, when I have to explode I will do it.
53. Because it gets to that point that sometimes they like to humiliate people, you know?
54. And they make you feel bad and, no, that…
55. I know a lot of Spanish people, um, they don’t even,
56. they don’t even like to go and apply or get help for their kids.
57. Um, because of the same reason. You know? Exactly. Not me. I don’t care. <laughter>
58. I was in New York and I mean, like, I just see everything,
59. I just let everything go by, you know, I don’t…
60. I have eight kids. And I work in the flea market. I was raised here.
61. My friends from New York, you wouldn’t see them in the flea market selling. Me, I don’t
care.
That’s how my family raised me, you know? I’ve sold videos, CDs, clothes, dresses, ice cream in New York in the streets, you know? And, I’m not embarrassed, I’m not ashamed, you know. ‘cause I’m not stealing or I’m not selling drugs. I’m not doing anything wrong. Just like my kids. They don’t like doing it. Don’t get me wrong, they don’t even like dealing with, they’re Spanish and they don’t like dealing with Spanish people, because they say, um, sometimes when I have to go buy the ice or something in the flea market, you know, my daughter’s, she’s about to be seventeen. She’s about to be sixteen. So, I have a worker, a lady that works with me in the flea market and, we’re all there doing, I go, I have to go the restaurant to buy my ice or my foods whatever I have to do. And when I get there, you just see all these guys like, undressing them with their eyes, you know? And, this is the, that’s the one reason why I don’t live where Spanish people live, cause I have my girls. And I don’t wanna have to have that kinda conflict. You know? I will help another Spanish person. Whatever they need. But when it comes to my house, I don’t like people in my house. I’m very reserved and the, situations like, you know? I guess I was raised a different way. A lot of Spanish people they have another, different ways of thinking, you know? They think that, um, oh, well, um, they gotta learn or, ya know, when I was in my country, um, I used to pick up garbage when I was ??? I used to cut coconut trees. I’m like yeah, that was in your country. We’re not in your country. We’re in the US. My kids are not gonna do the same things that your kids are doing. When you were, as a child, you know, so I guess. TDL: Can you tell me about the happiest or most enjoyable moment in New Orleans? 012: I mean, I like seeing my kids happy, you know, they like. When we got here they hated it, but now they like, I, I wake up every day and I gotta take everybody to school. Eight different schools. No, seven. Seven different schools, ya know? And, and like she’s happy, she’s waiting to go to that school cause she says that’s one of the best schools that they have in the state of Louisiana, you know? I don’t, I didn’t know that was true <laughter> but that’s what she says, cause she be on the internet. Yeah. And you know, and she’s really excited like to get in that school, and, you know, that’s her motivation. And I told her, you know, you have to do good in school and you have to finish your school to be somebody, you know? And that’s the only thing that’s gonna bring you and give you the life you wanna live. <laughter>

If you don’t wanna work in a flea market, you don’t wanna work frying chicken like I did, then you have to go to school. You know?
I finished school, but I mean, because, because I, um,

I’ve taken care of my father, you know?

And um, my father had an alcohol problem.

I had to be with him, and then, I couldn’t get on with my stuff.

You know, my rent, and, like, and everything.

You know and I tell her, if you guys don’t wanna go through that,

then you guys have to you know, focus in school, try to finish it, learn how to
cook, you know,

have all your stuff, clean, your house clean so you won’t have problems, you
know?

TDL: Can you tell me about a negative experience in New Orleans?

Um, four years ago, um, I was pregnant. And, I lost my daughter.

And, Tulane, in Metairie, they had me waiting downstairs and I told them that I,
that you know,

I had been there like two, three times and they were like, no it’s not time, cause I
had a ??

And I told them, I said, well, you know, I know that I, that I’m not feeling good.
You know?

Um, then we went to the hospital they were like no,

if you continue with that just come back but right now you’re okay.

And then when I went back and, you know, they told me,

did the ultrasound…um…<broken> my baby was dead already.

TDL: I’m so sorry.

Inaudible conversation.

TDL: Can you tell me something you would change about the city?

Um, you know, sometimes you get mad at stuff,

cause you’re always gonna find people that try to put you down.

But, that’s everywhere, you know?

So I mean, you know, people just haveta understand like, us, is like,

we’re strangers here, you know, like, but, then again, we have to get, and just,
you know,

we have to abide and respect, and go by the law, you know?

And a lot of them don’t wanna do that. You know?

TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?

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But, that’s everywhere, you know?

So I mean, you know, people just haveta understand like, us, is like,

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you know,

we have to abide and respect, and go by the law, you know?

And a lot of them don’t wanna do that. You know?

TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?

012: I don’t know. I like this state. You know, I feel comfortable.

Um, you know, sometimes you get mad at stuff,

cause you’re always gonna find people that try to put you down.

But, that’s everywhere, you know?

013: Monica

1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?

2. 013: Um, I personally don’t recall ha-have, eh, um, negative reactions. You know?

3. I always encounter, as far as I’m concerned, um,

4. people that are willing to help or to explain things.

5. Uh, very friendly, you know, and warm, you know,

6. that’s one of the qualities that New Orleanians have, you know,

7. that they’re very welcoming, you know.
8. So, I’ve never felt like, left out or anything like that.
9. TDL: Have you ever experience discrimination or negative treatment?
10. 013: No, uh, I don’t feel, I ne-I never
11. I’m not gonna say that I’ve ever felt discriminated, you know,
12. you always gonna find people that are gonna be a little rude but,
13. they rude with everybody, you know, they just,
14. but not, I’m not, I-I personally have not experienced discrimination, you know?
15. TDL: Do you think it is different in different parts of the city?
16. 013: Emm, <click> well, when I used to live on the Westbank, I used to-
17. It depends. I think it depends because when I used to live on the Westbank
18. I used to work at Café du Monde.
19. And I used to deal with mostly uh, tourists, you know?
20. And uh, when I used to live on the Westbank you have,
21. you have a mix of white people, and Hispanics, and Blacks, you know?
22. And you always going a see people fighting outside or you know, here in that,
23. but I don’t recall being involved in any of that you know,
24. it’s just gonna be trouble between them because whatever reason, you know?
25. But, I don’t, I personally don’t recall any negative experience from people, you know?
26. TDL: What about speaking Spanish in public?
27. 013: The opposite. <laughter> Because you know I look Hispanic, you know,
28. there is no other way around.
29. And sometimes I go speak with somebody that uh, um, that, uh,
30. I don’t know speaks Spanish, you know?
31. Speaking English with everybody and I start speaking in English with that person
32. and that person started speaking in Spanish with me. You know?
33. And it makes me feel sometimes that my English is not good enough, you know?
<laughter>
34. So it’s the other way around most of the times. Yeah, no, but, no I have not.
35. Uh, some people sometimes don’t understand my accent
36. but that that can be with anybody that English is not the first language you know?
37. TDL: But no one ever treats you negative because of it?
38. 013: No. No, no. The only thing that I’ll uh,
39. sometimes encounter is that they call, they think I’m Mexican but I’m not. <laughter>
40. But that’s, you know, people generalize most of the time. <laughter> Yeah.
41. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first got here?
42. 013: Ah, it was, um, it was exciting because it was a new place, you know?
43. And it was also exciting because I knew I was gonna be with my mother.
44. Uh, from time-to-time I did feel homesick, but um, I was able to adapt, you know?
45. To, so, but you know, uh, I have, um, my mother had some friends that welcomed me,
    you know?
46. Uh, so it was a big help, you know? You know?
47. TDL: So you had a place to stay, didn’t have to look for a place?
48. 013: Yes, yes. No, no. I already had my, yeah that’s, when you have somebody here,
49. it’s easier than when you just come here alone or whatever reason you know.
50. TDL: Did you already speak English when you moved here?
51. 013: Uh, if I speak any English it was very basic, you know.
52. It was uh, to the point that everything was yes, you know? Yes. <laughter>
53. Can you do this? Or what is your name? Yes, you know.
54. I don’t know what they were saying but everything was yes, you know?
55. But you know that’s a other thing that I, very thankful with people of New Orleans
56. because they uh, were willing to teach me, you know?
57. Like uh, if I didn’t see a wor-I didn’t say a word that was correct
58. they would explain to me they would, you know, with other people, you know?
59. That’s very helpful, you know?
60. TDL: What was your happiest experience in the city?
61. 013: I think uh, it’s in combination between when I met my husband
62. and when we got when we got, when we got married.
63. It was very, and when we got engaged. <laughter> Yeah. Yeah.
64. TDL: How long ago was that?
65. 013: Uh, yeah, we met um around six years ago.
66. Husbands interjects: ‘seven’
67. 013: <laughter> Seven years, okay. <laughter> Around seven years
68. but we didn’t get married right away.
69. We lived together for a little while and then we got engaged. And then we got married,
yeah.
70. TDL: Can you tell me about an upsetting experience?
71. 013: Oh, um, upetting, um, well, it was a little frightening when, uh. There are a couple.
72. Uh, I was studying at Delgado. And I was waiting for my ride, that was my husband.
73. But I was waiting outside and uh this guy came over and told me to get in.
74. And, uh, I was, just told him my ride is coming.
75. And he said, eh, he didn’t wanna leave so I kept walking out,
76. but he kept following me so I, I felt a little frightening.
77. I went inside again. And another time was um, when um, oh, again I was waiting for the
bus
78. and my ex-boyfriend saw me and he kept calling me, calling me
79. and he kept following the, the bus.
80. And uh, I didn’t wanna pick up the phone and it was a little, you know, it,
81. it was very nerve wracking, you know? Yeah.
82. TDL What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
83. 013: My favorite thing about New Orleans? The festivals. There’s festival for everything.
84. Or parade for everything, you know? <laughter>
85. I can say also enjoys uh, crawfish season, you know?
86. That’s one of the, of my best. <laughter> Yeah.
87. TDL: What would you change about the city?
88. 013: Mm, I like, um, there a couple things. Oh, the sewage and the water, you know?
89. Too much waste water, you know?
90. And the streets are awful. <laughter> So that, that would be one of those things.
91. You know, politics, but they always gonna be dirty so…<laughter>

014: Maria
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 014: When I came here twenty-five years ago it was just a couple of us around. It was really hard.
3. Especially when you come from another country and you don’t know exactly what to expect.
4. It was hard. It was, for me it was really hard.
5. And my English wasn’t good in those days. Almost like non-existent. Yeah. It was really hard.
6. But then uh, when Katrina came and all this new group of Latinos came to the city.
7. I think we’re well received, in a few places, more than in others.
8. TDL: What places are the most receptive?
9. 014: Like churches, for example. They welcome you really well
10. um, restaurants, but you have to very careful, wherever you go.
11. Especially schools,
12. I wanna show you something,
13. I really want to so, <laughter> that happened to me.
14. My kids go to a private school, here in the city, independent school.
15. And they sent this invitation yesterday to my house.
16. I think its something that I think you should read.
17. (She showed me an invitation to a luncheon for alumni of color)
18. I don’t know if you can see it there…that was yesterday, Country Day.
19. If you don’t have words, that invitation describes like, everything, yes.
20. And I, this morning, I’m ah, not afraid,
21. but usually I don’t want to do more than I have to in school.
22. My kids are doing well, I’m happy with the school,
23. but this morning I really went to school, with my invitation, and I talked to the principal.
24. TDL: What did he say?
25. 014: He was like, for them its, ah, they use the word, with teachers, of color.
26. Well, that’s what they call it, in the independence, in the association of independent schools,
27. here in the South, and that is not uncommon word for them to use. Yes.
28. But um, I was very like, I was very emotional this morning.
29. And I ask him that please don’t do that to any other family in the school.
30. Because when I went to Newman, with my kids, they really treat us like the maid and the gardner.
31. It’s not, it’s not uncommon.
32. That they think that all of the Latinos in this community are doing the hard work.
33. TDL: That’s an attitude I’ve heard before…
34. 014: And we do it, and very proudly. We are not afraid, we are not ashamed.
35. But you cannot treat all of us the same.
36. TDL: Painting everybody with one brush is a problem…
37. 014: It’s getting better. But when you receive things like this it’s like, ‘oh my god.’<laughter>
38. We are going back.
39. TDL: There is still work to do…
40. 014: Yes. A lot.
41. TDL: So you think perceptions have changed during your time in New Orleans?
42. 014: Yes. Yeah. You can say that.
43. TDL: How has it improved or changed?
014: If you go to, like example, restaurants.

Those very nice restaurants in the city that usually were just for Whites, now you can see other families like yours in there.

TDL: Do you think Latinos are well represented in city government?

014: Well, at least Elena Moreno is there. Which is good. Yeah.

TDL: People have asked me that...how do get more Latinos in positions of power...

014: For me it’s like, we have to encourage our kids to be part of this movement.

And it’s gonna happen. Probably not now in this city, but eventually yes.

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They’re gonna get surprised.
88. 014: Here in New Orleans yes, yes. It’s like a, because its business. <laughter>
89. TDL: That’s improvement…
90. 014: Yeah. It’s getting better.
91. TDL: Do you do translations?
92. 014: Yes. Uh, I remember a few years ago I was part of like uh, count-the census.
93. Cause people are afraid to disclose <laughter>
94. like all the information because you don’t know what they gonna do with it. Yeah.
95. I was part of that and also to work with the um, kids in schools just to improve,
96. like, to like, give them better opportunities in different schools.
97. TDL: Are there a lot of programs for non-English speaking children?
98. 014: They have ESL programs yes. Yeah. They have ESL available everywhere.
99. Within the city yes, yeah, yeah.
100. TDL: Can you tell me about your happiest experience here in New Orleans?
101. 014: a little. Wow. <laughter> Like what? Yeah. Um, like recent, can it be?
102. Yeah it was like Mardi Gras. Um, that was my first uh, Mardi Gras.
103. Not, not my first one but it was my first Muses parade.
104. And uh, it was really nice to be here with my kids
105. and to see more Latinos in this area especially here.
106. And then the parade that was following Muses was this um, like satire.
107. And they have a lot of good things <laughter> about what is happening.
108. And I made some stickers,
109. that I put everywhere in the city if you can see one of those it’s me.
110. Because um, for President Trump, we are not his friends.
111. Especially Guatemalans, or Salvadors or um, uh, people from Honduras.
112. Uh, and he thinks that a lot of other people come from shitty hole countries.
113. And these people needs to know that it’s not true.
114. TDL: What do the stickers say?
115. 014: I wanna show you something. <laugher> And I’m just putting stickers everywhere.
116. If you’re interested take one, and just, um. Oh, I just, I had a picture.
117. I don’t think you can see it really well.
118. But it’s uh, it says, ‘Hello. I am from a shitty hole country.’
119. TDL: Okay. Very good
120. 014: And then it’s like, I think it’s like, I’m trying to,
121. I don’t know if I have a point,
122. but for me at least, just to give people a reason to talk about it. Yes.
123. Yeah, if you see one of those stickers everywhere or in one of the cafés that I go
124. it’s like,
125. ‘oh, wow, this was offensive to somebody.’
126. TDL: Can you tell me about an upsetting experience in the city?
127. 014: Upsetting? Like this one like this morning?
128. It was really, it was not upsetting, but it very hurtful.
129. I was very, very, um, cause I never thought that they have that idea about us.
<laughter>
130. Or my kids.
Most, I was telling the principal this morning. I came from a country with the long history of civil war. I know how frightening it is to be in one of those countries. But not for my kids, and not to use words like that.

TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?

014: Well, New Orleans is a great city. And I think if they, <sigh> open their minds a little bit more <laughter> and they like, educate themselves about what they reality is, I think we gonna be good.

TDL: Are some parts of the city more open to Latinos?

014: Well I don’t think that is true at all. Every time that you move to any neighborhood they have the idea that the whole neighborhood is going down. <laughter> And people are very open to say that to you.

Oh yeah, Latinos are coming to the city, or the neighborhood, it’s like, ‘oh, not good.’

TDL: Do people feel threatened?

014: Yes. Yes. Always.

TDL: Why?

014: Misconception. They think that all of us are gang members. That we gonna kill. That we gonna just rape them. I don’t know. If, um, a few months ago I was like entering [retracted] with all my kids, can you imagine? Me with six kids. <laughter> And um, you can see some faces, that they were like really afraid.

It’s like ‘ma’am, I’m not gonna take anything from you. Actually I don’t want anything.

We are here for the same reason as you. We just want, need something from the store, but I have to be here with my kids.’

But, yeah, you can see when they move, when they walk away…

TDL: If there was something you could change about the city, would that be it?

014: Just the perception about us.

TDL: It sounds like you’re doing your part to make changes

014: Yeah. Because I think it’s I’m trying to, I don’t, I don’t want my kids to live in this United States that I love, no, no…

015: Marta

1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 015: Um, I’ve recently, I’ve even encountered certain Hispanics and I’ve asked them, like, ‘oh did you know,’
3. like they’ll tell me that they are from Colombia too, and I was like ‘oh do you know that we have an association and we get together
4. and celebrate for example the Christmas, we’ll have a Christmas breakfast,
5. or we’ll celebrate the New Year, independence kind of thing?’
6. I mean I’m not gonna invite em to our personal homes necessarily,
7. but, you know just let them know that there is a group here.
8. They have no idea, but they are aware that there’s the Hispanic Apostolate which exists
11. that’s off of Veterans past Home Depot, out by Kenner.
12. They also are a very huge support for all Hispanics of all kinds.
13. Um, when you say how we’re viewed,
14. I think it, it goes across the board, doesn’t matter what nationality it is,
15. it’s kind of your class, per se.
16. Whether you’re a blue collar worker or you’re a professional, such as medical.
17. There’s a Hispanic medical association here in Louisiana, that’s huge.
18. And there’s across from like Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, the Dominican Republic.
19. So there’s a huge variety.
20. So there’s a, the class type that’s educated,
21. and people are kind surprised or thrown back, then,
22. our harder worker people that are, viewed as lesser class,
23. people might be more discouraged to approach cause they don’t know
24. and especially if there’s a language barrier they might be afraid of,
25. like ‘oh they don’t belong here’ type, but,
26. I think everyone views how they want to view people.
27. I’ve actually experienced reverse, um, racism, being that my skin-tone,
28. being that I was born American, I’m very white. And I have freckles.
29. And people just take me for what it’s worth,
30. of like, ‘oh, you speak Spanish, you’re a Latino, great.’
31. They don’t put together that they can realize
32. that there is variations of Latinos that aren’t of olive tone.
33. My father is very white.
34. My mother is very olive complected.
35. So, I can go into a restaurant where I know they speak Spanish,
36. and I will speak Spanish to them, and they will feel offended,
37. as if I was an American undermining their English and,
38. so they’ll pretend not to understand what I’m saying.
39. And will feel like they’re insulted.
40. Um, so I’ve had that experience. Not often.
41. Or, I’ll catch people by surprise standing in line.
42. And I can hear people asking themselves, amongst each other like,
43. ‘oh, I wonder where, um, I’ll find bread, in the supermarket.’
44. And I will turn around and I’ll tell them.
45. And then they’ll be like ‘wow, we had no idea that you spoke Spanish.’
46. So I don’t know if that answers. <laughter>
47. TDL: I often speak Spanish to people, and they are surprised…
48. 015: Right. Right, right, right.
49. And then they’ll have the fear of whether or not, are we,
50. I guess, um, ICE, looking for undocumented people
51. because we’re white and we know our Spanish so well.
52. I, I, which is ridiculous, but… <laughter>
53. TDL: Do you think perceptions have changed over your lifetime?
54. 015: <click> I could say people are more aware and more grateful
55. simply because of the tragedy of Katrina.
56. So, they notice that the population of workers, whether they had a good experience or not,
57. they saw the influence of manual labor, uh increase here.
58. And so I guess they stand out more
59. because the population has increased since Katrina to my awareness.
60. TDL: Do you think people feel threatened by the Latino community?
61. 015: Not necessarily at all. Not necessarily at all.
62. Again we, it’s a mixture of people who have learned and mixed their culture such as myself
63. to where I’m American-slash-Colombian, or as I consider myself, an inside out coconut.
64. Uh, I know more Spanish songs than I do English songs.
65. Um, I do have the Latin rhythm. I do have the taste buds for Spanish food.
66. But equally I enjoy crawfish as spicy as it can be
67. and everything else that goes with American culture.
68. Um, <click> <sigh> then, again, you’re dealing with immigrants that are coming maybe
   <click>
69. first, second generation.
70. I have a best friend that we went to school together, her parents never learned English.
71. They still lived here.
72. Their child was experiencing life such as I, of growing up speaking Spanish at home,
73. doing English at school.
74. But her parents never needed the, they found them,
75. their way around to not ever needing to know the language.
76. How do people perceive that?
77. There are people that are upset, and I kind of see that in a widespread of
78. its kinda ridiculous that you can call any company at this point of time
79. and you’ll have a recording ask you ‘for Spanish, press one,’ ‘for English, press two.’
80. Why do they give it the importance of being Spanish first and then English second?
81. And why is that even an option?
82. If it were a fair game option for all um, immigrants, not just Hispanics,
83. it should be a variety of languages you could be having the option to.
84. Just a personal, opinion. <laughter>
85. TDL: Well, that’s what I’m after, your thoughts…
86. 015: Right. However, I’ve noticed, high schoolers are tending to push away Spanish,
87. and are more influenced to take French for example, or go, Asian.
88. TDL: Latino high schoolers?
89. 015: In general. In general. <click>
90. Uh, I don’t see the frequency of using, or the advantage of having French.
91. Even though we are a French-based, found city, of New Orleans,
92. you don’t find too many people speaking French.
93. TDL: How do people react to Spanish in public?
94. 015: <click> Amazement, by the Americans. They, again, they’re shock and awe of like,
95. not only is she doing it, but she doesn’t have an accent.
96. And vice-versa the person who I’m speaking to is like, you have zero American accent.
97. You speak with the accent of the person from that specific region. So I even have mastered that.
98. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
99. 015: Crawfish.
100. TDL: If you could change something, what would you change?
101. 015: <click> <sigh> The unfortunate over racialism.
102. And unfortunately it’s marked very severely during our Carnival here,
103. our Mardi Gras, on the specific Mardi Gras day.
104. You have the biggest parades, both Zulu followed by Rex. And the racism,
105. even though it’s developed to where Zulu has now
106. accepted non-African-Americans to participate.
107. <click> The, the throws are directed to only African-Americans from African-

Americans.
109. Equally as racist, the Rex will not throw to African-Americans, and it’s very
pronounced.
110. It’s, it’s a shame. I wish they would just force them to throw to the general
public.
111. And of course this is,
112. these are associations that are privately owned and privately funded,
113. so you can’t really tell people what to do,
114. but it is a very unfortunate and very distinct, strongly viewed, uh, noticeably,
115. like there’s no doubt in anyone’s mind.
116. And again, it’s on both sides, and its displayed on the same day, back-to-back.

016: Juan
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 016: Uh, we can like this, um, BT, and AT, we can call like this way.
4. I think for the Latino in every part of the country right now and even outside the United
States,
5. now we’ve been target, uh, you know, from this, this kinda way.
6. And, uh, so, but normally in, uh, I say that because I have a lot experience with that,
7. not good ones, with uh, some people, they been asking me you know, or uh,
8. saying something in the store or in any restaurant, or in um,
9. even in some parties I go sometimes and uh, so,
10. I have some people from, from, from here, uh, they asking me about the wall,
11. or they asking me about you know, this kind of stuff.
12. And uh so, I can talk with anybody about it, but uh, its all depends the way you asking
people.
13. If you ask in the right way
14. or you asking with the motivation of have your opinion about something, I ain’t open to
all that.
15. But when somebody asking you because they have the uh, they try to put you down or
something.
16. And that is the case uh, I, I been, you know, um, uh, dealing with some,
17. but mostly my, ninety-nine percent of my friends they wonderful.
18. And uh, the people I been having this experience I don’t even know them,
19. they show up at the party sometimes and uh, so, and, asking this kind of, and uh, so yeah.
20. The rest of my friends I mean, is, they, I love my friends they love me I think, and uh, so,
21. very good experience with everybody, all my friends and the people.
22. TDL: Do you think people in New Orleans view Spanish negatively?
24. And uh, so, but yeah. One day I was in, in uh, in this store with my friend Jerry.
25. And uh, so, we hang out every day. We working every day. Uh, he’s my boss.
26. And uh, so, I also invested with him as well.
27. So we business partners and we the best friends in the world.
28. So we were shopping at this store and uh, so we were talking Spanish.
29. because he learned Spanish with me, four years ago, five years ago.
30. And uh, we speak a lot of Spanish right now.
31. So in here, and we like to speak Spanish sometimes. English, Spanish, whatever you
   know.
32. And uh, so, and this lady, she’s a professor. She was behind me and she said, uh,
33. and she asked me what I was speaking Spanish.
34. And uh, so, and I was, really confused at why she were asking that from nowhere.
35. And uh, so, and uh, so I respond in a very polite way and uh, so,
36. and she told me she wasn’t Spanish and I said oh, I’m sorry,
37. I mean, I mean I…it was bad to hear she was a, a professor
38. when professors deal with different people and uh, so,
39. and different languages sometimes.
40. And, you know, races and um, cultures and um,
41. and I think normally professors are more open minded than other people.
42. And uh, so, I was a little disappointed and I said,
43. and I told her my disappointing about her being a professor, and she apologized.
44. So, yeah, that was, yeah, yeah, and uh, so, I took it in, in a good way. <laughter>
45. TDL: Can you tell me about your first experiences in New Orleans.
46. 016: I was lost. <laughter> and uh, so, um, it was uh, I’d made this friend, his name is
   [retracted].
47. Is the guy I used to live in his house.
48. And uh, so, <click> I was driving in my friend’s car because I no have a car at that
   moment.
49. And uh, so, uh, mostly my jobs I been uh, I was, I was very blessing
50. because they used to give me transportation, place to stay, and um,
51. my jobs, my jobs mostly was like a supervisor or manager or something like that
52. even in the, in the uh, factories, this one. I was not speaking English.
53. And uh, so, they putting my translator and uh, and I was,
54. my position was like a supervisor or team leader or something kind of stuff,
55. and uh, so, very nice. Good experience.
56. So, but uh, the problem, I was not needing car, I was not needing telephone,
57. I was uh, they was giving everything.
58. Mostly the time, the ninety percent.
59. And uh, so, when I left this jobs, and uh, so, I was having no transportation, and no place
   to stay.
60. So I had to come over here. I meet uh, this friend,
61. then I meet another friend she have a hotels, over here by Claiborne.
62. And, yeah I know a lot of people so I fill up her hotel with people, boom,
63. so she was very happy. She gave me place to stay right there.
64. Then my friend [retracted], you know, and uh, I meet uh some other friend because him
65. so,
66. and uh, so, I start doing some jobs for these people.
67. So, basically what it was, I start from zero.
68. My first uh, my first um, my first time over here in New Orleans.
69. And um, but I was very impressing from, of the people, over here in New Orleans.
70. The local people they very friendly, and they very um, um, festive, I mean, with uh,
71. I mean they’ve, everybody looking for the excuse to be happy. Yes, yes, to enjoy, yes.
72. TDL: Can you tell me about the happiest experience you have had in New Orleans?
73. 016: My happiest experience in New Orleans is, I think when I meet my ex-girlfriend,
74. now is my ex-girlfriend.
75. But I, and uh, then, eh, and uh, had a lot of fun with her and we very good friends until now.
76. And uh, so, uh, then, yeah. Living the life, and uh, so, um, eh,
77. to have the freedom over here in this city
78. because its not the same in other cities.
79. And uh, to uh, just doing a lot of things over here. So and go, enjoy, and uh, so fine.
80. TDL: Can you tell me about something frightening or upsetting in New Orleans?
81. 016: In New Orleans, uh, I think eh, the corruption in New Orleans is huge.
82. And that is always it made me very sad or very angry to see the corruption
83. because I came from a place that very, big deal the corruption.
84. I mean we’ve had big corruption in Mexico. And uh, so, and uh, but uh, that is the,
85. I mean, everything is not perfect right, but uh, but uh, yeah, that is the,
86. when I see police sometimes they, they, profiling people because they,
87. they minorities or they look like a, a, you know, different, like a, um,
88. I have a friend, she was in drugs, uh, she was drug-addicted and she was driving.
89. So this police was, you know, following her. I think he was looking at her, and she was beautiful.
90. And uh, so, the police stopped her and uh, so, and uh,
91. I don’t know what he asked her anything and she, uh, rejected him, and he arrest her.
92. And uh, so, and uh, she told me what happened
93. and the other friend was with her right there told me what happened
94. and uh, so, I was very upset about it and uh,
95. I mean, I mean, you can see the corruption and uh, you know it’s a big deal.
96. And uh you can see the corruption in City Hall as well.
97. And uh, so, and I deal with that every day.
98. And uh so, but that’s in, that’s big picture that is what happened,
99. but nothing is perfect in this life, right?
100. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
101. 016: Oh, the social life. Yes, its. People are very happy.
102. And uh, the architecture. I love the architecture.
103. I, I love the, the colorful uh, of the city.
104. And uh, the mosaic of, of everything, of the culture over here
and everything is mixed perfectly I think. I love that.

TDL: If you could change one thing about New Orleans, what would it be?

016: I mean, the extreme weather only. <laughter> The, the, the storms that’s all, but uh.

No I, I think I’m, I’m…I say the corruption. That could change.

But um, like I say you know, that’s is, is, I mean, it’s just way it is.

I mean, I, I’m expecting nothing perfect, you know. But yeah, that’s is.

I mean, we cannot change, we cannot change the weather, but the corruption maybe can change. Yes.

TDL: Is there anything else I should know about life as a Latino in New Orleans?

016: Um, <sigh> well I think, um. In the condition a lot of people, no only Latino,

but I can say about the Latino because I am Latino.

And the condition of you know the people, of the people living, uh, uh, is a lot of people without documents

and uh, and they don’t have the same rights because the situation in,

in specifically this moment, you know, BT and AT.

So, it’s uh, getting worse and uh, so a lot of people, eh,

dead, they no have the, they no have the opportunity go outside you know after their working.

They just working every day.

They stay in their jobs and uh, after they go back home they just stay sleep,

wait for the next day.

Is not Sundays, is not Mondays, its nothing different for them.

And uh, so, because they, a lot of people afraid to go outside and uh,

get arrested or be in problems,

people cannot call the police in case of somebody abuses them, because they afraid.

And uh, so, if somebody, um, do something to them, even hurt them,

they eh, everybody you know, um, scared.

And that’s not only in New Orleans that’s in the whole country.

And uh, so, uh, this is the only thing I think is a big deal and uh, for, for,

I am talking for my culture, for Latino.

And uh, so, I wish that can change. I wish, you know, something uh, can happen.

No even to be a citizen or not even to be a, you know legal resident,

but, if like in other states they start doing to uh, give a ID,

they can drive and it’s good for everybody

because then you can, people can have identification you know.

You can check the records if they have some problems in they countries.

You can check if they killers, you can check if they good people,

you can check, and um, if they have any, anything.

So everybody can be you know, much, I mean, that’s, that no, that no,

no need to do anything with the legal immigration or no.

It’s to identify people. It’s to give the people the freedom.

If you want to be good you can be good.

And uh, so, but you are doing something wrong as well you can be identified.
You know a lot of things happen you know um, because that. Because you know, people abuse other people because they know they can abuse that. And other people you know, uh, everybody the, the people living next door to you they don’t know who you are as well because you don’t have identification. Police cannot identify you. I mean, no records. And uh, so, I think that can be a really good thing for the Latino and for the local people. For everybody, I think it’s a, it would be open you know the, the doors for everybody in the, in the best way. TDL: Are there parts of the city that are more friendly to Latinxs? 016: Definitely you say correct. Depends in the, um, other thing New Orleans have is uh, the, is uh, is very diverse culture but also is like a uh, this area is this one, and that area is this one. Course, like, like me over here in Uptown, a lot of people looking at me and saying you know, and uh, so, and I am fine with that. But you know it’s uh, you see that um, uh, you know the example um, some areas that will, that will be more accepted than the other areas. But uh, I mean, just, you know in the, this place I can tell you know what I’ve seen so far. I mean the poor area, like eh, uh, like when I was in ninth ward. Everybody around me was my friends and uh, I was feeling very good. And over here I try to everywhere I go I try to get to know everybody I try to be a good friend be a very good neighbor. And uh, so, and um, yeah, but um, in the low income area you are like uh more, being Latino, you are like eh, more uh, uh welcome. But you want to keep moving, you know want to stay in the same place. And uh, so, that’s uh what I, I’ve been looking for my American dream and I will, you know, I looking for always the best for me, for yeah, for my dream. 017: Isaac 1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community? 2. 017: Um, I think, I think it’s just a way of life, I think it’s something that kinda, accept. 3. It’s part of the mystique of the city. You know, it’s without, it’s a melting pot 4. so without us there’s a portion of New Orleans that’s gone, so… 5. TDL: So is it a positive impression? 6. 017: Um, <click> I think recently it’s been pretty negative, 7. but I guess it depends on your political background. 8. Um, but I think for the most part it’s been pretty positive. 9. I mean from the rebuild of the city to now. 10. To a bunch of culture influences like restaurants and music and things of that nature. 11. TDL: Is it becoming more positive or more negative?
12. 017: I think, <click> I think a bit more negative just because of the atmosphere that, 
13. the political atmosphere that we’re in now, and, I mean, being a red state doesn’t help. 
14. So, I think a bit negative, but I feel like since most of the people in New Orleans 
15. are seemingly a little bit different that let’s say, Baton Rouge or Lake Charles. 
16. I think they’re a bit more um, open and bit more positive and embracing of. 
17. So I guess it be the same with a tint of negativity but nothing too serious. 
18. TDL: Are there parts of the city that are more embracing? 
19. 017: Um, definitely, definitely. I feel like once you, once you go to the more, 
20. some of the more areas where it’s less Hispanic and much more traditional, 
21. there you get kinda some funny looks and, like, what are you kinda doing here? 
22. TDL: What places are the most accepting? 
23. 017: Oh, Mid-City definitely. 
24. I mean that’s, I feel like that’s probably the patriarch of Hispanic community in New 
Orleans. 
25. TDL: What about out here? (We were in Kenner) 
27. It’s, <laughter> probably all of Kenner. 
28. TDL: Have you ever been treated poorly for being Latino or speaking Spanish? 
29. 017: Not really. Poorly? I wouldn’t say that. I mean, I’ve seen exploits. 
30. But, I think um, I think that’s something a bit more normal, like, 
31. for example, construction workers, undocumented, you know, sometimes they don’t get 
paid. 
32. or, I remember just coming back, the same year that I came back from Katrina, 
33. I remember kids in my school, no, no papers, right? 
34. He came to school one day with this black eye 
35. and he told me that some black guys just, clocked him with a hammer. 
36. And, since they don’t have, you know, bank accounts and they don’t, 
37. they keep their money in their socks or on their person. 
38. Very rarely would they put it on a card or anything. 
39. So they were, they were, targets, since, it’s easy, easy money for, yeah. 
40. TDL: Have you ever experienced anything personally? 
41. 017: Personally? Oh no, no, just, I mean, it’s, it’s funny. 
42. As soon as I switch on the English it’s like, 
43. oh, okay, you’re from the city and I’m like, yeah, I am. 
44. TDL: Have you had any negative experiences speaking Spanish in public? 
45. 017: Uh, I have once, but I mean, it’s <laughter> 
46. as soo-I mean as soon as they even think about approaching me English just, 
47. just automatically turns on and it’s sorta like a gasp, 
48. like, oh, okay, you speak really, really well, no accent so. 
49. TDL: So speaking English without a notable accent defuses the issue? 
50. 017: Yeah, yeah, most of the time. 
51. Uh, funny story my brother was at barber shop once, Spanish barber shop. Raided by ice. 
52. And uh, everyone were flying out the windows, you know, most of them didn’t have 
paper. 
53. They asked my brother and my brother with the most pristine American accent, 
54. well, no accent actually, um, was asked, you uh, you uh, you illegal? And he was like no.
And it was like, okay, you’re fine. So. Things of that nature.

TDL: What was you happiest experience in New Orleans?

017: Uh, dang, that’s, so many.

TDL: Just pick one and kinda tell me about it…

017: I would say, uh, it’s tough. Yeah there’s so many it’s so tough.

Um, in the city of New Orleans?

TDL: Yeah.

Um, I guess, witnessing my brother get married. Guess it was one of those, he finally,

I guess, moved on in life, sorta, sort of ordeals. So I would definitely say that’s one of

the…

TDL: Is he younger or older?

017: He’s younger. So the baby brother.

So it’s sort of, sort of uh, a tear-jerking movement when you see him kind of move on in life,

so it’s like ‘aww.’

TDL: Did he marry a local girl?

017: Yeah. A fellow New Orleanian.

Can you tell me about something upsetting or frightening?

Um, upsetting. It was probably my father passing away. Or um, definitely coming back to New Orleans and witnessing all my friends leave because of Katrina.

TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?

017: The food. Definitely the food.

TDL: A lot of good restaurants.

017: Oh my gosh, uh, so much, there’s, uh, I’m surprised I’m not fatter. <laughter>

I keep a list…

017: Oh no, there’s, there’s a lot. I could name so that are just, that aren’t as popular,

cliché as people would uh, normal people would,

you have to be a New-uh, a local to really, really know, you know what I mean, so.

TDL: Can you name one>

017: Red’s Chinese. Probably the best Chinese in the city.

TDL: Where is it?

017: It is located on St. Claude, going towards the lower nine.

And it’s um, it looks like, it’s like a hole in the wall kind of place.

You would never know it is a restaurant, but once you enter it’s, really good. It’s very good.

TDL: I’ll have to put it on my list.

017: There, La Cocinita is extr-I love there balleadas, I love there balleadas.

TDL: That’s out here?

017: Yeah, it’s in uh, it’s in Kenner on Veterans. It’s on Veterans right before you reach, um,

right before you reach, what is that? Williams.

So it’s, yeah it very, it’s very popular and it’s very good.

Yeah it’s, if you want some, some really good Honduran cuisine, uh

definitely go to uh…

TDL: What’s Honduran cuisine like?

017: Oh it’s delicious. It’s delicious. It’s, it’s really fattening, but it’s really delicious.
96. It’s almost like comfort food. So I, I guess, uh, the correlation between our food and, uh,  
97. New Orleans cuisine is so close it’s, it’s you know,  
98. New Orleanian cuisine is almost like comfort food as well, you know so,  
99. definitely balleadas, pollo con tejadas, you know, uh, sopa de caracol,  
100. it’s really good, really good.  
101. TDL: What’s your favorite Honduran restaurant?  
102. 017: Oh there’s so many. Los Catrachos, um, there’s, I think uh, La Tierra?  
103. Nuestra Tierra, something like that, on the Westbank.  
104. Um, there’s, Ideal sells some really good carne asada. It’s on the go.  
105. They have one right down there. Yeah, it’s really, they have the one, Terrytown,  
106. which they say is, that’s the best one.  
107. Um, there’s uh, there’s a couple in Fat City like  
108. Doña Pupu-Doña Maria’s Pupuseria which is really good.  
109. Really good pupusas, which is a Salvadoran staple, but I mean, we,  
110. we sort of claim it like it’s our own.  
111. Um, there’s also, one place in particular that I really like called La Hacienda,  
112. which is really good as well.  
113. TDL: I went into La Ideal looking for Moza…  
114. 017: Yeah, yeah. They just started selling that I think. I think, I think recently.  
115. I wanna say they made a post about it a week or two ago. I think so.  
116. Maybe, you might have to check, that, I don’t know which locations.  
117. You might have to check the Fat City location  
118. or you might have to just stop on by, I’m not…  
119. TDL: I went in this one like six months ago…  
120. 017: Oh no, they got, no they got some…  
121. TDL: They had a lot of Central American beer.  
122. 017: I, I think they, I think they might have just brought it in.  
123. But yeah, they have, aw they have.  
124. But yeah, the food here is, culture here is for food is, uh,  
125. they also have a Jamaican spot, uh one right on uh, Tulane, uh Boswell’s Grill,  
126. really good, really good.  
127. TDL: What’s one thing you would change about New Orleans?  
128. 017: The potholes. <laughter>  
129. TDL: That’s a popular answer.  
130. 017. Yes, uh yeah, keep it realistic. <laughter>  
131. TDL: Is there anything I should know about being Latino in New Orleans  
132. that we haven’t talked about?  
133. 017: Um, I definitely feel like if you’re Honduran this is home. Home away from  
134. home.  
135. Definitely the biggest, to me the biggest Honduran population outside of Honduras.  
136. It’s, I got to, uh, I go to restaurants, I go to any store, I go to Ideal, speak Spanish  
137. and it’s automatic, hey, hey you, make, you know, conversation.  
138. Or, you know, it’s, it’s funny, I go to, even if I go to practice, or go to any event,  
139. or just going shopping at WalMart, especially in Kenner, there’s a lot of Spanish  
140. people.
So for me, it’s friendly, it’s at home, the food as well helps. Because there’s a lot of things, you go to Texas, you go to Fl-North Carolina, you go anywhere else in America and it’s really hard to find balleada, it’s really hard to find, it’s like something you really have to make at home, um but it, instead of finding it at uh, a local restaurant that’s a walk away. So I’d definitely say the comfort, comfort value of being Honduran in this city is what really makes this city great for a Latino especially.

TDL: How often do you go to Honduras?

017: Um, I haven’t gone back since I was like ten or eleven, but my mother goes back fair-fairly regularly. She just, she just went. She actually um, for my brother’s wedding last December, um brought my grandma for the first time from Honduras to America and that was sort of like a crazy, you know what I’m saying.

It was wild, wild moment, cause I’m asking my grandmother, I’m asking my mom the same questions, I’m like ‘so what’s the first, you know, what’s the cult-what’s the first sense of culture shock?’ She was like, ‘oh, well you know, the airport, then, you know, coming in and, eating a slice of pizza or a burger, and it’s, things you don’t really indul- well they didn’t really indulge in back in the day in Honduras. But I guess since globalization and, all that good stuff, kinda makes things like burgers and, and pizza a bit more common now in places like Honduras.

TDL: So you have a lot of family in Honduras still?

017: Oh, yeah, of course.

TDL: Do you speak to them often?

017: Um, my mother does, so whenever she does, I do. We keep in com-we keep in touch with Facebook now, WhatsApp. I think that seems to be the most popular mode of, uh, of communication for Hondurans back, between Honduras and here. Definitely WhatsApp, definitely WhatsApp, definitely WhatsApp.

TDL: My Guatemalan friends like it also.

017: Right, I, I didn’t have WhatsApp until I was a coach, and I was like, ‘I mean, uh, how do I talk to you?’ ‘Oh…’ And it, it’s an ongoing joke for us that are American, um, we’re like, ‘hey tienes el WhatsApp? Tienes el WhatsApp?’ And they’re like, they just start laughing. Usually you can tell if someone’s extremely Spanish if he has WhatsApp. Definitely.

I think that’s the joke between us Honduran-Americans and Honduran-Hondurans.

TDL: Having WhatsApp?

017: Yeah, having WhatsApp. It’s definitely one of the tall tales.
018: Not very good, but I think that’s just the deep-south culture that’s still in New Orleans.

Um, I think we’re still seen as very much like the help and, second class, I guess.

TDL: Have you had any negative experiences?

018: Um, so, I mean when I was younger I started off elementary school on the Westbank which I think, at least my school was very diverse, it was, I had no issues. Then for middle school I came Uptown, to an all-girls school. And, it was awful.

I was the only Hispanic and I had really never experienced any of not, I don’t know if it’s really discrimination but just like being treated differently. And it, I mean they don’t know you, and I’ve been told, by a law student, how I should feel lucky that I’m in the United States and I should feel bad that my family’s still in Latin America, when my family in Latin America are doing very well and are very respected.

So it’s, kind of crazy how it goes even to people who are supposed to be very intelligent, so…

TDL: Are certain areas more closed off to Latinos?

018: Yeah, I’d, yeah, Uptown, Lower Garden District, Old Metairie would be kind of most.

the closed, and I would assume, I would, I think the Westbank because there are more Hispanics on the Westbank, Kenner, there’s a lot of Hispanics in Kenner.

Places like the Marigny, and the Bywater are just more, kind of hipster folk, which tend to be more left-leaning anyways, yeah. <laughter> Yeah. Mhm. TDL: What kinds of experiences do you have speaking Spanish in New Orleans?

018: Oh yeah, if you go in, if you go in, if I go in and I speak Spanish I definitely getting treated differently than if I go in and I speak English.

Or if I go in, there have been stores, where it’s, I go in just by myself and I get treated very differently if I go in with my boyfriend who’s a ginger, very, very white.

That happens all the time, and then people will make comments like ‘oh, I didn’t know you spoke Mexican,’ which in, yeah. <laughter> Yeah. Mhm.

018: Oh yeah, if you go in, if you go in, if I go in somewhere and I’m speaking Spanish I definitely getting treated differently than if I go in and I speak English.

Or if I go in, there have been stores, where it’s, I go in just by myself and I get treated very differently if I go in with my boyfriend who’s a ginger, very, very white.

That happens all the time, and then people will make comments like ‘oh, I didn’t know you spoke Mexican,’ which in, yeah. <laughter>

Yeah. That does happen. It’s mostly stores, I think, that, and, like doctor’s offices. Yeah. <laughter>

TDL: Why do you think people have these attitudes?

018: Um, well, I feel like it’s just the less-educated people, and it’s people who think that Hispanics are coming in to take over, or all Hispanics are the people that they see on the news.

And, it’s just easy to blame your problems on someone else who’s not like you, so, I, and they probably, I don’t know, I would say they maybe don’t have a lot of experience or exposure, but also don’t want that experience or exposure, to change their mind.

TDL: Is it getting better or worse?

018: I guess now, um, yeah, with all the quote, violence, drug war issues that they feel is just coming from Mexico, I feel like everyone just, all Hispanics get bunched up into the same, uh, and the stereotypes that you see, too.
Do you think things have changed?
Um, I mean after Katrina there was definitely a surge in the number of Hispanics and I don’t think that that helped at all, because the number of Hispanics that came into the city were mostly in for construction and lower-skilled labor that we needed at that time so I think that kind of engrained in people’s mind of I’m getting more exposed to Hispanics and it’s people who are doing this kind of work. Most of them are like that.

That’s what, I mean, yeah. I would wanna say that, ‘no, they should be smarter than that,’

but I don’t think most people are, and,

I feel like if you have one experience it kind of taints the rest, too.

How much do you remember about Katrina?
Uh, it was in 2005 so I was in eighth grade, thirteen years old maybe? Yeah. So we stayed until Sunday, and then we went over, we drove to Florida, and made it down to Miami to stay with family. And then we came back cause my dad had to go back to the hospital earlier and he came back to New Orleans and we were in Baton Rouge for, six months, maybe? Yeah.

What else do you remember?
Yeah. Um, I mean I still remember the day at school when they handed out slips saying ‘You might not have class Monday. You probably will have class Monday, but just in case.’

And then, this all happened and I, my, my youngest brother was months old, so I just remember the drive over was awful. And we had two birds, a cat, like five dogs, so.

And I was too young to drive so I remember I felt bad for my mom cause she had to drive the whole way, one car, my dad drove a different car. And, I remember in Baton Rouge, how nice the people were. That was, they were very welcoming and nice, and the school that I was at was, I enjoyed it much better than the school, than my middle school, normally. So that was, very nice, yeah.

It’s some good memories, and nothing happened to our house, so it’s not too bad.

How long were you gone?
I think it was six months. It was, uh, I don’t know. Maybe right before the end of the, eighth grade school year.

I ended at the school here, but uh, the majority of the time was over there, yeah. After, yeah.

What is your happiest experience in New Orleans?
Oh interesting. I’ve never thought about that. The happiest moment. Okay. I feel like most happy moments are during some sort of festival. So, I remember, I think it was my first year of law school for Mardi Gras. I had a lot of my friends come down from college and then ones who had graduated and that was just a great time.
85. cause it was people from all parts of my life
86. and high school friends kind of got together and then I got to show them around the city
87. and,
88. TDL: How often do you see your college friends?
89. Uh, maybe once a year, though not as often as I’d like, though.
90. Everyone’s busy and, I try to,
91. I have a group of friends that we try to meet up at least twice a year, somewhere,
92. but New Orleans has only been once. <laughter>
93. TDL: It’s so fun to show people around New Orleans.
94. 018: That’s true. And they have different like, preconceived notions of what New Orleans
95. is.
96. So it’s nice to show them that that’s not true and its better than what they think.
97. <laughter>
98. TDL: What was the most negative experience you have had in New Orleans?
99. 018: I mean I guess Katrina.
100. And the news made it out to be awful in the entire city
101. and I wasn’t sure if our house was gonna be okay, people I knew were okay,
102. who had gotten out, who hadn’t, so that, so yeah.
103. TDL: But your house was okay?
104. 018: Yeah. We just got wind damage, so that’s, yeah.
105. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
106. 018: The fact that it has a culture.
107. So it’s very much like a European city cause it has the Spanish and French
108. influence,
109. and I feel like a lot of American cities are just concrete and, new, but not in a
110. great way.
111. TDL: What would you like to change?
112. 018: The fact that it’s very, I think, behind.
113. And I that has to do with the kind of holding on to southern ideals
114. and the fact that it’s, like still a boy’s club kind of city, yeah. <laughter>
115. TDL: Is there anything else I should know about being Latino in New Orleans?
116. 018: Well I think it’s interesting to be, I guess, bilingual but, first generation.
117. Cause a lot of times, people that I, at least at Tulane,
118. are people who are coming to study abroad or they’re coming in from another
119. and I,
120. at least find it a little hard to relate.
121. So I think it’s an interesting point to be an- I mean I think any race first
generation
122. cause it’s a, weird, where do you place yourself, cause you’re not, you are American,
123. but people don’t see you as the typical American.
But your also not, wherever your parents are from, because you didn’t grow up there.

So like, my Spanish I don’t have an accent that puts me as a Guatemalan or Ecuadorian.

So I always, when I speak Spanish people are like, ‘where are you from?’ And that’s, I’m just like, ‘well, I learned it from both my parents.’

There’s no distinctive character to the Spanish. Yeah.

019: Waldo

1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 019: Well, I think you have different groups, okay?
3. You have, ee, uh, probably very well-educated people in the community that interact with the Hispanics
4. that because of their interaction with the Hispanics they’re better educated
5. their perception of the Hispanics are much better.
6. Then you have a group of people that have no interactions with anyone but their maid,
7. or their, uh, gardener, and they believe that all the Hispanics are that type of people.
8. Then you have those people that don’t interact with anything
9. but look at the news and may be a Trump supporter and believe that,
10. and I’ve heard this, they believe that the Spanish language is actually Mexican language
11. and they say, they will ask people ‘Do you speak Mexican?’
12. They, they really have, they’re ignorant in terms of the culture of the Hispanics and,
13. and therefore they’re afraid of, of the culture
14. and they believe as Trump indicated in his speeches that most Hispanics
15. are rapists and criminals that come from Mexico.
16. TDL: Do you think people feel threatened, and is this because of the rhetoric in politics?
17. 019: Yes. I think because of the political rhetoric and the ignorance of not really knowing them.
18. I mean I have actually patients that will see me not as this Hispanic but as their doctor.
19. And when you talk to them, and I try to do a little bit of impromptu research
20. and see how, what they feel like, whether or not they’re Trump supporters or not.
21. And, and I find out that yes, they’re Trump supporters
22. and they tell me ‘Oh it’s those immigrant Hispanics that come in and take our jobs.
23. Telling me that. <laughter>
24. TDL: Have you experienced discrimination based on being Latinx?
26. Well, the, the first time there was obvious profiling
27. it was when I was probably around maybe fifteen years old, fourteen, fifteen.
28. I lived in New York. I, I coached a, a police athletic league baseball team,
29. which is a sma-very um, I would say troubled kids, that the police were taking over
30. and they hired me to coach them.
31. And then I would have to go to, to the department to collect my check.
32. As I was walking to the department I had my lunch bag
33. and a I had a, a squeezer, and my pen, as a, as an exercise.
34. I, I was waiting for the light to turn green and there were like five taxi cabs
35. that came in all around me, handcuffed me, and put me in the car, and took me in.
36. Clearly profiling thinking that I was a drug dealer with drugs and a gun.
38. And I said, ‘where are you taking me?’
39. ‘To the station.’
40. I said, ‘well that’s where I was going.’ <laughter> So they gave me a ride.
41. But they clearly there’s, there’s discrimination, uh.
42. TDL: What about in New Orleans?
43. 019: Yes. Um, I would say the way they, they, they, they see you
44. and they say you’re Hispanic therefore you will not be able to afford something.
45. Uh, I went to buy a car. And I go to the dealer and I said, uh, ‘I want that car.
46. This is the price I’m willing to pay. And I don’t wanna go back and forth.
47. You know, you just take it or leave it.’
48. So they came back and said,
49. ‘Okay, he’s willing to take the price, so let’s, come and talk to the finance.’
50. I said, ‘Well, I’m not gonna finance it.’
51. ‘Then how are you gonna pay for it?’
52. Like it, I couldn’t pay cash for the car.
53. It was clearly a uh, the way, the way he made it sound, discriminatory.
54. Um, <click> and I’m sure there have been other events as well.
55. TDL: What about if you’re speaking Spanish in public? Has anyone ever said anything?
56. 019: No, but I wish they did. <laughter>
57. TDL:
58. 019: I remember I went to, I was trying to get my concealed weapons license.
59. And I went through the training and I went to the place to get my fingerprints and some
60. papers.
61. And, it said over there ‘no phones and no beepers.’ There was a sign.
62. Well I got a page from the emergency room. It’s an emergency.
63. And I tell the gentleman, I said ‘sorry but I’m a cardiologist, and this is an emergency.’
64. He threw me out.
65. TDL: Tell me about when you first came to New Orleans.
66. 019: Oh it was terrible. I hated it. Coming from Miami.
67. My house in Miami was palm trees, weather was always sunny. It was, super nice.
68. I came in July. Here it was hot. It was humid. The streets were bad, in bad shape.
69. A lot of the houses were old houses, not well-kept.
70. Uh, so my first, my first experience was not very, very nice.
71. Um, I went into the house. I didn’t have any problems with the delivery of my furniture.
72. This was on a Friday, I remember. July.
73. And, as the movers were coming in, the the house was getting hotter.
74. Said, ‘oh, it’s getting hotter.’
75. So one of the movers said ‘well I just saw Entergy,
76. and Entergy truck come in, and then they left.’
77. So they turned off the electricity.
78. So I called Entergy, that, my first experience with Entergy,
79. and I said ‘we had electricity, it was nicely and cool, and now it’s hot. What happened?’
80. Well, the previous, uh, owner had called Entergy to disconnect the electricity.
81. I had called Entergy to connect the electricity. And I said ‘okay.’
82. So they guy who disconnected the electricity went there
83. but the guy who was supposed to connect it, called in sick. <laughter>
83. Well, actually, unfortunately, in New Orleans that’s the way it is.
84. It’s, they’re, they don’t…I will say, they don’t use common sense in a lot of things that
they do.
85. And that was my first experience knowing that.
86. TDL: And you still chose to stay?
87. 019: No. I didn’t. I left. So after one year of, really learning a lot more than I thought, I
decided.
88. Cause when I came to New Orleans I, I told Doctor [retracted],
89. I said, ‘Look, I’m gonna give it a try for one year.’
90. And that one year I really did not like New Orleans.
91. Uh, they had called me for a job in Saint Petersburgh, Florida, to start an interventional.
92. To be the interventionalist for that group.
93. And, you know we worked out a deal, and we went, after one year.
94. We moved. We lived on the beach in Saint Petersburgh. And, we were doing great.
95. Um, my wife probably was in her early twenties and I was probably in my early thirties.
96. Uh, I mean I was aggressive in working.
97. I, just, we had a, it was a three man practice
98. and normally they had five or six patients in the hospital.
99. Within three weeks I was up to twelve patients in the hospital
100. and I was giving lectures, I was talking to people,
101. just recruiting physicians to send us more patients.
102. And, I mean, we were like in, in, in a month, in two months we grew a lot.
103. Um, they were calling me back from New Orleans to come back.
104. ‘Oh we want you back, we want you back.’
105. I met with the cardiologist in Saint Petersburgh and I said ‘we need to work out a
deal.’
106. And he says, ‘ohh I wanna wait.’ And then my wife was a deciding factor.
107. My, my wife kept telling me ‘I miss New Orleans. I wanna go back, I wanna go
back.’
108. So four months later, we came back. And then it, we’ve been here ever since.
109. TDL: What was your happiest experience in New Orleans?
110. 019: I mean besides the birth of all my kids, <chuckle> and that’s been…
111. cause the birth of my first child was in, in Miami. She was born there.
112. Uh, birth of my second child, I was hoping for a boy, and it was a girl.
113. The birth of my third child, I said ‘whatever.’
114. And uh, it was a friend, my gynecologist, my wife’s gynecologist said,
115. ‘so Carlos, what are you gonna name him?’
116. No, no, I’m sorry, ‘what are you gonna name her?’
117. And I said ‘her?’ And it was, he knew it was a boy.
118. Uh, so I guess the birth of my children have been the most exciting things that I,
119. that I’ve had here.
120. Um, other than that I think.
121. TDL: Can you tell me about something upsetting or frightening
122. that has happened to you here?
123. 019: Well, it was mostly, uh the death of my partner.
124. Um, you know, the Doctor [retracted],
who we basically started the practice together
after we bought the practice from Doctor [retracted],
drowned about fifteen years ago. Uh, and to me that was really devastating.
TDL: What is something you would like to see changed about the city?
019: The politics. Uh, but that’s, I think that’s everywhere.
But, we really do need some, ethical, moral ethical people working in New Orleans.
I mean, I, I know a lot of politicians. And they’re good, some of them are good-hearted.
The other ones are just there to make money, to make contracts, to.
Um, so, I think the, one thing that I like about New Orleans is the people.
You know, the people themselves are very cordial, very down-to-earth.
Uh, no matter who they are.
I mean I mean I have, I know people that are extremely poor
and that are extremely rich and in,
and all of them are as cordial as they can be.
Which is a little bit different than New York and a little bit different than, than Miami.
But the politics over here is, is hard. Especially Orleans Parish. <chuckle>
TDL: Are there areas of the city that are more open to Latinxs?
019: You know when I, <pause> not first came here
but probably was here already five years I was looking for a house.
And, and I’ve always lived on the Westbank
but I know about the Metairie, Uptown, Downtown area.
My realtor, uh, we were looking in a certain neighborhood and she said to me,
‘Now Doctor [retracted], you gotta be careful over here
because a lot of minorities are moving in.’
<laughter> So, so you can tell that. I said ‘hmm, okay.’
Uh, eh, some, sometimes they, they tend to lose track of the fact that you’re Hispanic,
you’re a minority just because you’re a physician.
Um, the, there are areas of course, in Old Metairie, also,
that tend to be a little bit, less acceptable to some Hispanics.
Um, uh, you know we, I have some properties on Uptow-uh,
Uptown or the Garden District.
Uh, one of the condominiums, you, you can tell that they, they tend to be a little bit of a,
a friction or, uncomfortable about the Hispanics.
Specially the, some of the older.
There, there was a specific, uh condominiums there a lot of older people there.
Wealthy older people.
So whenever there in the elevator with a Hispanic, they go like,
they, they look around, and…<trails off>
TDL: Is this getting better or worse?
019: Actually I think it was getting better until Trump came along. <click>
I have seen significant changes from, starting with this rhetoric on Hispanics.
Uh, I’ve seen it in, in my patients. In some of the employees of the hospital. Um, you know, we’ve seen it in, in areas where there’s a white, less educated community. Which the Westbank is. Uh, so, we, I have noticed it more deterioration over the last probably year-and-a-half.

TDL:
019: I think it’s what they say. Um, their perceptions with Hispanics. Uh, as I said again, I ask questions to some of my, my patients and, and they believe that unemployment, even though unemployment is so low but people not work—not working over here is because of the Hispanics taking their jobs.

Uh, they believe that the crime, here, is because of the Hispanics that come from Mexico.

I mean directly taking word-for-word what Trump said. And I’m sure that what they’re telling me is what a lot of the other people are also thinking.

TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
019: As I said, the people, in general. Of course the food is, is awesome.

TDL: Is there a way people can tell someone is Latinx?
019: Well, especially if you have an accent as a Latino, that they’ll be able to tell. Uh, once you’ve lived here long enough, for instance my, my kids when you listen to them speak they’ll use ‘y’all,’ which we never used it in New York or Miami.

So they they’ve assimilated a little of, of the way people speak in uh, in New Orleans. Especially going to school at Country Day, which is, is in Old Metairie.

I would say mostly white, upper-middle class, uh, and you listen to my kids speaking, that’s the way they speak.

TDL: Is there anything I should know about life as a Latinx in New Orleans?
019: I think the, in general, the New Orleans is accommodating to Hispanics. Uh, and, and clearly we saw that when Trump wanted to make, uh, do away with um, what do you call, cities? Sanctuary cities. And New Orleans said ‘No. We’re not going to go along with that. We’re not gonna be an immigration uh, department.’ We’re gonna respect all, every citizen no matter who they are.’ Because by doing, not doing that you are profiling, clearly.

Because then you will look at a Hispanic and you stop them to see if they’re legal or not.

And that’s what they were doing in Arizona. So in that regard I think that New Orleans is very accommodating to Hispanics. And, if you look at what happened after Katrina, New Orleans was rebuilt by Hispanics.
We had about fifty thousand Hispanics coming into the city to clean it up and to rebuild it.

TDL: Do you feel the Latinx community gets the appreciation for that?

019: You know we talked about this in, in my board, in the, in the New Orleans Hispanic Heritage Foundation. A lot of people on the board are professionals. Very wealthy people. They own big companies, big law firms.

And, we talk about whether or not there is, there’s a lack of appreciation to the Hispanics.

And we believe there, there is some, but not a lot <nurse enters, converses>

So what we do is we meet there and we, and we talk about whether or not are appreciated and we realize that we are probably underappreciated.

So <cough> our main objective on the board is to provide scholarships to Hispanic kids that wanna go to a better high school, but they cannot afford.

And we do fundraising and last year I think we did 150, 000 dollars <clears throat>

we’re giving about 60 scholarships this year, uh, throughout the met-New Orleans metropolitan area.

Uh, and our object-and we have gone beyond that. We’ve gone to now kids going to college.

Provide some assistance, like a thousand dollars for books.

Uh, we have supported some of, uh, artists who come to the community.

We’re working with the Mexican consulate.

We’re working with other cities to try to promote the Hispanic heritage.

TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?

020: I guess it depends where, where you are, but, I’d say in some areas we’re accepted, in other areas we’re seen as invaders, like we’re taking over certain communities.

TDL: Which areas are more accepting?

020: Um, the more accepting areas would be areas that are more diverse, um, so I guess parts of the Westbank, um, I guess Black communities, um, usually middle-to-poor communities.

And then not accepting would be the ones that are like, wealthier.

That’s like Metairie or Kenner, those pla-Uptown, the Garden District. Yeah.

TDL: Do you have examples of that?

020: Yeah. Um, there’s this store, [retracted], I don’t know if I can say that, but it’s, it’s on Magazine.

It’s predominately for White people. And I’ll walk in and like, no one will come help me. Yeah.

So, it’s like, I don’t know.

TDL: Based on appearance?

020: Yeah, yeah, based on appearance, yeah.

And my high school does a lot, they work with them a lot for graduation.
18. So I go get tailored for suits there and I’ll walk in and be like, ‘hey, I need a suit for graduation,’
19. and like they won’t help. It’s kind of tough.
20. TDL: Have people said anything to you?
21. 020: Um, no comments or remarks, but usually when I walk in to places, certain places,
22. they’ll follow me around.
23. Like if I walk into a convenience store they’ll follow me around.
24. They’ll keep an eye on me, yeah.
25. TDL: Do people react negatively when you speak Spanish?
26. 020: Yeah, people make faces, yeah.
27. And I think part of the reason why I don’t speak so much Spanish is because of that.
28. Like I know, like, I don’t want people to, to react a certain way.
29. So I don’t wanna put myself in that situation.
30. TDL: Where does that come from?
31. 020: I think it’s just how they were raised, how they were taught.
32. It comes from their parents. Yeah.
33. The community that they revolve in, yeah.
34. TDL: Is it getting better?
35. 020: I think the more the community grows the more people will have to accept it.
36. But you’re always gonna get those people that will always reject us being here.
37. TDL: Do you think the perception has changed?
38. 020: Changes like what?
39. TDL: Just has the attitude towards Latinos shifted?
40. 020: Um, I don’t think so. I mean there are more Latino or Hispanic restaurants and stores.
41. And people, like they like going to them.
42. Whether it’s because they wanna be, wanna learn about the culture,
43. or they just find it fascinating.
44. So I mean, maybe that’s…
45. TDL: Do Latinos get the appreciation they deserve for their role in the city?
46. 020: I don’t think so. No. I don’t think.
47. I don’t think a lot of people, um, I mean I don’t know how many people know the,
48. the impact that a lot of Latinos came after the storm. But yeah.
49. I think it’s, when, when they talk about ‘oh, we’re resilient, like we rebuilt this city,’
50. I think they focus more on the people that were there before the storm
51. and not the people that came in afterwards to help, yeah.
52. TDL: Can you tell me about something upsetting that has happened to you in the city?
53. 020: I guess upsetting was, it actually happened recently.
54. We got a letter from our sc-from my old high school um, for an alumni breakfast
55. and it was like, they labeled us, ‘alumni of color.’
56. And, I haven’t really seen that term be used a lot, or at all.
57. Um, and so I always considered myself being just like a regular alumni.
58. Uh, and then, when I was like, classified as something other than just a regular alumni
59. it was kind of upsetting.
60. TDL: Because you were singled out?
020: Yeah, yeah. For them to single out a certain, class of alumni from the rest of the community.

Cause I always felt pretty accepted.

Like I was, there was really no difference between me and the other kids

except for my ethnicity or my race but it was, it wasn’t a problem.

TDL: So you never had any discrimination or anything there?

020: No, no, not like that. But, I mean you do notice that I’m one of two in my grade, 

like one of four, five in the entire school.

There’s no faculty representation. So that, all of my teachers were White.

There weren’t even any African-American teachers. <laughter>

And then you see all of the staff, like the maintenance, are all African-American or Hispanic.

So it’s like, you see it, but it’s, so…

TDL: But nothing explicit there at the school?

020: No, not really, no.

TDL: Can you tell me about your happiest experience?

020: The happiest, um, I think going to, uh, there’s a, 

there’s a new supermarket on the Westbank that’s uh, just for Hispanics.

I think going there and seeing everything that I see in Guatemala, 

and like seeing everyone just kind of be there and be relaxed, um, 

was really good thing to see in the city.

Like seeing, seeing the community grow in such a way that, 

you can walk in somewhere and everything looks familiar, yeah.

TDL: What’s it called?

020: Um, I don’t know off the top of my head.

TDL: Do they sell Moza there? I’ve been trying to find it since I came back from Guatemala.

020: Yeah. Yeah they do. Yeah I think they do. I think it’s, it’s called ‘La Morenita.’ Yeah.

It’s on Burman Highway and Belle Chase.

TDL: So they sell Latin American things?

020: Yeah I mean they sell, like, a lot of Hispanic products. All the things you can think of. Yeah.

TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?

020: Favorite thing about New Orleans. Um, the atmosphere.

Um, everyone’s for the most part friendly.

Um, I mean you can walk around and people always say ‘hello’ to you, 

or at least ‘good morning.’

Um, the sense of community.

Um, there’s like a, although it has it’s problems, 

there’s like a sense of like, we’re all New Orleanians, um, so they’re really accepting.

TDL: What would you like to change?

020: There’s a lot that I would change. <chuckle> Um, I think it’d be like, the, the inequality.

Yeah. Whether it’s in housing or education definitely be, yeah.

The level of inequality is pretty ridiculous. Yeah.
TDL: There is a lot of visible inequality in the city, even just looking at houses, sometimes right next to each other…

020: Yeah. And that, that has to do with how the city developed since it was created. So you had a lot of the wealthy people living in low-risk, low-nuisance areas. So that’s like, down St. Charles. That’s in the French Quarter. Um, it’s the Garden District. And then you had everyone else. Uh, Irish, Spanish, Black, living near the river or back what used to be back swamps.

And so, you, that, that mixing comes because they had to live close to the areas where the white people lived so they could serve them. So when you walk down St. Charles you see all the nice houses but then you go one or two blocks back and it’s a poor neighborhood, yeah.

TDL: Is there anything I should know about the experience of being Hispanic in New Orleans? 020: I guess there’s not much representation, anywhere, for the Hispanic community. Um, that you can see in like, in government, or the police, it’s just, there’s no Hispanic representation whatsoever. And maybe that’s because we’re a small because we’re a small community and we’re growing, and in the future there might be, but right now there is, there’s none.

TDL: Do you know of any leaders? 020: I’m sure that there is. But, like that I can name, no.

TDL: I’ve heard that from a few other people, the lack of representation. 020: Yeah, and also in, in um, just other, like business areas, or business sectors, or education-wise. Like there’s just, there aren’t that many Hispanic or Latino, um, like prominent businessmen, yeah.

TDL: Why is this the case? 020: I think some of it has to do with, like fear of going out to vote. Like they, they don’t wanna vote or they don’t wanna make themselves, um, like they, they don’t wanna come out and say, ‘hey, we’re here,’ because there might be some repercussions for, for doing that. Yeah. I also think there might be a large number of undocumented immigrants that are Hispanic and Latino that live in the community.

021: Paco
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 021: Well, depends on the attitude of the Spanish people.
3. If you do what you have to do you never have problems.
4. If you come into the, the, the place is not your home and try to make you rules, you gonna have problems.
5. You know, the American people is very patient.
6. If, if, if all these people go to another country they might kill half of them, you know?
7. American people is have very good patience.
9. And if you do good things and integrate with them, they respect you and love you and they,  
10. they embrace you like you own, like you know, one of them.  
11. So it’s what I feel over here, you know?  
12. I always, um, when I come here, my English it was,  
13. well it’s not that good anyway now, but it was worse.  
14. And many people tried to help me, ya know?  
15. I always tried to be, be, uh, in the middle of the American people.  
16. It’s the only way you gonna learn.  
17. If not, you know, you go to another country you have to learn the culture of that country  
18. and integrate with them. If not, you gonna be miserable.  
19. TDL: Have you ever seen or experienced discrimination based on English use.  
20. 021: No, yeah, everybody. Some people sometimes, but, ya know, the people,  
21. they travel, they are smart people, they know that you speak another language.  
22. The ones they never get out of New Orleans, some, they are a little retarded and they try  
23. to,  
24. you know, to make smart, but it’s not, you don’t pay attention to those people.  
25. You always have stupidity all over the world, wherever you go.  
26. So them ones don’t count, ya know? If not, make yourself miserable. No. <laughter>  
27. TDL: Has anyone in New Orleans ever said anything to you?  
28. 021: No. No. No. I been I been, uh, I, in, in my forty six years I have gratitude for this  
29. country because they been good to me and my kids. Ya know?  
30. And um even if I don’t agree with politicians.  
31. But the, the people is good the politicians no. <laughter>  
32. TDL: Do you think some parts of the city are more open to Spanish speakers?  
33. 021: I think its, its almost the same.  
34. Because you find, remember there was Spanish uh, live over here and  
35. and the French, and the high society, the French and the Spanish they get together  
36. and they live in Old Metairie or whatever. Most often they have Spanish descendent.  
37. So, I don’t see any part that is better than the other one, ya know.  
38. And I never have problems with the, over here even with the,  
39. the black people, the white people, the Chinese or whatever.  
40. I always work for everyone, and they respect me and I respect them.  
41. It’s mutual you know so it depends you attitude, you gonna receive, the same.  
42. TDL: What was your first experience of New Orleans?  
43. 021: Bad. Bad experience. Because I come in through the river, and I saw Chalmette,  
44. and I saw this little sharks. And I said, “wow this is United States?” It surprised me,  
45. because in Spain I used to see movies and all this thing, California,  
46. all the apartments all the beautiful things and then I come here I said, “woo.”  
47. TDL: Did you have any trouble finding a place to stay?  
48. 021: I have a friend of mine another Spaniard we stayed, and,  
49. and then um, this lady, uh, from Puerto Rico, and invited us to home.  
50. And said well you can stay over here come. And we stayed one month with her.  
51. So it was uh, you know when you are young, we not afraid of nothing so, young and crazy.
So <laughter> it was easy. I mean, I don’t find nothing hard. I find job.
52. The people it was very, um, try to teach you because you don’t speak English
53. and, and, you know, and the places I work always they are very patient with me, you know?
54. TDL: Did you speak any English when you first arrived?
55. 021: Well, uh, the only thing is ‘yes.’ The only thing I know in English. <laughter>
56. TDL: Your English has come a long way…
57. 021: Well yes, uh, I mean. And um I never been in the school over here.
58. You know, I just learn in the street. Yeah. From speaking to people and watching tv.
59. I used to watch tv with my kids and, and, uh, Sesame Street, all that, ya know?
60. And, and I have this, this old man, told me one day.
61. Then um, you try to learn one word a day. Only one.
62. If you do that, in the end of the year, your English is alright. Ya know?
63. Because if you try to learn too much, you don’t learn nothing. <laughter>
64. Do it in the in the easy way. So I always listen to the old people.
65. Cause they have the experience, and, and, the, and the wisdom, yes.
66. TDL: What has been your happiest experience here?
67. 021: Well I guess, when my daughter, come to the world. <laughter> It was unbelievable.
68. I watch all, all the, all the way.
69. And, and uh, the way she come out, when she have both the eyes open, like, like octopus.
70. I said “boy.” Unbelievable. And you know the, the impression I have,
71. when the doctor pulled the head, and, and she do the shoulder, one-by-one by herself,
72. first one, and then the other. I said, “wow that little one is more already.”
73. The nature, is, is, because I’m from the country, and we have cows, we have all the stuff.
74. So I saw that one, all the stuff before you know.
75. But never, I never saw a, a woman have a, a baby.
76. And that impressed me the way, the very smart they are, yes.
77. And have you, you own, piece of you, in your hand. That was the most…
78. TDL: What has been your most upsetting or frightening experience here?
79. 021: Upsetting? Well I, I have a fight uh, with two guys, just young people, you know.
80. Because they, they saw you little they try to beat you up.
81. And, but, I am a black belt in karate, so, I beat the crap outta them.
82. And then I set them and, and, you know, and we were friends, after that, I mean.
83. Because my teacher tell me if you in trouble, hit em to knock em down.
84. Because if not you, if you have to hit twice you might hurt them or they might hurt you.
85. And the surprise is in your side.
86. You know, so, never underestimate a small man. <laughter> Yeah.
87. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
88. 021: I mean everything. The people, the festivities always is, is a party over here.
89. New Orleans is a party city, and I love that. Ya know? Always is something to do.
90. TDL: What would you change about the city?
91. 021: Maybe the politicians. <laughter> Ya know? Yeah.
022: Sara
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 022: Good question. I guess hard working.
3. And, probably, I’m not sure but maybe they probably don’t think that they are,
4. um, educated maybe enough. Maybe with my generation going older, but not the younger one.
5. It’s, it’s, you know what I mean?
6. The, they probably perceive me as probably not educated or anything because I’m older now,
7. but I guess if they look at a younger person like my daughter, her generation,
8. they would know like okay, they were here, born here, educated, whatever it is the case.
9. But I guess people my age, thirties going up,
10. they probably would think ah she didn’t go to school,
11. she probably dropped out and got married, and, you know, probably doesn’t,
12. probably is a waitress or a cleaning lady, you know, they perceive as that.
13. TDL: So you think there’s a difference in how people see older vs younger people?
14. 022: They do. It’s a big difference. Yes. Yes.
15. TDL: Why?
16. 022: I guess because they think we have not acclimated. My generation. And oh lord, we have.
17. And I guess the younger generation they figure like, oh, you know,
18. they were born here, raised here, so they’re more or less acclimated.
19. And for the older ones they think like ohh, they probably don’t know the Spanish,
20. so they probably don’t know understand and they probably don’t know how to read it
21. and they probably don’t know how to write it.
22. And so, or, stereotype like you see on TV, like,
23. oh, they speak that broken Spanish or that broken English, either way, you know?
24. I’m like, what does that mean? <laughter>
25. TDL: So you think it comes from TV?
26. 022: Yes. They do, they do. A lot.
27. So they perceive us as uh, not educated and probably you know,
28. poor or livin off the government, whatever is the case. You know, which is not, the case.
29. TDL: Do people here feel threatened by Latinxs?
30. 022: Not really. I have find that not really. They’re more relaxed.
31. But if you go other states states they, look like they do.
32. But, not really because, it’s a melting pot here.
33. So we’re not just Latinos but they got other cultures goin-happenin with the Vietnamese culture
34. cause when I was bringing up, back in the Vietnam era we had, Asian neighbors.
35. We had Cambodians and Vietnamese.
36. And so over here you really can’t pick-and-choose one culture,
37. cause then you got this culture and you got that culture
38. and all that so everybody’s entwined with every, you know.
39. TDL: Is that only New Orleans? Is it different in other parts of the state?
40. 022: Right. Only in New Orleans. <laughter> Yes. It is. Because again, the, the stereotype.
41. If you go up north, there not really a lot of Latinos, or a lot of Asians.
42. They don’t have a lot of people from different cultures and different, um, and with,
43. with culture also comes with food. And, you know, they kinda like seeing it as, what is that?
Ew. We don’t eat tongue. Like, ew. Stay away. You know. So. <laughter>
Things like that. <laughter>
TDL: Is it different in different parts of New Orleans?
022: Yeah. If you’ll go to the lakefront, or Lakeview. Yeah. Oh yeah.
Or if you go to um, say, um, some Uptown areas they might perceive you as, oh,
she might be the cleaning lady. Or your babysitter. Ya know? <laughter>
TDL: What areas are most open?
022: Mid-City, and the, the area around City Park. That’s still considered Mid-City.
Um, and probably, Esplanade, where, I don’t know, what do you call that? The Bywater?
I don’t know if that’s the Bywater or not. I don’t. I really not sure. <laughter>
TDL: Neighborhood boundaries a little fuzzy around here, it seems.
022: Right. <laughter>
TDL: What about outside of the city? Westbank, North Shore, Metairie?
022: Um, Westbank is, Westbank you got all different cultures they don’t,
they don’t perceive as much, not that I know of. Um, Metairie, huh, have they.
I have not encountered that, per se. But uh, you know, like, different, in between, but, no.
I haven’t but I know like, when I was younger, going to a private sc-well Catholic school.
The nuns used to pull away the Spanish speaking people, and the Asians,
and pull them on the side and have em tested, like, hearing, eye sight, phonics, all the
time.
And I felt like she was picking on us because like, why we-
cause they used to do was like bring us in the, in the convents,
cause that’s where we used to have like the testing done and stuff.
I felt like we were picked more than all the other kids there.
But we were fine because, obviously, we talked and we, we read
and I mean, we could write, and understand. So I think she was really,
I think it was the principal, per se, than the teachers and all. It was more the principal.
Yeah.
[Retracted]. But now it’s called, [retracted]. In Mid-City. Mid-City. Mid-City.
TDL: Where did you go to high school?
022: Um, [retracted]. <laughter>
And at the time there not really a lot of Hispanics there. <laughter>
No. You could count em on your hands, basically.
And, more or less it was more the Caucasian people.
You could count your Asians on your hands as well.
And Blacks also you could, probably a little bit more than Latinos.
TDL: Have things changed here over time?
022: It ha-it has. Because I know that, when I was younger we, they used to have a,
a Spanish kind of a fair, per se.
And, you know everybody would cook their own dishes from different, uh, from their
countries.
And they used to be at the Armstrong Park, which is in New Orleans.
It was every year, and it was very small, obviously, if they put in Armstrong Park.
So within the years they, um, they kept it there and then like in the eighties
they moved it out there in Kenner.
And then, they kept it in Kenner for years and years.
And then after the storm I know they did like maybe once at the Zephyrs stadium.

And then now is, they do a lot, instead of one now there’s so many of them <laughter>

TDL: In Kenner?

022: There, they have, will have in Kenner, they will have one in New Orleans.

And, I think those like, those would be like the major two,

in Kenner and New Orleans, more-or-less,

cause I think Kenner has more of the Latino population than maybe what Metairie would have.

And then of course New Orleans, you have a lot of them as well.

TDL: Have you experienced discrimination based on being Latina?

022: Interesting. I think that, only that one time when I was in school with the, with the principal.

Because, more-or-less, I went, after I left there I went to different schools, more diverse.

So, not really, I haven’t really experienced where they looked down on, on,

I guess cause I really don’t look at that if they, someone that does I really just don’t care.

And I just go with the flow and like, I don’t care. <chuckle>

TDL: Do people look at you odd if you speak Spanish?

022: Oh yeah. Yeah they look at me like, why are you talking Spanish?

I’m like, because I can. <laughter> It, it’s the, I mean, like I’m going back to as,

and I’m going back to as an elementary.

As a person who is bilingual, when we were in elementary,

they told my dad to please don’t talk to her in Spanish, cause she needs to learn the English.

Now we’re talking seventy-seven, seventy-six, you know, all that era, era.

And, not to talk to us in Spanish cause you won’t pick up the English.

So when I picked up the English, forgot the Spanish, so my dad hada reinstill,

and, hire somebody to speak to me in Spanish

and then I took Spanish classes to reinver-and

so that was the thing that it was back in the day

where you can’t talk to your kids in Spanish at home.

Talk to them in English. But you had grandmother

and your aunts and your uncles who didn’t know how to speak.

The older generation and, so, you know, you were like caught in between.

So now I see my daughter’s generation,

they really don’t know how to speak it, in Spanish.

They und-they would understand it but they won’t know how to speak it,

and, you know, express themselves, more-or-less.

TDL: Does your daughter speak Spanish?

022: Basics? She would understand it. I mean and we sit there and talk

and, with my friends and st-she would pick it up. Oh yeah. She would pick it up.

Yes.

TDL: Is her father Latinx as well?

022: No. No. He is um, Middle Eastern. He’s from Jordan.

So he speaks Arabic. Yeah. <laughter> Another culture. <laughter>

TDL: Do you remember much about when you first moved here?

022: I remember going on a plane, with my brother. And I remember sleepin.
Coming here, it was around November, so around the holidays. So I do remember a lot.

I don’t, I don’t remember much about the, uh, only that about the flight, but everything else, I remember doing a Christmas tree, we were opening up gifts, the whole family got together and I remember that last time when my great-grandfather came.

They uh, they did a big celebration and fireworks, as usual. Yeah, I remember a lot. I do.

TDL: Were you excited to come here?

022: Uh, did-it didn’t really I, I guess at five I really don’t know much. I mean, you came here, you came here, and all of a sudden you’re here. You know, and back then I guess when you’re five years old, we weren’t as smart as a five-year-old, now-a-days. <laughter>

TDL: Can you tell me about your happiest experience in New Orleans?

022: Going to downtown with my grandmother. In the bus. And, just us going in the bus, cause my grandmother would take the bus, probably three-to-four busses so we had to go the east, and that was like the fondest moments. Cause we would sit in the bus, and anticipation and then going to different busses and then going to the mall and then going back in the bus, that was, yeah. Going to downtown that was, really, cause that was the place to go for people who lived in, uh, in New Orleans. And we’ll buy school supplies downtown, we’ll buy my backpacks downtown, so downtown was the place. Yeah. That was the fondest moments.

And the French Quarter as well. Yeah.

TDL: Can you tell me about a negative experience?

022: I do remember, as a child I do remember the KKK being in corner. I don’t know if it was Galvez, or was it Claiborne? I did see them. I do remember that time. It was where Woolworth used to be. And I do re-recall that, seeing it out the window.

And I asked my grandma, why are people dressed in white? Yeah. I do remember that. <laughter>

Maybe five or six. I do remember. Yeah. <laughter>

TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?

022: Oh, French Quarter. <laughter> Not, not the drinking or anything. I just like, uh, when as a kid I remember going there and the flea market and had that particular smell, which was the old stuff, but it was, cause people, you know, now when you go there they sell all new.

Back then people sold their stuff, antiques and all. So that was, yeah, brings you back to, yeah.

TDL: What would you change about the city?

022: Politicians. Cause there the ones really mess it up real bad, yeah.

Um, well just the fact that they bicker over everything,
and they pocket every money, and the money that they get, they pocket it.

I mean, the streets are horrible. You know, nothing gets done.

You need to actually, after even Katrina saw some areas that are not even liveable.

And, they just need to fix everything, you know. At least fix the streets.

You know, have a place where people can walk, you know, in the city everywhere.

Bike as well, not just, and certain particular neighborhoods,

have it everywhere where it’s bike friendly.

Not just downtown, you know, French Quarter, or even in City Park.

Have it everywhere where you can ride a bike, walk, have fun.

You know, have street lights on, for crying out loud.

That’s like the easiest thing. <laughter>

Have the streets lights on. So that’s, that’s rough, yeah. <laughter>

TDL: So you were living here when Katrina hit? Did you have to leave the city?

022: Yes. I left because my grandmother wanted me to leave,

and so, my kids left with my ex and I went myself too.

And then, but I met them over there, cause he took them over there

so then I met them there.

TDL: Where did you go? For how long?

022: I went to Pensacola, Florida. Not long enough, cause it happened that weekend.

We stayed there one week. We came back that Sunday cause we went the back way.

If you know where, all the, the correct back way,

you know how to get around all those, check-points, and we did.

And I went back home. I went to my aunt’s house, stayed there,

and I would go back home and back way, to check my house,

cause nothing happened to it, cause my house is really high,

so I would go there every day.

TDL: Do you think Latinos are well represented in city government?

What can be done about it?

022: No. Not at all. No. It’s either one or two races and nothing in between, so, no.

Not at all.

If we actually have Latinos have the guts enough to stand up, open up their mind.

Not even open up their mind but speak it. Not just say it, but do it.

Don’t make any promises. Do it.

You know, don’t worry about what people are saying. Just do it.

If you do something good, we’re gonna notice.

But if you’re just gonna be a politician talk, talk, talk

and then you do nothing, like, well, why you there?

TDL: Is there anything we haven’t talked about that is important to know about life as a Latino in New Orleans?

022: Um, it’s funny that you say that, cause you know, in um, in New Orleans you would know where everybody lives, per se,
like um, ethnicity or race.

Cause you know New Orleans East, you, you have your Asian community, which is mostly Vietnamese.

They have their doctors and they have their far-you know know they have their restaurants and stuff, so you know where they’re at. And you have like the Black community and you know where they’re at.

And you know where your Latinos are at, and you know what their stores are at. <laughter>

You would know where to go, cause you know exactly where the pockets are at. <laughter>

Like if I want something Latino, I would go to Kenner.

Like, I, I get it the store, I get it, I know where the food.

I, I know where, where to find it, basically. <laughter>

And that’s a good thing cause you know, cause and uh, one more thing.

Is also the people, they will let you, like, “oh yeah you can go so-and-so and get something.”

You know, if you talk to one person, that’s the good thing about it, here.

Like, you’re lost, someone would help you no matter and regardless, like, oh yeah, you know, you’re lost, just go back this way and all that diff-friendly in that aspect.

TDL: Is there a Latino of speaking in New Orleans?

022: What do you mean like, speak?

TDL: Like accents or anything?

022: Oh you’ll pick it up, You know it. You’ll know.

I mean if, since I was particularly, mostly, you know, raised by my grandmother, I would know if you’re Cuban. I would know if you from South America.

I will know if you’re Puerto Rican. Oh I will know that.

Eh, also I would know if you’re from Mexico, because they do, again, the accent.

Of course Spain you can’t miss their accents.

Or even Argentinan people cause they, they have those accents.

TDL: Is that for them speaking Spanish or English?

022: It all depends if you were raised here sometimes as a young child or born, shouldn’t have no accent, but again, my generation and some people came older, they do have that accent and I can pick it up.

I’m like, oh yeah, you’re a Latino. <laughter>

Cause, you, some of the dropped out of school, like my brother, and a few of his friends, so I would know.

Like okay, I know, that it, but my brother doesn’t have an accent.

He has a California accent. Cause that’s, um, he left here and then went over there since 1998.

TDL: He still lives there?

022: Yes, he still lives in California.

TDL: Do you still attend the Catholic church you mentioned earlier?

022: No. <laughter>

TDL: I’m just curious about Spanish church services in the area.
022: But I used to. Yeah. They still do. The, the [retracted] church.
When, I’m obligated cause they have to have,
something like dedicating a mass or something.
That’s the only time, but to go per se everyday Sunday, no.
But I do know the Spanish songs, cause I did my catechism in Spanish.
TDL: So they still have a Spanish mass?
022: Yes. They do at 9 o’clock. 9 o’clock to 10 o’clock sharp. I still know their
time.
And, you know, I don’t know if they still do the catechism in Spanish
cause I did it with a different church, [retracted], which is right over there in
Downtown,
close to Tchoupitoulas.
So I did my catechism there, that’s where we went to church for the,
oh, for the um, communion.
Yeah. So I did all that. Oh I did all the catholic stuff. <laughter>

023: Tony
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 023: Um, I think that depends on your background, on who you are.
3. Like, my friend group that I’ve made here is really diverse and beautiful.
4. Like, my neighbor and one of my best friends, his name is [retracted].
5. He was born in Poland, brought to the states when he was one,
lived in Tallahassee, he’s a Florida boy that speaks perfect Polish. <laughter> Right?
6. And uh, you know, then we got my friend [retracted], for example,
he was born in the states, lived all his life in Germany and then moved back.
9. And then I got people that I’ve met from Louisiana who are, you know, great and I just,
10. I think that depends on who you are and how you wanna take that in,
11. but for the most part I’ve had a very positive experience being Latino in New Orleans.
12. TDL: Have you had negative experiences related to Spanish use?
13. 023: Yeah, um, yeah, for sure. I guess I don’t meet the Latino stereotype when people
look at me.
14. I’m, I’m not brown looking, I don’t have the, the dark, dark eyes,
like what people imagine of, you know, oh that guy’s Latino.
15. Uh, but yeah, right here, right here on, I was walking, I was once walking on Magazine
Street
17. and I was talking to my mom on the phone in Spanish
18. and this guy was like, you know, ‘go home Spic,’
19. and I’m like, ‘yeah, ok…<laughter> ‘Mami te llamo ahora. Dame un break.’
20. I took, hung up the phone and I told him to, you know, I cussed him out.
21. I was mad. I was, frustrated. I was like ‘no, not okay.’
22. TDL: Have you had other experiences?
23. 023: So that was my second one, which was like the most recent one.
24. But that was about a year-and-a-half ago.
25. Uh, when I got here to college, um, my sophomore year, during Mardi Gras, uh,
same thing kinda happened.
27. I was with one of my best friends. He’s uh, <clears throat> he’s more brown than I am.
28. Uh, so I guess he fits the more Latino stereotype that people think about.
29. And we were both speaking, speaking in Spanish.
30. And, uh, I think they were, frat kids from LSU or something, or,
31. University of Louisana-Lafeyette, ya know?
32. Um, uh yeah and they just, yeah, “go home we don’t speak that in American speak American”
33. And I remember that clearly that was during Mardi Gras.
34. That was during Mardi Gras here in, that was close to Pennison and St. Charles.
35. TDL: And the other one?
36. 023: I was walking towards uh, I was walking towards um, whatayamacallit,
37. um, towards district donuts. District Donuts is great.
38. I was um, I was on my way to uh, the sandwich place.
39. Why am I forgetting the name of the sandwich shop?
40. TDL: Stein’s?
41. 023: Stein’s, yes. I was on my way towards Steins.
42. TDL: Do you think different parts of the city have different attitudes towards Latinxs?
43. 023: Well, eh, I think, you know, one both times happened when it was like high tourist season, too
44. so I don’t think the peep-I don’t think the people that,
45. that said the racist remarks lived in New Orleans or lived in our neighborhoods.
46. They were coming in and checking it out which is even worse
47. cause if you’re going to somewhere,
48. you need to be open to the culture and open to the people that live there.
49. You know this is the host community.
50. You’re not supposed, you know, you know, be nice to the people that are hosting you, right?
51. What’s interesting to me is like, my, my friend [retracted],
52. he lives in Mid-City, right there on Banks Street.
53. And all his neighbors are from Honduras or El Salvador so they all speak Spanish.
   <laughter>
54. And when I go there and I, I go, I you know, go talk to them
55. and they’re some of the nicest people I’ve, I’ve met.
56. They’re always, you know, blasting some good, good music
57. and just drinking beers on the porch and hanging out.
58. TDL: Do you think Mid-City is more accepting of Latinxs?
59. 023: I don’t think it really matters what part of the city you’re in.
60. I think New Orleans as a whole is a very welcoming community.
61. And New Orleans has a, you know, big beautiful heart.
62. As long as you’re a good human being and you treat other peoples with respect,
63. New Orleans is gonna give you love, is gonna treat you right.
64. So I, I, I do think it just, it depends on, on, you know,
65. who you are as a human being and what kind of, you know,
66. what kind of values you were raised, and what kind of, what kinda person you wanna be.
67. TDL: In your experience are there parts of the city with a greater concentration of Latinxs?
68. 023: Oh definitely, definitely. Um so, I would say uh, the Westbank has a little bit more Latinos than,
310

69. you know, say the lower garden district, for example.
70. And in in New Orleans, in Orleans Parish I guess, you know.
71. Or, I think Westbank’s probably the Orleans Parish so maybe I’m not saying that right.
   <laughter>
72. Um, but in like, I guess, this side of, of the bridge, uh, I guess, uh, you know,
73. that Mid-City location has a lot of, a lot of uh, um, Honduran population,
74. a lot of Salvadoran population there living.
75. So I guess, yeah I guess those two areas are predominantly more Latino.
76. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first arrived in New Orleans?
77. 023: Um, yeah, I mean, I can tell you about moving day, <laughter> to the dorms.
78. Yeah, we just, uh, my roommate and I and, uh, my roommate was actually from Puerto Rico too.
79. Yeah, yeah, yeah, we actually went to the same high school as well, so, so we knew each other.
80. We both got accepted we were both going to Loyola.
81. Um, and both our, both of our dads came here with us.
82. So the four of us just kinda, kinda went out, and, you know, havi-looking for a good time, right?
83. And ya, and ya, it’s uh, you’re growing up in Puerto Rico, drinking age is eighteen, right?
84. So I was already eighteen so I was you know already used to having a glass of wine or,
85. or beer with my dad and so, so was my roommate.
86. So we were, we would go to restaurants and, and whatnot,
87. and <laughter> my, our parents would all order beer-two beers for each,
88. for them instead of just one so that we could have a beer, so we can, so yeah, um.
89. But people didn’t care it was, it’s New Orleans, you know, it’s,
90. if you’re tall enough to reach the bar I guess you’re, you’re old enough to drink.
91. And it’s kinda that’s, uh, how it works here, um.
92. Uh, but yeah, uh, we went to, I can’t even remember the name of the restaurant.
93. But it’s like a touristy restaurant in uh, on the French Quarter.
94. And that was our second day here.
95. And we just, four of us just sat down, had a, had a great meal, just laughed and,
96. we we’re, you know both of us just getting ready for you know what college had to offer,
97. what New Orleans had to offer. <laughter>
98. TDL: New Orleans is so chill…
99. 023: Anything goes. What’s the uh, Matthew McConaughey love letter to,
100. have you read, have you seen the love letter to New Orleans that Matthew McConaughey wrote?
101. He’s got this, he’s got this bit where he talks about <coughs throat> the front, front
   of the house porch.
102. Or the, or, or, you know, it’s not a porch in the back
103. but in the front of the house so that you’re facing your neighbor and you create a
   sense of community.
104. I think it’s, I think it’s great.
105. TDL: Can you tell me about your most enjoyable experience in New Orleans?
106. 023: <laughter> That’s such a hard question.
Um, oh, I, so I uh, when I moved back to New Or-New Orleans after working in Los Angeles.

I was like, if, if I’m moving back to New Orleans, I wanna be part of a krewe, of a Mardi Gras Krewe.

So I, I got to join the Lucha Krewe. We all wear luchador masks.

And this past, uh, Lundi Gras, I got to lead the whole, uh, Dead Beans Parade from, from, uh, from, um, Mid-City area to uh, to the Treme.

So I think, you know, me wearing my luchador outfit, carrying my Puerto Rican flag and leading thousands of peoples, down, down a parade,

that was, that was pretty fun. <laughter> That was freaking great. Oh yeah. That was dope.

TDL: How long were you in Los Angeles?

023: I was there for about four months. Yeah. I was there uh, working for a P.R. firm.

But I did not really enjoy living in L.A. Yeah. It was a little too much for me.

I guess I wasnt ready for it. It’s a very, very big, big city.

Uh, and, I mean, I’m sure they’re great people in Los Angeles.

Sadly I did not meet a lot of them <laughter> So I came back to New Orleans.

TDL: It’s a very different vibe that New Orleans.

023: New Orleans is not part of the United States. <laughter>

It’s like its own little city-state, if you will.

TDL: A lot like Latin America…

023: Well, I think part of the reason I’ve thrived so much in New Orleans is because there is so much Latino kind of flavor, Caribbean flavor in this town.

I mean everything from the, the, the way, the island time we run on is the same island time Puerto Rico runs on.

Everything from the potholes to the corruption to the way we party and the way we drink, there’s so many similiar-similarities from, you know the Caribbean or, or Puerto Rico to, in, in New Orleans as well.

So I, I think that’s, you know, part of the reason I love it <laughter>

TDL: That’s due to the Spanish influence, no?

023: Oh, definitely. Or when you’re walking in Old San Juan it looks a lot like the French Quarter. Yeah.

It’s um, it’s uh, it’s, it’s a very European, Caribbean, Spanish city in that way.

I think also the uh, you know, back in the day when Havana and New Orleans had that ferry route.

I think a lot of, I mean a lot of, uh, culture came back and forth.

Especially the music, that came, came and influenced, you know, um, uh, New Orleans musicians, and New Orleans musicians that influenced Cuban musicians.

So I think has a lot to do with what makes the city so special.

TDL: Can you tell me something negative that has happened to you?

023: Uh, uh, oh, yeah, uh, last Super Sunday my friends and I were biking around town sightin-wat-trying to catch the Mardi Gras Indians.
Uh I don’t remember exactly where we were,
but I guess that’s the closest I’ve been to actual gunshots in the city.
So I guess I that was like the scariest that uh, thing that’s, that’s happened.
Um, to me in this city. But other than that…
TDL: Did you see what happened or just hear?
023: Uh, for the most part I didn’t not really hear the gunshots.
I mostly just saw a bunch of people running towards one direction
and I’m like, “well, something’s going on,” and then I heard another,
and that’s when I heard that, the other two like, pop pop.
Okay, it’s time to get out of here. Time to go.
TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
023: I mean New Orleans wouldn’t be New Orleans without the people in it.
So I think the people. The people here are, freaking amazing.
They’re beautiful. They’re real. And I think that’s something that, that matters.
TDL: What would you change about the city?
023: Um, I mean we have a, I think New Orleans needs to find a way
to incentivize more, uh, more jobs.
Maybe not necessarily in hospitality or tourism.
Which is what do, which is fine with me, right?
But more jobs to bring other folks to come to the ci-ci-city, or people who are in
the city to thrive,
in you know, whether it’s technology or infrastructure or <clear throat> you
know,
I think we need to import out ship-our, our, shipping and export needs to get
bigger.
I mean, the New Orleans port should be a mecca.
But it, I don’t think it’s thriving the way it should be.
But I guess that, so I guess that.
Create more ec-economic opportunities in the city so that, so that the city can
benefit from,
from it by creating better infrastructure, fixing the roads and,
and obviously, we need to take care of our public school systems down here.
We need better education, for sure, yeah.
TDL: Is there anything about the experience of living
in New Orleans as Latinx that we haven’t touched on?
023: Um, let’s see, let’s uh, this is uh, I guess that’s a difficult question to
answer.
Uh, I mean I guess maybe this happens in, in other cities but,
the fact that I could be with my friends and put up, put some salsa on or
merengue and that they love it.
I think that’s great. <laughter> Maybe that won’t happen in other cities,
or like, maybe they’ll go like, change that music man we don’t wanna hear that.
But here it’s more like, they embrace that.
They, they take, they’re like, “okay, yes, I like this,
I like this six times four groove that you’ve got going on.”
Um, I think that’s, that’s the beautiful thing about being Latino here.
024: Angel

1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 024: Um, you know, I’ve thought of that question many times.
3. Growing in Puerto Rico, we’re not taught to be victims or be minorities.
4. We, we don’t look at it that way. At least not how I was raised.
5. So I don’t feel anything, uh, you know, how you say, I would, like I’m in a minority at all.
6. Um, even when I was in Pittsburgh, uh, it was funny.
7. My accent was very heavy and um, they would smile
8. and say ‘could you come back and repeat that again?’
9. Two or three times, and until, you know, we communicated.
10. And, as time when on and they got used to me and I got used to them, it was easy.
11. Same thing down here. I, I don’t feel anything. No repercussions being Latino of any kind.
12. TDL: Have you ever experienced negative reactions to Spanish in public?
14. TDL: Do you speak Spanish in public often?
15. 024: Yes I do. Nope. Now I live here for, oh I don’t know, twenty-some years
16. and if I go to Walmart, for example and I find somebody uh,
17. that speaks Spanish and just, a lot of people around me know me
18. and they just smile and wave, keep on going.
19. TDL: Do you think it differs in different parts of the city?
20. 024: Umm. I’m sure it is. I’m sure it is. It’s, it’s like anything, any, animal in the animal kingdom.
21. You know, black birds don’t fly with red birds. Red birds don’t fly with blue birds.
22. Eagles don’t fly with crows. It’s all the same.
23. TDL: What parts of the city are more accepting?
24. 024: I don’t think there’s one, one area in the city that is more accepting than the others.
25. I think as new people move in and uh, their traditions are expressed, then the locals don’t like it.
26. And the locals might be eh, of any race.
27. They just don’t like it and there’s no, direct, eh, uh revolt against it.
28. But if at two o’clock in the morning you’re loud
29. and throwing bottles in the street it don’t matter who’s your neighbor,
30. it’s you’re gonna hear about it. <laughter>
31. TDL: Have you experienced any discrimination based on being Latinx?
32. 024: Never. Neither here or in Pittsburgh.
33. TDL: Did you leave the city during Katrina?
34. 024: We left for about five days and came back.
35. TDL: Where did you go?
36. 024: Uh, Little Rock.
37. TDL: Who was with you?
38. 024: My wife and kids.
39. TDL: How many children do you have, and do they live here?
40. 024: Total of five. I have two older uh, children. At that point one was in North Carolina.
41. Actually no, during Katrina they were still in high school. They went with their mom.
Two of them went with their mom. To Texas, somewhere in Texas. Around Houston I believe.

And then came back to Lafayette.

And they stayed in Lafayette for about a month, month-and-a-half.

And the other three went with me, uh, to Little Rock. For a few days, yeah.

TDL: Did you have to come back to work?

024: Mhm, yes, yes. At West Jefferson, yes.

TDL: Did you have any property damage?

024: Yeah some, yeah some, but nothing dramatic. A few thousand dollars.

TDL: So after five days you were able to come home?

024: Because we didn’t know, um, what kind of damage were gonna have in the house, um,

I bought a used trailer. Like a camping trailer, small little thing and we drug it back,

uh, put it in my driveway and then we found out we didn’t need it. <laughter>

Well, we needed it cause we have no power. So I just put a little generator to it.

So it was a lot easier to keep it cool rather than the house.

TDL: How long until you got power?

024: Uh, was it two weeks or so.

TDL: Can you tell me about when you first moved down here?

024: Um, I practiced in Pennsylvania for a number of years so as a,

as a working person uh, it was just about the same.

It was just learning the area uh, didn’t have a GPS back then.

I don’t think the GPS were that available.

I had a map and this and that.

I would get in different neighborhoods that I should not been in, uh,

like New Orleans East, Doutmond Road. And uh, but never had any problems.

And, and if I had troubles I’d stop in a gas station and ask.

They were nice to me, and said go back here and make a right, a left,

and this and that, get back I-10. I never had any trouble.

TDL: Was it hard to find housing?

024: No i just went to a realtor, real estate lady

and she gave me some options and I look at the neighborhoods and we chose one.

TDL: What was your happiest experience in New Orleans?

024: Oh, birth of my children. Yeah. I was able to be present when all my children were born,

and that’s very important to me, family.

So, you know, I’d drop everything for my kids, and my wife, of course.

TDL: Do they still live here?

024: I have one in North Carolina, and, fo-fo-let’s see one in Tuscaloosa,

one in uh, Baton Rouge and two here.

TDL: What about a negative or upsetting experience?

024: Oh, Katrina. No doubts about that. Actually we were having a party with, uh, um

<laughter>

There were six adults, one American and the rest Hispanic.

And were drinking tequila and having a heck of a time.

And that was on a Friday evening.
And uh, my wife says uh, on Saturday morning, about one, two in the morning, ‘you have to come and see this hurricane.’ And I said ‘what hurricane there nothing there coming up.’ She said, ‘look at the tv.’ I look at the tv and there’s a storm from Mexico to Miami.

<laughter>

And all hey broke lose from there on. Yeah, we didn’t make any arrangements we just, I didn’t go to sleep I just started putting stuff away and uh, patching up the windows and throwing a few things in the car. And we left on Sunday , uh, like four in the morning. And we spent the whole day on the road, basically.

TDL: But you said you weren’t gone for long…
024: No, not too long, yeah, yeah.
TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
024: Oh the food. I put on sixty pounds in New Orleans in, <laughter>
I didn’t know how many years.
Uh, my normal weight is about a hundred and eighty. I peaked at two sixty. But coming down.
TDL: It’s hard to eat healthy in New Orleans.
024: Huh, yeah, that doesn’t exist. <laughter>

TDL: What would you change about the city?
024: Oh the roads, yeah. Uh, going from the west bank to the east bank and traffic, ugh, forget it.

TDL: Do you think Latinxs are well-represented in city government?
024: <click> That depends on what you call representation.

If you want a Spanish-speaking, uh, native sitting on council, and uh, or, in uh, legislature, it’s gonna be very difficult. There’s not enough people that would, uh, vote for them.

Uh, one because they might not be able to vote, two they don’t have the money to, to advertise and send the message out.

Do I see needs for Latinos to do different things? I look at the situation a different way.

When in Rome, you do like the Romans. So, I, I don’t want uh, United States to change their ways for me. I just adapt. And, and, I’m not confrontational.

I’m not here to confront anybody or change anybody so.
Um, I respect the neighborhood, I respect the, the streets. I re-you know. Don’t throw things out the window.
I don’t drop the wi-uh, window down and put loud music.
That’s not me. Uh, just, live my life and I don’t mess with anybody, nobody messes with me.

TDL: Do you think people in New Orleans feel threatened by Latinxs?
024: I never seen it.

And, and, patients that I’ve seen are more racially charged Black and White rather than White, uh, Hi-Latinxs or Black and Latinxs.

Black and White more than anything else.
And, eh, eh, now lately, I’ve seen some Vietnamese that, they don’t like it.

Now of course I frown and they change the tune right quick. <laughter>

TDL: Is there anything you think I should know about the experience of being Latinx in New Orleans?

024: To me, no, um, it has been a very good, um, you know, change.

New Orleans has been very embracing to me.

Um, made tons of friends of all shapes, sizes, colors.

You know people come to my house of all colors, all backgrounds.

Um, I haven’t had any trouble at all.

TDL: Do you think things have changed?

024: It has changed. Um, I don’t know how much you know about, uh, the migration from Spain to the Americas back then.

But, um, my family came through the Canary Islands, like many others.

Um, and, eh, the migration of the Canary Islands it came in, some of them came into New Orleans, they call it Isleños. So, uh, the Isleños are here.

Their music, what they eat, the way they eat is very similar to what I’m used to.

Also some Mexico, Mexicans from Veracruz are very similar to us.

Um, the same thing is um, in Hispanics and Latinos from um, let me think, um, <click> from uh, Colombia around Cartagena. Um, and from Honduras, definitely.

Um, they eat and they act like I, I would.

Um, it’s funny as so heck, you know, <laughter> just very similar.

TDL: Have you noticed changes in size of the community or the make-up of the community?

Are there more Puerto Ricans?

024: Oh it’s growing. It’s definitely growing.

Um, eh, Puerto Ricans tend to fly, or to migrate, to places where’s there’s only one flight.

They don’t have to change airports.

So the migration from Puerto Rico is Miami, Orlando, Atlanta, um, eh,

Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, uh, Houston, Dallas. That’s, Los Angeles.

It’s a straight shot from Puerto Rico.

They just get off the plane and that’s it, um, so.

TDL: So not many Puerto Ricans?

024: Well, Puerto Rico, they population is about maybe three-and-a-half, four million.

But there is twice that number outside. Basically second generations.

TDL: What’s the largest group in New Orleans in your experience?

024: Um, probably from Honduras.

025: Dio

1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 025: Well I mean um, since I did this work, right after the storm
3. and I lived here before the storm, uh I could tell you that before the storm
4. there wasn’t much of a thought. That is to say, that in Orleans Parish proper,
5. the Latino population was so low,
6. um, that no one even bothered to consider it an issue one way or the other.
7. And it wasn’t. Uh, it was rare to run into a non-English-speaking Latino in Orleans Parish
8. before Katrina. When Katrina happened that changed everything and so, you know,
9. there were, there was lots of talk on the news, on the talk shows, on social media about
10. the Latinos which was both a blessing and a curse. Some people welcomed them
11. because they were cheap labor, and most people hated them,
12. well, not most people, some people hated them because they took other people’s jobs.
13. Uh, and so that became a new conversation, that we didn’t have before.
14. Uh, and so that mixed perspective is still there.
15. TDL: So a mixed perspective?
16. 025: Mhm. Some will say they, they’re like our brothers.
17. We welcome them, they helped us rebuild, we love them.
18. And some were like no, they need to go back where they came from.
19. TDL: What determines which perspective a person has?
20. 025: Um, uh, I, I think uh, <click> largely, uh, I don’t know, I don’t know what to call it
21. but it’s certainly value orientation. Meaning if someone values, um, us first versus them, uh then,
22. and that tends to follow with economics, uh, eh,
23. and with priorities who gets services who gets resources,
24. then you don’t want them around.
25. And if you have a value of its inclusive, we all belong, were all immigrants, <laughter>
26. then that’s, looks different you know so, and of course it plays out along political lines,
27. along ethnic lines, along language lines,
28. but typically its one or the other of us them or its all of us.
29. TDL: Do you think it’s different in different areas?
30. 025: I’m sure, um, but you know the metro region is mixed right?
31. So Orleans is a highly liberal place compared to next door Jefferson Parish
32. and certainly compared to the rest of the state.
33. And so an example that stands out that I’m sure you’ve heard about already is Mayor
34. Nagin, uh,
35. post-Katrina saying ‘we welcome the taco trucks,’ because Jefferson Parish,
36. two years after the storm, enacted a law to make it harder for these new,
37. at the time, taco trucks to do business in Jefferson Parish
38. cause they were popping up, they were coming from Houston,
39. and they were popping up their businesses in front of the Lowes and the Home Depots,
40. wherever they saw workers. Uh, and of course they weren’t established restaurants,
41. and they didn’t have a law for managing that so Jefferson Parish quickly set one up
42. to exclude them, and then Orleans responded and say ‘come on over we don’t care.’
43. <laughter>
44. So that’s, there’s that dynamic here.
45. TDL: So there’s a difference between parishes?
46. 025: Yeah. Absolutely. Politically. Because I think on the ground it’s different.
47. Because Jefferson Parish has, ma- many low income communities that could care less,
48. where a lot of Latinos who are newcomers find themselves.
49. They find themselves mostly in low-income communities,
50. and they get along just fine in those spaces.
51. But when, then you talk to the upper-middle-class folks
52. and the folks in politics in Jefferson Parish
52. TDL: Do you think it varies even within Orleans Parish?
53. 025: Absolutely, yeah. Um, I think if you went to Lakeview
54. you would want your La-Latino workers, and, and then to leave and go to wherever they
55. live.
56. You don’t want them living next door.
57. Um, and there are some places, where I’ve experienced through my city work where
58. some uh,
59. sort of established middle-class black communities don’t like them around because uh,
60. particularly large groups of Latinos living in one household tend to be rowdy, uh
61. and so the rowdiness spills out onto the streets and they don’t appreciate that.
62. And so it becomes an ethnic issue, and that has played out too.
63. So it’s not just a color thing, you know?
64. TDL: What parts of the city are most open to Latinos?
65. 025: Definitely Mid-city, uh, because there’s a history there. Uh long history of, um, you know,
66. Mid-city was the place where Cubans came, uh, in the seventies I think, or sixties.
67. Before they um cause we were one of the sites for receiving refugees, right?
68. So Catholic Charities has always been uh, an immigration uh, refugee processing site.
69. And so Catholic Charities New Orleans obviously brought people here, uh,
70. sponsored people here the same way they did with the Vietnamese community.
71. Uh, and so a large portion of Cubans stayed and they stayed in Mid-city.
72. So there’s a history of Latinos in the area, uh that’s has always been here.
73. And so, still there, so I think, you, you could feel like ‘okay yeah this is a good place for
74. Latinos.’
75. Um the Vietnamese community has made it very welcoming for Latinos as well,
76. out in Vilage del Est.
77. Um, so they’re out there, um, and then, you know, I think, after that it’s just hit or miss.
78. Latinos don’t really congregate in one neighborhood in Orleans.
79. They’re, they’re kinda dispersed.
80. But you, you will find them primarily Mid-city and Vilage del Est,
81. and then dispersed throughout Central City, which is working class community.
82. Uh dispersed a little bit throughout the Upper Ninth Ward and Gentilly a little bit.
83. You won’t see them too much in Lakeview and you won’t see them too much in, you
84. know,
85. sort of well to do Uptown, for vari-you know, for obvious reasons.
86. TDL: Have you ever experienced discrimination for being Latino?
87. 025: Yeah, I mean, I, I don’t really have clear memories as a child, but I know that we
did.
88. Um, you know, being recently here, uh, back in the seventies.
89. Um, but that’s so long ago. Um, my mom didn’t speak English, I didn’t speak English,
90. you know, when we had to go anywhere, to do anything.
91. Um, so I just, I just don’t have a clear memory of that.
92. Uh, as an adult, I’ve lost most of my accent so I haven’t had a problem, uh locally.
93. Uh, also because of my skin tone and the texture of my hair I kind of look like,
94. um, the creole community here, and so, there’s a, there’s, I’ve had a lot of acceptance,
95. because people always think I’m their cousin or something.
96. and it, that’s a real thing because people are always saying it out loud.
97. Uh, and, and, the first question they always as me when they see me is
98. not what country are you from, is you know, ‘who your people?’
95. Meaning they think I am, you know, one of them.
96. So I’ve had that experience, but only in New Orleans.
97. Because, because of New Orleans’ creole history. <laughter>
98. TDL: What about just for speaking Spanish?
99. 025: Uh, it depends. Sometimes I uh, sometimes I do it on purpose to see.
100. Um, it depends on where I am and who’s there.
101. Some people don’t mind it and other people may make a funny face,
102. but no one has ever said out loud, in my personal experience here in town,
103. no one has ever said out loud ‘don’t speak that language here.’
104. So I’ve never had, I’ve never had that experience here.
105. TDL: It’s interesting, some people have, some haven’t…
106. 025: Right, right, yeah, yeah, no I, I know it happens, and I know it happens here,
107. but I haven’t had, haven’t experienced it directly.
108. TDL: What do you remember about when you first arrived here?
109. 025: Yeah, no, yeah, I don’t remember much.
110. I was seven <laughter> so, I don’t have good memories,
111. I mean, I, I don’t have a good memory.
112. I do have good memories I don’t have a good memory,
113. meaning I’m not one of those people who can recall events in their childhood
with detail,
114. so I don’t have that for you.
115. Um, I just remember it was, I
116. just remember vaguely that it was really hard the first two years,
117. you know, uh, I had a, I peed on myself once as a student, you know, in the third
grade
118. cause I didn’t know how to ask ‘may I use the bathroom.’
119. And I was just deathly afraid. <laughter>
120. So, you know I was like a seven-year-old kid, you know, so, in class.
121. Um, you know, it was that kind of thing just afraid of speaking it.
122. And, and, and, not being able to make any friends cause I couldn’t speak.
123. You know, it took a while.
124. TDL: Do you know much about your family’s initial experiences,
about the process of finding a place to live?
125. 025: That I don’t know. What I’m, I, I, I don’t know,
126. I do know that my father came here one year before us, to set up things.
127. And I do know that he struggled. He’s long dead, but, um,
128. I do know that he struggled, uh, to, to establish himself,
129. you know, get a place to live, all that stuff.
130. Uh, he had a job, because he came, you know, got hired on the job and then
came.
131. But you know, start-started in a hotel room and then had to find a, and do all of
that.
132. So he went through his struggles that I don’t have a lot of detail about.
133. So by the time we showed up he had an apartment, he had a car. <laughter>
134. So he, he had like, taken that year to set things up. And he, he had managed to do
that.
135. And I don’t even remember how well he spoke English.
136. I know he didn’t speak it that well.
137. But he got along. He did find a way. Yeah, that, that, he was resourceful.
TDL: Can you tell me about a really happy experience living here in New Orleans?

025: Living in New Orleans?

TDL: Yeah, yeah. Something that stands out.

025: I mean, tons of good things. What would you, you want, you want me to focus that a little bit? <laughter>

TDL: It’s just open-ended, the first thing that pops into your head.

025: I mean, it could be anything.

TDL: I mean I have a eighteen year-old boy who was born here,

you know, so, I would say that’s it, but, that’s not much to say there other, other than, you know.

Oh, okay, I will say, his mom is a local, white woman,

and we’re not together anymore, but um,

you know, her mom is a liberal minded lady, is um, a lesbian, uh,

and has a Cajun partner, a lady from Cajun country, um, and, you know,

our families, while we were separated, we,

we didn’t stay together too long after having the baby,

but, we maintained relationships and the family came together,

it’s like, so the day that the child was born there was this Latino family

and there was this white family and there was this Cajun lady

and we were all in the same room together.

It was one, you know, it wasn’t an operating room.

We did a, uh, birthing room where everybody could be in the same space

at the same time while the baby’s coming, <laughter> like, at the, at that moment. Yes.

So they were all in there, all in the same space together.

You know my mom talking to her mom and her partner

and everybody loving on each other.

These immigrants and the Cajun and the white people,

you know, yep, to see this baby come out.

So, you know, that was a cool moment, you know,

in terms of multi-ethnic relations, you know? <laughter>

TDL: Can you tell me about something upsetting that has happened to you?

025: Yeah, sure, I mean, that one’s easy. <laughter>

Yeah, cause there’s, there’s, there’s um,

There’s one, there are two moments that stand out in recent memory that are, uh,

I still get upset thinking and talking about them.

And one of them was when I was running uh, [redacted],

the non-profit, um, in 2010, I think,

David Vitter was running for re-election.

And of course, between 2008 and 2010

was this very strong national anti-immigrant legislative wave at state level.

States are putting together all these anti-immigrant laws, right?

And so Louisiana was, obviously, participating in that effort. We fought that.

But um, but Vitter’s campaign had this, this, this, um, ad um, that uh, showed uh,

what looked like, you know, Native-American Mexican looking type folks

coming through a hole in the fence, walking into a limousine,

being given cash in their hands as they come across the hole in the fence,

and then driving off in a limousine.
And of course what he’s saying as well, on the ad, is around whatever stupid ideas he was promoting around all the things that we give ‘illegal’ immigrants, right?
And so we just felt that that was an offensive ad, uh, and, and, so I, I was asked, I didn’t want to do this, but I was asked by many community leaders at the time, who felt like, ‘hey, [redacted] is our, our loudspeaker, [redacted] needs to say something,’
and [redacted - exchange with other person in coffee shop]
Uh, and so, so I reluctantly agreed to spear-head a press announcement uh, demanding that Vitter remove those ads.
Which I didn’t want to do because it would put the organization front-and-center against a person running for Congress who’s already, I mean, he was already a Senator,
he was running for re-election.
Uh, and I wasn’t interested in having that kind of limelight on this little, small non-profit in New Orleans. Uh, but, I organized it.
We had oh, four tv stations present.
We put together a multi-ethnic group of leaders to speak out against the ads.
We had Black, Asian, White, Latino local leaders all, we had prepared speeches.
And I did my best to minimize my, my presence in front of the tv.
So like I stood up, I did the intro a welcome to the press that was there and gave it off to the gathered leaders. But just doing that and putting it together, um,
I still find, I still find that to me one of the worst experiences uh, in the role of leadership, helping Latinos, cause I felt the potential of threat from that like,
to be very real. In a way that I, I, I didn’t, was very uncomfortable.
So that, to me that’s one of my, my worst moments, but people, uh, were grateful for that moment cause it sparked some conversation and people were thankful for it and the people who wanted it were thankful for it, I, I just, I didn’t like it, cau-yeah, cause I didn’t want to be the one to do it.
I would have been thankful for someone else to do it, but, so…
TDL: What would you change about New Orleans?
025: Wow. Yeah, I don’t know man, that’s a lot. Yeah, I don’t know, I mean, I think, every city has a lot of inequality, but I think ours is stark.
So, I think Latinos fall in that line just as much as Black folks.
And so the legacy of, of Jim Crow, the legacy of slavery, the legacy of, of, keeping people at a certain space so that they can always be your service workers is very strong here, and I think Latinos are falling into that trap.
So that could be changed, you know?
TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?
025: It feels like a Caribbean town. <laughter>
TDL: I get that a lot...
025: It does have that. That’s why people who are not, U.S. residents who don’t understand New Orleans come here and find it so foreign, but Latinos who come here find it like, ‘oh it feels like home,’ you know? <laughter>
So there’s that.

TDL: I see that myself…do you think it’s the colonial history?

025: Yeah, yeah. I mean I, I think it’s a combination of a French-Spanish colonial history, which is also a Lat-Caribbean and Latin American thing, cause the French and the Spanish were everywhere in, in that region, but also I think it’s the Haitian heritage which is very strong here. And, and, when you say it has a Caribbean feel, what I’m really saying is it has a real colonial feel, you know, Caribbean colonial, like Black pep-folks kind of thing, which other people won’t say, but, that’s what I think it really is.

TDL: Do you consider yourself New Orleanian?

025: M-m. Nope, I still call myself an immigrant. Yeah. Cause I wasn’t born here, I don’t have multi-generational family here, you know, my son does, because he’s born here and his dad’s been here thirty years and his mom, on his mom’s side is multi-generational. But I’m not, you know, my family is all immigrants and I’m an immigrant.

TDL: What does it mean to be New Orleanian?

025: I think you can become New Orleanian, you know, in a matter of five-to-six years, but its acceptance. Um, now to be recognized as New Orleanian by New Orleanians I hope, that’s another matter, yeah. But obviously it’s a mutli-generational thing, folks who have a history here. You know, um, you walk around the street today people still talk about things that happened in the seventies and the sixties, you know.

And structures, you look at NOLA.com, at any given time they’re always talking about some structure that’s been gone for twenty years, some establishment, ‘you remember this place?’ You know.

So that very strong local history thing goes on here. So a New Orleanian has that local history, like, they have a sense of it, it was part of their conversations at home, somebody talked about things that used to happen, you know, so, we don’t have that, we’re, we’re outsiders. <laughter>

TDL: What does it mean to say that someone speaks like a New Orleanian?

025: Yeah, um, it’s its’ own thing. But it’s, you know, it’s southern but its not southern.

It’s kind of Brooklyn-ish, <laughter> you know.

It’s kind of New Jersey, Atlantic City-ish. <laughter>

You know, cause it’s got those ethnic components similar to the folks that went over there.

Um, so its all of that, but it’s not WASP-y, <laughter> like the rest of the south.

So, I don’t know. It’s, it…

TDL: Can you think of any specific features?

025: New Orleanians? Yeah. Um, that’s disappearing but you know,
I grew up learning that you make the groceries around here. You’ve heard that right?

I don’t know where that comes from but definitely that’s what people say, um, but, let’s see. What else is New Orleanian?

There are bunch of things like that, but since I’m not, multi-generational New Orleanian,

I struggle to find these things.

I know they come out from time-to-time when I’m talking to people.

Um, but it’s also time, cause I remember when I was a kid ‘brah’ and ‘sucka’ you know,

which obviously you heard in sort of the blacksploi-plot-blackspolitation,

why can’t I say that? Blacksploration movies.

You think it’s national, but it was very common down here, the ways kids talked in,

in, you know, the eighties. ‘Hey brah, hey,’ you know? ‘Come here, sucka.’

But you know, you could see that in Brooklyn too, so, uh…

TDL: Is there a Latino way of speaking?

025: Ehh, I don’t think so. Cause it’s so, we’re so diverse.

Um, it’s not the same when you talk to a Garifuna,

cause you know we have Garifunas here.

I don’t know if you’ve had a chance to interview any, but we have Garifunas.

Um, we have Garifunas that have been here thirty years. Uh, who live in Central City,

and look like anybody else in Central City.

Um, and you wouldn’t know it, unless they opened their mouth

and they had a strong accent.

And, but they’re from, they’re from Honduran Caribbean coast.

Um, but then you talk to you know, one of the, one of our famous civic leaders who’s a doctor who is Argentinian, right?

And he has an accent, but he’s Argentinian upper-class,

and his philosophy and world-view, and the way he expresses himself completely different that a Garifuna, so you know, it’s.

And then, then you have Dominicans and Puerto Ricans who have their own vibe.

Then you have the Central Americans who, we lump all together.

Like Dominicans will say Nicaraguans, Hondurans, Salvadors,

they’re all the same. <laughter> So no, yeah, I don’t what that,

maybe for a person who doesn’t understand these differences as a local.

You know, they kinda lump us all into Mexicans, I think. <laughter>

Or Hondurans, cause there’s lots of those here, uh but that’s about it.

But no, I mean, there’s different, there’s different Latino experiences.

Um, we don’t even know what the Tex-Mex experience is,

cause that, that doesn’t happen here.

We don’t know what the Chicano experience is,

cause that doesn’t happen here, you know?

They, some of them are here, but it’s not, it’s not a local Latino view, you know?

Cause it’s more mixed, very mixed, actually.

Even though our population is small, there isn’t,
there’s one largest group, which is the Honduran group, but it’s, all groups are here, even in small numbers, you know?

026: Manny

1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 026: Um, I will say overall, overall I think most people have a positive view.
3. And, and that was influenced in big part after Katrina.
4. Uh you know when the city had to be rebuilt, a lot of the workforce were uh, Latinos,
5. Who came over, mostly from Mexico but also from other nationalities.
6. There was already, uh, a sizeable Latino community here,
7. Uh, mostly Hondurans, uh, Cubans, uh, and some other nationalities.
8. But then there was a big influx of Mexicans, and, and,
9. and a few of other nationalities after Katrina.
10. And because they helped rebuild, uh, I think a lot of people who were here at the time,
11. really had a positive view, a positive image.
12. Um, I personally don’t encounter a lot of negative reaction at all really.
13. Um, but like I said, I mean, I’m, I’m, the circles I move in,
14. I, I move on uh, you know, the people I work with,
15. you know, I’m not out on the street a lot. I’m, I’m an editor so I don’t,
16. I no longer like go out and report on a day to day basis but when I did, um,
17. I, you know, people were cordial, people were fine, for the most part.
18. So um, I think there is that.
19. Now I think that there are also, however, uh,
20. some parts of the area that are kinda more conservative.
21. Like let’s say, you know, some parts of Jefferson Parish or the North Shore
22. where the experience may be different if you are Latino and you go there.
23. Um, but I think overall it’s probably positive.
24. TDL: So you think some areas are more open than others?
26. TDL: What parts are most open?
27. 026: So, well, so, pos-well, I will say, for example, so, you know, in Jefferson Parish,
28. it’s I don’t think it’s necessarily that you’re gonna find hostile-hostility,
29. but, you know, if you poll people on their opinions about immigration, for example,
30. conser-more conservative places like Jefferson Parish
31. are gonna have a more negative reaction to that than, let’s say, the city of New Orleans proper.
32. Um, but as far as like going out and about, um, I, there’s no place where I feel like
33. I shouldn’t go into that neighborhood, I shouldn’t go in there, um.
34. TDL: Do you think people feel threatened by the Latinos?
35. 026: I don’t think so, no. I mean it’s, it’s not like,
36. because we have had a long presence here of decades.
37. And because our numbers, uh you know, the population of Hispanics in the ci-in New Orleans,
38. is, is, is still in the double digits, but it’s not, you know, huge,
39. it’s not twenty percent or a lot more.
40. Um, so you don’t see here the dynamics that you might see in some places like in the Midwest.
I’m talking about like Iowa or, you know, north Alabama
where the immigration and the influx of Latinos has been recent and big and sudden
say like uh, I actually did a uh, when I was doing my Masters
I did some series of newspaper articles about Latinos moving in to
small towns in north Alabama to work in chicken plants
because, you know, for what the plants pay, nobody else was, who is from there wants
the jobs.
They pay like minimum wage and its back-breaking labor.
Um, so there were towns where the population may have been two thousand people
and all of a sudden they have five hundred Latinos that move in in a couple of years.
So that cau-causes a lot of friction.
Uh, here its been more gradual the increase, uh, so I, I, yeah, I don’t think,
I think overall, the opinion, or, or the, there’s not a sense of a city that’s been transformed
by, by the presence of let’s say recent immigrants.
TDL: Do you think issues will arise if the community continues to grow?
026: I don’t know. That would be interesting to see if, if, if that happened.
Probably the city, and the com-or the community around here, in our metro area,
that has seen the biggest change is Kenner.
Um, cause Kenner has had, uh, as a city, as a municipality, a big increase in Latino
population.
They had a presence uh, before Katrina, but after Katrina,
in part because you know that’s where apartments were affordable,
uh, a big, of, of that, a lot of that influx concentrated there.
Uh and so, I think they, there has been somewhat of a, that, that friction
that I was talking about you probably will see it more in that, in, in parts of Kenner.
Where you know, you see, after so-after Katrina, the city, you know,
started enforcing some zoning laws and some apartment laws.
Also Jefferson Parish decided not to allow building
of certain apartment complexes around the parish.
Now that was not just about Latinos.
They also, uh, some politicians, were worried about New Orleanians
who didn’t have a place to live here, mostly poor New Orleanians, moving over there.
There some other racial dynamics going on in that.
But Kenner, I will say, is the city that has seen the most uh, influx of Latinos percentage
wise
Now whether people in Kenner, the majority or, or not, consider that a problem,
I don’t know. It’s hard, it’s hard for me to say. We haven’t seen, like the express,
Um, you know, we haven’t seen the kind of like racial politics there that we have seen
yet,
Uh, in ot-that, that can be seen in other cities, in other places
so as of now I don’t think so. But I think obviously, you know, at some point,
when Latinos, you know, Latinos are set to become the biggest ethnic or, or you
know, group
uh, in the United States by like twenty-fifty, I think.
So you know what, what the ratio is gonna be in New Orleans by then I don’t know.
There, there are many other cities that compete
for attracting Latinos more than New Orleans does.

But the, but it is, it is a big presence, I mean, have you been in Kenner?

TDL: I have, yeah.

026: Okay, you know, Williams Boulevard north of I-10, it’s a ton of Latino businesses there.

That eighteen years ago, twenty years ago, were not there.

TDL: Can you tell me about when you first came to the city?

026: Right, right. No, no um, no, not at all, I mean, um, I, but, I was bilingual by then.

When I came to LSU that was more of a culture shock, cause that was my first time living in the US.

But when I, by the time I got to New Orleans no I, I mean,

I’d been, I had my years at LSU, two years in Alabama, so uh, I, I didn’t find it, I mean, it wasn’t like we had to hunt for an apartment and we felt like we were not getting, you know, offered apartments.

No it was like the first place we went made an offer, that’s what we rented.

And then we bought a house and, you know, neighbors were accepting so I, I’m not…

TDL: You said your wife’s family is from the area?

026: Yeah, they’re, she grew up in uh, Patterson, about an hour and a half from here.

What has been your happiest experience in New Orleans?

026: Uh well the birth of my kids. <laughter> That’s an easy one.

But as far as like a New Orleanians, New Orleans proper kind of thing, the Saints winning the Super Bowl.

You probably hear that from multiple people.

I mean it was, the, the worst, it’s easier to remember what was the worst thing and that was Katrina,

for most everybody who was here in the city.

That’s gonna be like the before and after moment of your life, you know.

Uh, but the Saints, that season, and the fact that just you know, I mean, we all rallied around them as a team and,

you know, sports, they do that, you know, sports ten, ten-you tend to rally around.

But for, for, for us in the city, um,

the Saints that year meant a lot more than just a sports team.

Uh you know, this was, um, so 2006 was the first really good season they’ve had in a long time.

At a time when, you know, the city in 2006, a year after the storm Was still probably like Puerto Rico will be right now, you know,
a lot of homes devastated, a lot of families still trying to rebuild.

Uh there was the physical damage and then there was the emotional and psychological damage.

[phone rings – ‘uh, pardon me’]

So um, so that was the thing. Uh, as a, as a kinda of New Orleans, that was the happiest, the 2009-10 season.

TDL: Can you tell me about your experience with Katrina?

026: Right. Well so um, personally we, I mean we, we, we had just,
I had just gotten a promotion here at work, two, a few weeks before, so we had, we had a house in Metairie and we had purchased a house in St. Bernard, um, but we had not yet moved in. The house was being painted, and stuff like that. So, we lost that house, got flooded. And we sold, we cleaned it up and sold it after, a few months after. The house in Metairie did not flood, fortunately. Uh, and so, um, you know, I was working here and worked with the paper as did most of the reporters for the immediate few weeks.

My family evacuated to their, to their parents, my wife’s parents, uh, like I said about an hour-and-a-half from here. And they were there, I didn’t see them for a couple of weeks. And then, you know, we uh, they came back when power and some services had been restored. I believe in, somewhere in September Jefferson Parish opened up, or early October, I wanna say. And so they came back. And uh, you know, it, it was, it was a long time rebuilding, but I personally, um, we were lucky. You know, we had flood insurance, we had uh, uh, property insurance. I mean we, we had some loses because of the other property, but you know, our things, our house was not destroyed. Uh, and we didn’t lose any relatives, so, uh, which was not the same for most of the staff here at, at the paper. Uh, most people lost their homes, just like most New Orleanians did. So it was very difficult. You know, cause folks, and then of course after the storm you know, you had the rebuilding, which went on for years. I mean it’s still going on in some place-in some, in some aspects, but, um it was a long time before things felt kind of like normal again. Uh, but I, I personally consider that me very luck in that sense, that we, we did not have as much loss as, as others did. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans? 026: Oh, um, well, I mean a lot of people would say the food and that is true, but I just like, I think New Orleans is kind of a very open place, you know? It has, uh, some of that I think is because it has a long history of being a place where there was an influx and an outflux of people. Um, you know, so, I find it, it’s a, as a city it’s a pretty inviting and a pretty, you know, accepting place in some, in some ways. It’s also very backwards in many other ways and very, um, it has some serious problems, you know. We have some, some serious problems here, poverty and crime, etcetera. Um, but that’s what I would say about that. TDL: What would you change about New Orleans? 026: Poverty. It’s our number one problem. Crime is a consequence of that. Crime is not cause, you know, people are inherently bad. Some people are inherently bad, but most people are not, you know.
Poverty is, poverty and the, and the problem with education are, are the, you know, the things that generate a lot of the other problems in the city, um…

TDL: Do you consider yourself a New Orleanian?

026: I do. I mean not, I am a New Orleanian. But I’m also a, an American. I became a citizen in 2011, but I’m also a Nicaraguan too. It’s…

TDL: What does it mean to be New Orleanian?

026: I think you being, when you been here long enough, I think, um, you know, something New Orleanians that’s probably, I, I don’t, I don’t think there is a place that makes you different than any other place.

But in New Orleans I think, you know, an appreciation of the culture of the city, um. You know, you hear about it, you read about it, but it takes a few years, to where you really understand the things that are uniquely here, uniquely New Orleans.

And I’m not talking just about the um, the Mardi Gras Indians, or Mardi Gras itself, or Jazz Fest, or those kind of things that happen only here. But the fact that you know, you can, you know, there are some neighborhoods in New Orleans where you can walk down the street and that you hear music. Not just people playing in the radio, people playing music. That’s really cool, uh. And also that you have a variety of food, a variety of cultures.

It’s a very culturally diverse city. I like that. That’s, you know, a lot of ti-a lot of, it takes, generally, a much bigger city to get that kind of a mix of people. New Orleans is kind of a smaller city that has it. And that’s really cool.

TDL: Is there a New Orleans way to speak?

026: There are a few things, you know that, some of them are not just New Orleans, but they’re very New Orleans, like ‘baby’ and ‘y’all’ and the fact that you ask somebody at the line at the Walgreens ‘how ya doing?’ and they’ll tell you, and they’ll talk your ear off, you know, as opposed to, um, when uh, I live in, we lived in Alabama, people ask ‘how ya doing?’

You say ‘fine, how bout you?’ ‘Good.’ That’s it. <laughter>

It’s a different culture, you know. Here, people are more friendly, uh, you know, they get into your business, if you will.

Uh, but that’s fine, you know, that’s, I’m, uh, from a Latin culture, so, you know, um, we’re, we’re like that too, so um…

TDL: What does it mean to speak like a Latino?
026: So I have an accent.
027: Siri doesn’t understand me most of the time when I try to use Siri. Uh, and, and it’s fine.
028: It’s a running joke. My wife says Siri is a bigot, as a, as a joke.
029: Uh, but so you have an acc-well so there are differences.
030: So okay, there are Latinos who grew up in Latin America speaking Spanish like I did,
031: you know and so it’s very hard to get rid of an accent, to get rid of some expressions,
032: to get rid of some grammar mistakes that I still make
033: even though I’ve been in the U.S. by now, you know, more than two decades.
034: You know I still say ‘his’ instead of ‘her’ sometimes,
035: or use prepositions that are not the correct ones and what not, uh.
036: And then if you are a Latino, you know, second generation or so, um, you know,
037: ‘Spanglish’ is a thing, but I don’t think it’s that common here in New Orleans.
038: Myself, I have not encountered, you know, in talking to people
039: that is like a total mix of Spanish and English kind of thing,
040: that it almost becomes like a third, like a dialect. I haven’t uh, you know,
041: people either speak Spanish or English in my experience, at least here.
042: Uh children, you know, who grew up in bilingual houses will switch back-and-forth,
043: but it’s not like, uh, they’re, mid-sentence introducing a couple of Spanish words
044: or constructs from that or, uh, so…

Rebeca
1. TDL: What are people’s perceptions of Latinx community?
2. 027: So I think it really depends on how much interaction they had had with, with people like us
3. um I think that those who have met other uh Latinx folks will have a better,
4. um idea of who we are will understand that, you know,
5. most of the people here are from Central America,
6. are not Mexicans um, like in other parts of the country um.
7. So I think it really depends on how much interaction they have with us.
8. Those who haven’t had any interaction with us will think that were all Mexicans,
9. that we all speak Spanish, and were all undocumented, right?
10. But that’s just like the American stereotype.
11. Uh but those who are, who have more interactions, and in my world because I only, honestly,
12. hang out with people who share my world view, that’s maybe a, a mistake but uh,
13. it is what it is in my world and in my work.
14. So uh, the people I work with and the people I interact with
15. have a pretty good idea of who we are as peoples, right?
16. Like were diverse. We’re not one. We are from many different races.
17. We speak different languages, all of that. I think uh the people who I interact with know that.
18. TDL: Which is more common?
19. 027: Hmm, I think the city is changing so much, um,
20. that it’s probably now more the more people with the stereotypical views than not.
21. TDL: Have you seen changes in the time you have been here?
22. 027: Yeah, I think there was a huge shift after Katrina right?
23. Like before Katrina we were like so, we were invisible.
24. Um, we’re still invisible but it was even worse, right?
25. Like we weren’t even part of any conversations or any discussions, or anything.
26. And then after Katrina there was such an influx of um,
27. particularly Latino men coming for work opportunities uh,
28. that I think we became more visible as a community.
29. But then I also feel like when the need for cheap labor the, the, then the, the hostility
30. and the hate, and the harassment, and the discrimination all also came, like, got
31. exacerbated.
32. Cause it’s like you, they didn’t need us anymore, so they just wanted throw us away.
33. TDL: Have you experienced discrimination?
35. TDL: Can you tell me about anything that’s happened?
36. 027: Mm, so I think because I’ve, I carry a lot of privilege, you know,
37. I’m not uh, the typical immigrant,
38. I came by choice, not by necessity, I speak the language, I’m a U.S. citizen,
39. I have a higher degree.
40. I have a position of power at work. Because of all of those things my experiences are
different.
41. But it doesn’t shield me, like, or shelter me from, you know, from the world.
42. Um but I think the only thing, one thing that comes to mind is like, at, at [redacted]
43. I have had a couple of professors assume or say things to me,
44. assuming that because I’m an immigrant I cannot uh, read or write
45. at a level that is expected for a graduate student, you know,
46. so those have been kind of the things um, that I’ve been told.
47. Mm, what else? I think there a lot of microaggressions
48. so its not necessarily like people saying things to you that are, that are, that,
49. it’s not necessarily that they’re explicitly saying something and connecting it to your
ethnicity,
50. but there’s a lot of underlying, you know.
51. So I’m often told I’m too aggressive. I’m too direct. I’m too forceful. I’m too honest.
<sigh>
52. All the things that I’m too much of are things that are who I am
53. and that are also very cultural things, that are part of my culture,
54. that I feel like I often don’t, I don’t,
55. I’m often not allowed to show up as who I am, fully who I am, right,
56. without being criticized for that.
57. Which has a lot to do with gender too.
58. It’s about being a woman, a woman of color, immigrant woman of color,
59. right, like all of those things…
60. TDL: Do you think the increased visibility is more positive or more negative?
61. 027: I think it can go both ways.
62. The problem we have now, um, to show you, uh, you know,
63. you pay attention to what’s happening in this country,
64. and I’m honestly talking about the dreamers cause they annoy the heck out of me.
65. Uh as a movement they have divided us as a community,
66. because they’ve bought into this idea of the exceptional, exceptionalism right?
67. So the American, they are the exceptional group of us.
68. So this is the youth who have finished high school, which, you know,
69. we have some of the highest drop-out rates after African-Americans.
70. So this is the, the minority of our youth.
71. Who also have either enrolled in college or are eligible to enroll, enroll in college or the military,
72. so that means they don’t have a, a need to work to support or to help support their families.
73. And uh, and have no criminal record like all of these requirements that, for the DACA and now,
74. maybe we’ll have a dream act next, in the next couple of weeks, have just fueled this rhetoric
75. about the exceptional immigrant and then what about the rest of us?
76. What about their parents? They have literally thrown their parents under the bus,
77. and god bless their parents because they will throw themselves under the bus to,
78. to give their children opportunities.
79. But its so unfair and so unjust that they get to, get to be the visible part of our community
80. and they’re just a teeny, teeny percentage.
81. So what it’s not even a million out the eleven million undocumented who will benefit from that?
82. Yeah. No. I don’t think that’s the kind of visibility that we need.
83. But that’s the kind of visibility that we get. It’s always about the exceptional ones.
84. You know I am the exceptional Latina.
85. Like I feel like people often perceive me like,
86. ‘oh but you are different than, you know, the rest of you.’
87. So I think we have a lot to work, a lot of work to do to, to get our stuff together as a community,
88. as an immigrant community, beyond our ethnicity, you know, like with other ethnicities too.
89. To become more visible in a more constructive and just way
90. where we all become visible for our humanity and not for our exceptional characteristics.
91. TDL: Do you people react negatively if you speak Spanish in public?
92. 027: I don’t know. I don’t care. I have become, I'm, I'm a different person than I was when I first came to this country. I woulda cared back then.
93. Um, I’m at the point where like I don’t care.
94. I speak Spanish all the time with my friends, with my child,
95. and if anybody has a problem, oh well.
96. It’s their, it’s on them, it’s not on me.
97. TDL: Has anyone ever said anything to you?
99. 027: Not to my face. I’m sure people have problems with it,
100. but they have never said anything to me, to my face.
101. TDL: Do you think people here feel threatened by Latinos?
102. 027: By the community? What do you mean?
103. Oh the non-the, uh, oh yeah, of course. Yeah. We’re pres-you know,
104. there is this whole idea that were taking jobs and opportunities for native-borns.
105. Uh, all these stereotypical things, that we are draining the system, um, that we are, you know,
that we refuse to learn the language which bullshit because nobody wants to be in
a place
where you don’t know what’s happening around you right, and it’s not a choice.
Um, or that we are trying to impose our ways of life uh, over, instead of like, you
know,
basically the assimilation argument right, that we don’t assimilate.
I think that’s, that’s when we are perceived as a threat, yeah.
TDL: Do you see that in New Orleans much?
027: Hm, the threat part no. I don’t know. I have to think about it. I don’t know.
I mean, this is very specific to the city, right?
TDL: Yes.
027: Um, no. I mean, I see it, I have seen it
manifested through legislation at the state level,
that has tried to, you know, criminalize us and um, but no, not at the city level,
I haven’t seen any like, organized effort no.
TDL: What about just generally not necessarily organized?
027: No but again, I live in a bubble.
I’m sure those people are out there, every day, saying horrible things.
I’m not naïve, but I also know that I live in a bubble.
TDL: So it’s not something you have dealt with here?
027: Not in New Orleans. I think I faced a lot more of that in Mississippi.
Here in New Orleans, I’m trying to think…
TDL: Are there some parts of the area that are more open to Latinos?
027: Well yeah, the parts where we are, right?
We are concentrated for the most part in Jefferson Parish.
Um, I think the city of Kenner is, which, where the majority of the community is,
is probably one of the most welcoming cities.
You know New Orleans is a welcoming city in quotations but not in actions.
Kenner actually has taken actions.
You know the Hispanic Research Center is a project of the city of Kenner,
which is fully funded, has its’ own building.
You know there are, there are ways in which I see this, that from a city
perspective
the city has really taken it seriously and recognized
that this community is there and not going anywhere.
Um, yeah. What was the question? I forgot.
TDL: Just ways that ideas of threat are seen here locally,
and what parts of the area are most open…
027: Oh yeah. But I now remember one of the things of the threat.
Are you talking about the city or the metro? Because it’s two different…
TDL: The metro. I say New Orleans, but I mean the area.
027: Right, right, okay. So after Hurricane Katrina,
I think this was like 2006 or 7, was it Orleans or Jefferson?
I can’t remember, but you may have heard this. You can find it online.
Um, it was Jefferson, yeah.
They passed an ordinance prohibiting food trucks. Have you heard about that?
Yeah?
And at the time with the idea that, you know there was something about
sanitation,
some, you know, B.S. excuse, but at the time the only food trucks that were operating in the area were taco trucks that were mainly serving the con-reconstruction workers. So that was a well, well not a well, but yeah it was a well-done from that side, well-done effort to um, to target this community and, because they were, we were perceived as a threat you know, taking away from like, local businesses and blah, blah, blah. There was a whole argument about how they did this and why they did it, um it was then revoked, you know, or amended or whatever. It’s no longer an issue but it was an issue for a while and it was a clear uh, targeting of a community under the pretense of something else, right? Yeah, so that was one.

TDL: Can you tell me about your most positive experience in New Orleans?

027: Like one instance? One…

TDL: Sure, just something that stands out…

027: I don’t know.

TDL: What about something negative?

027: Recently I was, when was this? In March, of this year.

I was driving to Bogaloua, Louisana. For a event, a work event. And on my way there I was in St. Tammany Parish, I think I was in Covington. I was on I, I think it was I-12, one of this, it was a huge interstate.

I was going really fast. I always go really fast, uh, and I got pulled over by a, um, highway patrol, I think it was a highway patrol.

I have gotten pulled over several times in my times, in my years in the states. And I’ll have to admit that for the most part I have gotten away with stuff. Cause I’ll cry, you know, I use, I’ll totally use the woman card. Um, <click> this time it was so different.

And also, so at first it made me realize that I’m afraid of the police. I’ve always been afraid of the police.

I carry that with me from our country and our relationships with, uh, authority. But here, also because my work is very much related to police reform and criminal justice and all that,

I’m so aware of how horrible they are.

Um, that as soon as he pulled me over, I was on the phone with a friend uh, from work.

And I said, ‘I just got pulled over.’ She said ‘just put me on speaker, put the phone down.’ So I put the phone down.

And then I realized he was afraid of me too, right? So we do not trust each other as groups of people, right?

So this is the first time in my life that I have been asked to get out of the car.

He wouldn’t even come to my window.

He stood in the back of the car, told me to get out with my hands, you know, showing my hands, and then come to the back of the car, put my hands on the hood.

Um, for speeding, right?

And then he said to me, like, ‘I need to see you license and your registration.’ And I had taken already out my license so I had my license in my hand.
I said ‘well, my insurance and registration is in the car, I have to go get it.’

And he said, ‘well, you have to do it from the passenger side.’

He wouldn’t let me go through the other side.

And I look, looked and I said, ‘I don’t even know if it’s locked,’

cause I thought it was locked, right?

And then he said to me, something like, ‘well, if it’s locked than I’m going to get in through the driver side and get it out, tell me where it is.’

And I said, ‘no, you will not get in my car.

You don’t have reasonable suspiscious or my permission to get in my car,’

cause I truly believe he’s about to frame me with something.

So I looked and I said, ‘the door is unlocked, so I’ll go get it.’

So I got, I went in there and I got the papers and he went back to his car, you know.

I’m sure ran my number, my name and all of that

and then came back with my speeding ticket and let me go.

But the whole experience was just mind-blowing to me because of yeah,

he thought I had a gun, when he’s the one that has the gun, right?

He thought I was gonna hurt him, I thought he was gonna hurt me.

We have absolutely no trust for the people who are supposed to protect us.

You know, anyway, so yeah, all of that was crazy.

Then I got back in my car and I’m like, already like, you know, shaking over this thing.

And I drive, I keep driving and the I get to almost like,

Bogaloua’s a teeny town and I know ?? it’s small.

I’m almost getting to Bogalousa and then I see freaking I.C.E, like an I.C.E. car,

or was it the border patrol? I, I, I don’t remember, I think it was the border patrol.

And they start following me

and I’m like, ‘are you got to be freaking kidding me,’ right? <laughter>

I’m thinking ‘I’m about to get pulled over by border patrol?’

Which is my dream, because I will sue them for racial profiling.

Um, but uh, they follow me and then I realized that road, you know,

they have like speed traps where the speed changes like so many times

so they’re trying to get you

and I was like paying attention to the speed so they wouldn’t get me

and then eventually I turned and they keep going.

I was like ‘oh my god.’ I was done that day, like I was done. Yeah.

So that was a horrible experience, recently, that I can remember.

TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans?

027: The people. I really like the people. They are very warm and welcoming.

Like I always think, the South in general but particularly New Orleans reminds me a lot of my country.

Not my city, because my city’s horrible. People are mean and ugly.

But like outside of the city, you know, like people in rural areas, in the country

who are like nice and everybody talks to you, people greet you on the street,

you know, those kinds of things. I love that about New Orleans.

The people are, for the most part, just so nice and welcoming and yeah.

TDL: What would you change about the city?
027: Uf, so many.
Um, right now I think is the housing affordability crisis that we have, right?
Like the city’s becoming more and more inaffordable and it’s pushing people out,
that’s like what I said, I don’t even, in a few years we won’t even recognize the city
if things keep going the way they going.
So you know we have, it’s gonna get whiter and it’s gonna get more conservative
and it’s going to get more inaccessible in so many ways if we don’t do something now
cause it’s already going that direction.
TDL: Do you consider yourself New Orleanian?
027: No. Because people here are wack, <chuckle> wack,
people here are like almost borderline psychotic
when it comes to this idea of being from here.
I never seen that in any city.
Um, there is a lot of pride on being a native New Orleanian,
and I think it has a lot to do with all this changes,
and the way this changes are happening, gentrification,
all these ways in which people are being pushed,
that’s it’s also making that identi-this idea of place-based identity even stronger.
Um, so in that sense, no, I can never be a New Orleanian
because I wasn’t born and raised here
and I have to respect that there are people who were born and raised here, right?
So I’m like a New Orleanian, I guess by choice, but I’m,
I always identify myself first as an immigrant woman of color first and foremost.
TDL: So you have to be born here?
027: And raised, at least, or spend the majority of your life here. Yes, I think so.
TDL: Is there a New Orleans way of speaking?
027: Oh yeah, yeah, for sure. There are a lot of expressions, and um, it’s just a tone.
It’s a different tone or accent. It’s a different accent.
You know, you get out of New Orleans and go to the North Shore
and their accent is completely different there, particularly in rural areas.
Um, here, I don’t know what to compare it to, but it’s definitely a different accent, um.
Yeah. It’s, there is a particular way of,
there’s some phrases and some sayings that are only from here, right? Yeah.
TDL: Is there a Latino way of speaking?
027: Of course. So there are many ways.
I think there are, there is a way of speaking when you are,
when you have been in this country for a few years.
Um, and then there is a way of speaking when you are an,
you have been born and raised here,
and Spanish is like your family tone, but not necessarily you know.
And there is another way of speaking when you just first arrive,
that you’re literally speaking the way you spoke in your native country, right?
Like I do not speak like a Peruvian anymore.
I know this, because when I go home everybody makes fun of me.
And it’s rough and hard but I have to just like own it and accept it, like I have lost a lot of the, the jargon, um. I use jargon now that is not from my country but is like from other countries cause I’ve learned it, I picked it up.

Um, I yeah, like we, I think Latinos here um, we have a tendency to like, you know, mess up the language and so we do a lot of mixing of words and I mean there are words that do not exist in Spanish that have, that are used here as if they were Spanish words, you know. Um, which, they’re English words that have been, you know. So yeah, there is definitely a way. Like when I listen to the radio or t.v. in Spanish it’s like, ‘oh yeah.’ Like I get it, although when my parents were here they were like, ‘what are these people talking about? <laughter>’ ‘Why are they doing this to the language?’

Cause they are, you know, we’re mixing it up all the time, yeah.

028: Adalberto

1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 028: Oh man. It’s so up and down. All over the place.
3. It’s so up and down.
4. Like, it has to do a lot with your, I think it has to do a lot with the political beliefs as well.
5. What do you want to believe in?
6. Um, if you wanna believe in equal-equity or in equality and human rights you, you, you, you, you’ll see everyone equally, you know?
7. Like, it doesn’t really matter where you’re from,
8. or you understand their limitations and you try to work with that, you know, try to help them out.
9. Um, and you have the other extremist side where no, no, no they’re totally wrong, they should, they should come here and. They should come here, or not even come here.
10. And if they come here, do your best to forget about your culture, forget about who you are, and become what we want you to become.
11. And that’s a very, that’s a very historical, it’s a historical thing from here in the United States.
12. We’re going, we’re talking about all the way down from Jefferson Davis down to Nixon and now to our current president, you know.
13. So there’s a, the other day I was reading, I was reading this book, I can’t remember the author of the book,
14. but the book called called ‘Stamped from the Beginning.’
15. It’s a really amazing book and it tells all the history facts about how these ideas that are extremist,
16. are extremely radical and crazy ideas are now in our system.
17. And you just put A and A together, you join points together and it, you’re like, it makes a lot of sense why we are where we are right now.
18. But yeah, um, I’m a, I can tell you my own experience.
19. My own experience, uh, and it happened to me like on,
20. it happened to me where when I was here in New Orleans and I was looking for a job.
I went to this company that, which name I’m not gonna mention.
I went to this company and I, it was just easy for me.
I did some research, I saw the company, and after I saw the company
I went and knocked on their door.
I was like ‘hey, good morning, look, here’s my resume. I just saw you online,
I saw you guys are hiring for this position, and uh, let me just introduce myself,’ right?
And that got me in the door, got me an interview. I saw everything that I wanted to do,
but after that, after interviewing with the guy or the people
I just went and knocked on their door
and I was like ‘hey, good morning, look, here’s my resume. I just saw you online,
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I saw you guys are hiring for this position, and uh, let me just introduce myself,’ right?
And that got me in the door, got me an interview, got me everything that I wanted to do,
72. It’s a reflection of their own ignorance.
73. It’s the same way as, it’s the same way as if, like,
74. like if somebody walks into the supermarket and just goes mad with someone
75. because they’re speaking in another language.
76. You feel, the, the hu-the human race is a race that reacts based on fear.
77. Whatever you do not know, you fear. You fear that it’s gonna do you a harm.
78. And once again, pushing buttons and saying the right things, you build that fear in
people.
79. And once you hear somebody that says something that you do not identify, you do not
recognize,
80. you fear that. And it could be, uh, yes, sort of afraid of.
81. TDL: Can you tell me about when you first came back to New Orleans?
82. Oh man. It was, I mean, I love the city. I love New Orleans,
83. I love to hang around and just walk around and learn about the culture.
84. Uh, as we, as we sai-as we talked before, I mean, when I was in the Hollygrove,
85. I mean there’s certain communities that you can see the levels of poverty that the people
live in.
86. Uh, but as well you can see how, building communities as well
87. and they’re trying to make it happen one way or the other, you know?
88. Um, my first impression was, I think I already shared this with you before, like,
89. how there’s a strong cultural uh, influence of history in one part of the city and down,
90. five miles down the other side is totally the opposite, you know, and totally different,
so…
91. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
92. My favorite thing about the city? Damn. That’s a great question.
93. I have never thought about something like that. Huh. I’m not sure.
94. I’m not sure, let’s go for-forward and let me think about it a little bit.
95. TDL: The next question is the opposite, what would you like to change?
96. Aw, man. That’s a lot of stuff. I can say so much.
97. Segregation, discrimination, the fact that people just, like,
98. wanna judge you without knowing what’s going on, you know?
99. Um, there’s, I mean, once again, I would change a lot but that, but the things that I would
change.
100. it has to do with a lot of the cultural background of a nation.
101. Not only of a city, you know? Like, uh, <click>
102. but if you ask me I would change uh, uh, sewage and water board, for sure.
<laughter>
103. TDL: This question gets such a wide range of answers from racism to potholes…
105. That’s not, that is not, uh, I mean, that is a material need, and that,
106. it is a need to improve the quality of life, but that’s not one of our biggest
problems.
107. Our, we have a lot of bigger problems.
108. Like, we’re talking about uh, cultural appropriation,
109. segregation, discrimination, racism, a lot of different factors that I would like to
change.
And the way I think you would change it is bringing more awareness to people and teaching, not only bringing awareness but telling them, ‘okay, well, this is what’s happening, and this is how it works, and this is what you can do to help that change.’

If you actually want to change, because the change is in you, you know, it’s in yourself.

If you don’t want to change and you’re just comfortable in you, living in your little bubble, that’s fine, I mean, it’s not gonna change anything, you know?

So, that’s one of the things I would change the most.

Now, I do have a, that’s why it was hard to respond to my favorite thing of the city, because I do have a very superficial and not serious answer to that.

I would ‘oh, I love the festivals every year,’ you know?

Like say, ‘every weekend there’s a festival going on.’

But that is not, that is more a personal level of a answer.

I would like to have a very serious answer to that.

And uh, <click> I think the thing that I like the most is that, it’s the closest thing to home from home. As I said before, it reminds me back of Mexico a lot. Without the food, though. <laughter> Without the food and uh, I mean, it’s, it’s, it’s Friday, ten o’clock, and I’m out here having a coffee with you talking, even though it’s like and interview for your formal, for your formal uh, investigation,

it’s just like, I feel like a casual interview, later today I’m just gonna hang out with some buddies, grab a couple of beers, and that kind of lifestyle reminds me of like, what I had back in Mexico,

so, I would say that would be my favorite thing.

TDL: That’s something I get a lot and that I have noticed from being in Puerto Rico and Guatemala…

028: The cultural aspect, yeah. Absolutely. Yeah, I mean, that is something.

At the beginning it was hard, but it was not that hard to move down here. Because a lot of people, and when I say a lot of people,

I mean more in the minority communities.

More in the minority communities, it reminds me more.

It’s easier to get along with them than like, white people.

Honestly. No offense. <laughter>

TDL: None taken.

028: Yeah.

TDL: Do you consider yourself New Orleanian?

028: No. No. Not at all.

TDL: What does it mean to be New Orleanian?

028: Oh there’s so much more to be like, I could, if,

if I consider myself a New Orlean-New Orlean-

I can’t even say it right, with my pronunciation. I cannot even say it right.
If I considered myself a New Orleanian, um, I think that would be part of the problem and not of the solution. Because there’s a historical background that I’m not even aware of.

It’s for example people that, and, once again I do not have anything about against that.

I do not have anything against that because it become to the point that that’s what it is now.

But people that use second lines for celebration or for their weddings.

When I saw second lines for the first time I was ‘this is so cool, this is really cool.’

But the thing I did is like, but why this happens.

I wanna learn more about this before I get more involved in it.

And I think that is lacking a lot in our communities.

So I learned that second lines were actually a creation for the celebration of somebody’s funer-

a very positive way to celebrate somebody’s death.

And it was, it was, it is used for funerals.

The same with the Mardi Gras Indians. I was like, ‘wow, this is really cool,’ but before getting more involved, I wanna learn more about it before, actually, I do something wrong.

So calling myself a New Orleanian? Yes, I live here, but I am not that.

TDL: Is there a way of speaking that is unique to New Orleans?

028: Oh man, okay. I’m gonna give you examples because you asked for it, but if I, if my wife was sitting here, she would be pissed. <laughter>

I had the opportunity, I had the great opportunity and I had a wonderful time when I was learning, I was working for this, a furnture company, that I was their manager, a logistics and warehouse manager.

So I was in, was in control of the staff, I was in control of the uh, inventory, etcetera.

So one day, um, going back to your example, I got along,

everybody in there was a minority except the boss.

And, I was working in there and uh, and this guy that I got very, uh, his name is uh, [redacted].

And he’s a older gentleman, very nice guy, he was a mentor for me, honestly, for a while.

And his New, New Orleans accent for me was not, I was not familiar with it.

So one day he yells at me, he was like ‘hey [redacted], can you give me some ‘erl?’

And he was inspecting the trucks.

And I was like, ‘da fu, what the hell is [redacted] talking about?’ Like, ‘some what?’

‘Some ‘erl.’ Give me some ‘erl,’ You don’t know what ‘erl’ is?’ <laughter>

I was like ‘no, I do, what are you talking about?’
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192. And he just like shakes his head and is like ‘oil.’ <laughter>
193. I was like, ‘oh, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, I know what you’re talking about.’
194. So, him and I, we talk about it and we find it funny, you know,
195. but I tell this to my wife and it’s like,
196. ‘uh, you’re so mean, you shouldn’t make fun of him.’ I’m not making fun of him.
197. It’s a story that, it’s a experience that I actually lived, you know? So yeah.
198. TDL: Is there a way to talk like a Latino?
199. 028: No. No, no, no. Not at all. Not at all
200. because Latinos have so many, even in the Latino community like sometimes,
201. some of the slang and the slurs that I say in Spanish,
202. <click> not even in the Latino community. Don’t go too far in one country, in Mexico,
203. Mexico itself, like I’m, I was raised the name of the state is called Tabasco,
204. like the hot sauce right?
205. And this is all the way down in the south of Mexico, close to Central America.
206. This is close to Central America.
207. The people that lives in Tabasco, their slang, their accent,
208. and their behavior was very different from the people that lived in Yucatan,
209. a state that was four, four hours away.
210. So you can only say how different the people that lived in the north,
211. in Chihuahua, Monterrey, and all these states, and Tijuana,
212. is so different between them and the United States and not only,
213. and so, you only can imagine how different it is
214. from Mexico to Honduras to Peru to Colombia
215. and even though they’re all in the same continent, they are very different.
216. So there’s not a right way to speak, and so, that’s my answer, no.

029: Sandra

1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 029: It’s so wild it has changed so much
3. so when I was young so one of the things here they
4. so because you know there’s like this history of being sort of colonized here you know
5. the Spanish came and so there was so much uh context for that for the local community
6. that growing up what they would call you was Spanish
7. so even though you know Central American has definitely been the largest group here
8. they would just call you Spanish so the Spanish girl the Spanish boy um so before it was
9. oh and also thinking about like I grew up in the private school system
10. so there it was a little bit more like you’d have one or two Spanish people
11. and then they would call you the Spanish person
12. they had no idea where Honduras was uh
13. I think they saw it again as sort of upwardly mobile
14. a lot of people even though they spoke Spanish
15. and we had some festivals
16. the idea there was that we would acculturate um
17. but I mean there was still you know quite a bit of racism
18. like there wasn’t you were still the brown kid
19. and you were not really I wasn’t
20. especially specifically in the school that I was at
21. included in a lot of like social gatherings and things
22. and then and then my family had most of their friends were Latinos
23. so then we would hang out in those groups um
24. socially so we were sort of separated
25. and then with Latinos you know varying in sort of the color spectrum
26. that made a huge difference
27. so you know the lighter you were the more you could just acculturate um
28. so and then now things have shifted so much
29. I mean after Katrina then it was everybody
30. and then I think as the migration sort of changed
31. and we had a larger influx of people that were sort of coming in to work
32. cause part of that again like saying that it was a sort of top down migration
33. and then that as that started changing
34. and then in the public schools like
35. I lived in the you know like redwood and bobby village
36. and a lot of those kids went to Bonnabel and Roosevelt
37. and for one year I ended up going to a public school and then there,
38. there was a high concentration of Latinos and Black people and White people
39. so then um I think then you’d sort of get more
40. the like we’re poor were living in these apartments
41. and so it’s sort of like the gangsters and that kind of um attitude
42. and New Orleans is super racist so we were still sort of seen as other um
43. and then but then there’s been such a different awareness now after Katrina
44. all you know the Mexican population that came in to work and more Central Americans
45. so now I think number one there’s a lot more awareness that people are Honduran
46. like now where I say oh my family is from Honduras
47. everybody’s like I have a friend that’s from Honduras
48. and like well, nobody ever told me that when I was young
49. so it’s sort of interesting that they know what the country is now
50. and then but then now I think there’s a lot there’s a lot, there’s a lot of friction
51. I don’t know I hear the craziest things sometimes
52. so I’ll either hear from White people like
53. oh, well the Black people didn’t wanna help fix Katrina
54. so the Hispanics did
55. so then there’s like this positive attitude that like
56. they came in and fixed everything um
57. but then there’s still this resentment of like
58. ‘you can’t just come and not speak the language and do what you want’ you know
59. so you know, I mean, overall we’re still you know, brown people <laughter> um
60. but I think there is because they did do a lot of the construction
61. then there is sort of an attitude that they came and helped
62. I don’t know that’s sort of my perception
63. TDL: Do you think the Latino community is more visible today?
64. 029: Yeah I mean we were always we always had festivals
65. but it was one here and there.
66. Growing up like there was a
67. and we were attached to the I mean we still are attached to churches but um
68. there were certainly catholic churches um and evangelical churches
69. and there was one huge festival that they would put on
70. and we would all, but I feel like a lot of the acts that would come in at the time
71. would come in, it was like at a hotel. You would go to that hotel and it was only Latinos
72. and then that was it.
73. Where as now, yeah, it’s a lot more visible
74. and they’re at the larger festivals or they’re integrated into, um, some other festivals
75. and there was a festival put on it was Mensaje, it was a catholic church in Kenner
76. and they would put on a huge festival that the racetrack way deep in Kenner
77. and then it moved to, there s a hospital in Kenner, Ochsner,
78. and it was in that parking lot for a long time,
79. so I think before it was like concentrated to a few
80. and then now it’s definitely more integrated and there festivals every other weekend,
81. um, associated with loads of churches so…
82. TDL: So the church is an important factor in the community?
83. 029: Yeah, absolutely. I mean those and that’s, I mean, if you look at, you know, New
   Orleans
84. and where a lot of people are coming from,
85. there are a lot of the same things like it’s hot here, <laughter>
86. The religion is largely catholic. Like all of those things are really familiar,
87. and yeah, absolutely, the church has been a huge part, I think, of most of the upbringing.
88. TDL: Is the Latino community still mostly Catholic
89. 029: You know I don’t feel like I have a, I would say yes,
90. but I’m just making that up, again, that’s just based on like a feeling
91. and not any real numbers that I might have,
92. but I mean it’s still largely Catholic here.
93. It’s still largely catholic in those countries,
94. but I definitely feel like the um like evangelical churches have a greater presence than,
95. than I felt growing up but, again, I was hanging around with all Catholics at the time so,
96. TDL: Do you have a church that you attend?
97. 029: Uh, yeah, my child is baptized at St. Anthony of Padua.
98. So the church that I grew up in was St Jerome church
99. which was at the time, I mean, we a huge,
100. it was right next door to that complex, so everything revolved around that area
   um,
101. and then now were at St Anthony of Padua.
102. I say were at because I don’t go to church.
103. My husband only will go if it’s in Spanish.
104. Both of our kids have been baptized at St. Anthony of Padua,
105. but my mom goes to Mater Dolorosa,
106. which does not have a Spanish mass.
107. So that’s another thing, like all the Catholic, not all of them, a large,
108. a lot of the Catholic churches, um, will have a Spanish mass
109. so like in Kenner there was Nativity had a Spanish mass,
St. Jerome had a Spanish mass, and multiple ones and then um on the Westbank too, Christ the King and then here St. Anthony of Padua has been the big one and it had you know Latino kids that would go to that school when they were in elementary school and it still has a pretty um, big Spanish mass and that people go and that’s on Canal.

TDL: Have you experienced any mistreatment for being Latina or speaking Spanish?

029: Yeah. So when I was little certainly, um, just whatever, being called ‘spic,’ or being told that I wasn’t, like one friend in high school was like, ‘well my parent let me bring home a Latino’ or, I mean, they didn’t even have the word Latino wasn’t, ‘wouldn’t let me bring home a Spanish boy.’ So there was definitely quite a bit of that, um, and then I mean now less so, cause I’m not really put in situations where I’m like, I’m gonna put myself in a situation where I know <laughter> you know, my family’s gonna be different. But we were, so this would have been six years ago, my daughter was really small and she was in a carrier and we had walked out of a restaurant, Panola St Café, so we’d walked out of there my mom and I were speaking Spanish. My husband had my daughter and then a guy was driving really fast and we were looking at the car and I was saying like ‘this idiots going really fast’ in Spanish and then once we, once he was passing us he yelled out of the window like ‘speak, speak English, this is America’ but I mean that hasn’t happened since then so yeah that’s I think, most of the stuff.

TDL: Where do those attitudes come from? Why do people feel that way?

029: I mean I think in New Orleans also there’s a history of having other languages and they haven’t wanted to keep it right it was always the like poor cultures so like French which was of them like a lot of people that I know whose families were, spoke French or Cajun French they didn’t want their kids to speak it cause they, they wanted them to sort of move up the social, um, classes. And so, I think it’s the same for, um, Latinos. They just don’t, have never really wanted it, um, because then it means you can move up, um. And then now of course with Trump in office I think it just emboldened people to feel like they can say what they want, um.
But yeah, the attitude I think has always been that you don’t speak another language because then you’re sort of locking yourself in to only speaking that language and only being around certain people. So at least that’s been my experience here, so…

TDL: Do you think people feel threatened by Latinos here?

029: I mean I feel…I think jobs are certainly a thing that people are concerned with.

So, I think it’s easy again, like we, this is a place where you can really point to they were getting all of these jobs, especially after Katrina.

So, yes. I think the visibility of that, so yeah, that’s made a…

I don’t know, there’s gonna be some friction there because of all that um, and I think the Black and Latino community struggle sometimes, um, that way.

Because, like I said, I’ve heard White people say ‘Well, they didn’t wanna do anything.’ ‘m like, ‘I don’t think it was really all that cut-and-dry, but okay.’

So then it’s interesting because it’s like they’re pitting them against each other, and then there’s um, that friction, so yeah.

TDL: So there’s friction between Latinos and African-Americans?

029: Yeah. I mean, and Hispanics are racist, let’s be one hundred percent clear here.

Like, there’s definitely a color spectrum there and like, <laughter>
the lighter you are the better. So um, so yeah.

There’s I think a lot of, coming from Latinos, um.

And then I at least, growing up, didn’t feel that way.

I feel like that has happened more now, um, with this sort of job issue.

Um, growing up I could, I could definitely um,

be with Black people much easier than I could with White people.

I was accepted, um, a lot more.

And then also it was like, ‘well aren’t you, you know, Black?’ And like, ‘I’m not.’

But I think you can look, especially here with all of the like, Creole culture,

I look a lot like somebody who would be mixed and so um.

So I was much more accepted there than I was…

TDL: Can you tell me about the happiest experience you can remember in the city?

029: I mean related to…anything? That seems really like an open question <laughter>

TDL: Yeah, it’s just meant to be open to anything you want to share…

029: Right, right, right. I mean, clearly cause we’re thinking about all these things,

like I would say a moment that has been huge for me living back in New Orleans which I didn’t think that I would.

I did not think I would be here, so I left and very much was like

‘It’s very racist. I don’t wanna be there. It’s the south.'
189. I don’t want anything to do with it.’ And now, live here <laughter>. That was interesting.
190. So my daughter going to --, um, when she was in kindergarten, uh,
191. because they look at the -- school they pick a country,
192. each class will pick a country
193. and at the end of the year they do a second line around the school.
194. Um, and the country that my daughter’s class picked was Honduras.
195. So at the end of the school year they do a whole presentation on Honduras.
196. So it’s all these little kids, um, talking about Honduras.
197. And I was just crying hysterically
198. cause I never in my wildest dreams thought that I would live in New Orleans
199. and that my daughter would be speaking Spanish
200. and that there would be a school where she could do that
201. and that they would be learning about Honduras,
202. and her friends would know what that was.
203. Like it was just not even close to anything
204. I thought could happen in my lifetime I don’t think.
205. So I think now being back that’s probably still a moment that,
206. and my mom sitting next to me, like we’re just watching her and she’s, yeah,
207. I was like ‘I never thought this was gonna happen.’
208. Cause I was like the one brown kid in my private school so I didn’t think at all…
209. TDL: Can you tell me about something upsetting or frightening?
210. 029: I mean that one. Like the, the guy yelling out the window.
211. Cause we were as a fami...
there would always be like a family that we would meet that was,
you know, not Latino and then they,
we’d go over there for thanksgiving and stuff,
since that wasn’t a big holiday for us, personally,
and we, it felt like were at our family’s house so, it can be a very welcoming place.
And people really like to eat food and drink with you, so I think that makes it easy so.

TDL: What would you change?
029: I wish they were less racist <laughter> Right?
Obviously, I wish they would just not say horrible things, um,
and I wish it wasn’t as segregated as it is.
I think those are the things I wish.
Which is weird, cause we have all these spaces where we come together,
but then everybody retreats right back to their, the place where they live, so…
TDL: How do we change that?
029: Oh my god. I don’t know. I don’t know. I, uh, I mean,
I feel really hopeless, right, at the very moment. <laughter>
If this interview were happening at a different time it might,
I might feel a little bit less, yeah.
I don’t know. I don’t know. I wish I knew.
I feel like we just keep doing the work and keep interacting.
Keep being nice to each other
and that’s about as much as we can do right now <laughter>.
Yeah. I don’t know.
When kids are being locked up it’s really hard to be like ‘I think we can figure out…’

TDL: It makes it hard to be positive…
029: Yeah. Yeah. But…
TDL: Do you consider yourself New Orleanian?
029: Yes. I mean I have a crisis of, um, identity. <laughter>
And I thought rather than having more of a crisis as I got older
I thought I would have less of a crisis,
but instead like Honduras is really dangerous
and I don’t have the ease of access that I used to, um, going there.
And New Orleans is a mess, for me in a lot of ways, so.
But yes, I, I consider myself a Honduran-New Orleanian.
I mean that’s the way that I would describe myself, and it’s always been.
TDL: What makes somebody New Orlenian?
029: So in our friend group our joke is always
you have to have an anchor baby.
So you’re not a New Orlenian unless you marry a local and you have a baby here.
And then somebody might consider you New Orleanian.
But like my husband, I joke, so I have this love-hate relationship,
my husband just loves New Orleans, there’s no hate there.
And so, he now can consider himself New Orleanian right?

But like I think people that have even lived here for twenty years, if you ask them if they’re from New Orleans they are like, ‘well...been here most of my life…’

Like they still can’t answer that way, so, and I being somebody who’s from here, agree with that so, that’s our, always our joke.

Like if you marry somebody who’s local and have a child here, then fine, you can maybe say that you’re from New Orleans. But otherwise, unless you’re born and raised here, went to high school here, which is always the question, ‘where’d you go to school?’

means ‘where’d you go to high school?’

So, if you can answer that question then usually they’ll say you’re from here. Yeah. <laughter>

TDL: Is there a New Orlenian way to speak?

029: I mean there’s a lot of ‘y’all’ and I think it’s a very Brooklyn-y accent, right?

It’s very New York, um, and even when I moved to Baton Rouge to go to school they were, like, ‘what is your accent?’

And then mine is heavily Latina, Honduran, mixed in with like going to school Uptown and there is like a White, you know, Uptown-y speak which I definitely have and then there’s um, my friends all went to public school, theirs is different but um, yeah, that’s what New Orleans is to me.

TDL: What does it mean to speak like a Latino?

029: I mean, I don’t know, I mean for me speaking Spanish is really important, so there’s that.

But then like there’s, I mean there’s definitely a like, it’s just a, your Latino, like that sort of Spanish traits, all of the English. And then, I mean there’s, there was a lot of Spanglish, a lot of Spanglish, um, growing up, but, yeah.

I don’t know that there’s any specific thing, word that I can think of.

030: Sasha

1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 030: Um, so something that I think about all the time,
3. and something that I see a lot with the kids in school is that
4. the kids who are born and raised people of color, um black and brown bodies from here are like,
5. not ver-just generalizing, not accepting of the immigrants who come to live here.
6. Um, and it’s mostly in schools and it’s also like, high school, which is the worst for everybody.
7. High school just sucks in general and I try to tell my kids that all the time,
8. like, high school just is terrible.
9. People are mean, it just <laughter> doesn’t get worse than high school.
10. Um, but, yeah it seems like, it’s really beautiful because in Miami
11. the sa-sort of same thing happens where like,
12. I’m sure you saw it in Ohio where the Latino communities band, band together
13. and they sort of create this insular community, um, because of language as well,
14. but um, I do feel like that happens here in New Orleans,
15. that we don’t have as many Latinos representing us in, um,
16. in different like seated positions throughout the city or state.
17. Um, even though we are increasingly more and more Latino.
18. Um, so I think that this is a part of like the slow movement of
19. as the Latinx community becomes more educated and organized,
20. um, we’ll see it a little bit more and I think that’s been sort of the silver lining within this
21. um, administration is, the Latino people were activated before this
22. but, this administration, but now there is this push of training the people
23. who have been in the movement for many years.
24. I mean, I’m not sure if you’ve talken to any people from the Congress of Day Laborers
25. but yeah, they’ve been doing incredible work for years and years and years in New
27. So it’s nice to, now they’re like training their members
28. and I think, yeah, hopefully that’ll create a little bit more integration.
29. TDL: How do we get more Latinos into positions of authority?
30. 030: Um, I mean it’s like empowering people, you know?
31. Um, yeah, it’s, it’s like gauging interest,
32. like showing importance of like why we need a Latinx person representing us.
33. Um, yeah, it comes with a lot of responsibility too, but, yeah I’m not sure, honestly.
34. TDL: It’s complicated, but it’s something people bring up a lot in interviews.
35. 030: Yeah, one of us stepping up. <laughter> That’s the answer.
36. One of us has to step up and like, do it.
37. TDL: Do you think people feel threatened by Latinos?
38. 030: Um, no. I mean, I think that, like in, not to talk bad on Jefferson Parish police
39. officers,
40. it’s very difficult to be a police officer.
41. But, I think there is a lot of racism and discrimination and there’s not a lot of training,
42. um for antiracism and um, antidiscrimination, especially for the police force,
43. and so we do see a lot of brown bodies getting pulled over
44. and getting um, taken to jail and sent to the I.C.E detention center.
45. Um, so yeah I, there’s, there’s, it’s the same fear of the other
46. that we see in so many different ways.
47. And um, something that I’m constantly um, thinking about
48. because I am a white Latina woman who’s born in the United States.
49. And so, in Guatemala they call me ‘gringa.’
50. And at first it was really horrifying because I never considered myself a ‘gringa’ ever.
51. It’s like kind of a bad word in Miami, um, like to be considered ‘gringa.’
52. But it was a part of my identity that I’ve been having to really work with lately
53. because I get to choose when I’m seen as white
54. and when I’m seen as Latina and a lot of people don’t get that same choice.
55. TDL: Have you experienced discrimination for being Latina?
56. 030: I have not. Um, and I think that is because, um, I’m like a tiny white woman.
57. I mean I’ve had a lot of uh, experiences as a woman, but no-not as a Latinx person, yeah.
Which is nice, um I think instead of like discrimination I’ve actually been, um, like praised??

TDL: What is your experience with speaking Spanish in public?

030: Um, um, so I’ve been taking the public bus a lot lately, especially with my clients, and like going to a lot of places with my clients in public.

Um, and I think we get some looks of just,

but I think people are starting to get used to hearing Spanish in public <laughter>

I, well, something that I have recognized is the lack of interpretation services.

So if I come with a client the agency will automatically assume

that they don’t needa provide interpretation

and a lot of the times they’ll try and do it without interpretation, even if I’m not there.

And so I think that is probably the most difficult part of like,

I was in [redacted] Hospital and they didn’t bring out the language line.

And I am not a medical interpreter at all. I’m not even a certified interpreter.

And so, um, that, providing services really was the most shocking part of like,

people aren’t even trying.

Schools aren’t even trying to provide language access and it’s a law to do so.

So that, that’s been the most shocking points for me, um,

like more so as a provider than as a Latinx person.

It’s like, I speak both languages fluently, but the people that I work with do not.

And they’re not even, the, a lot of the service providers,

and, you know, like bless teachers, bless the school system, it is so difficult to be a teacher.

They’re like, putting expo markers on schools supply lists

because teachers aren’t being given Expo markers at school.

So that’s like just a tiny picture of like,

of course they’re not providing access to parents in Spanish,

because they could barely pay for whiteboard markers. Um, but, it’s still the law.

TDL: Do you remember your initial impressions of New Orleans?


From the Bywater all the way up to Uptown and, yeah, it’s just kind of a dream.

It’s like you walk into the city and you don’t really see a lot of the darkness cause it’s easy to like,

walk in the silver-lined streets and like, see all the candy-colored houses

and yeah, that’s, taken by the music and the food.

TDL: Can you tell me about your happiest moment in New Orleans?

030: There’s so many! Uh, oh my gosh. New Orleans has been an absolutely dream life.

Uh, my happiest moment. Oh my gosh.

Okay, well I don’t wanna rank em, but I’m just gonna give you one that came to my mind.

I used to dance with this group called [redacted].

It’s a Brazilian street band and they’ve had their own issues,

but it was really fun while we were doing it and they were in the Muses parades

and so I was like one of the dancers on the side and I had this mirror as a prop.

And so I went down the entire parade route and I just held the mirror in front of people
and said ‘look how beautiful you are.’

And it was the most incredible experience just how many people,

how they would react and how happy they would get

and like feeling that personal attention and that one-on-one connection

it’s like a five hour parade, you’re marching and it was just so, so, so special

to give that gift to people of like telling people that they’re beautiful

and yeah, that’s like only in New Orleans. <laughter>

TDL: Can you tell me about an upsetting experience?

030: Um, yeah, definitely. Um, I mean, we got like a gun pointed at us in a car

one time,

but I think the most, um, <click> so I was a, a exotic dancer for many years.

I danced for like five years.

And the first year I experienced a lot of darkness

and just like the darkness of Bourbon Street.

Um, it, I think that purgatory is being on Bourbon Street at sunrise

for the rest of your life, just being stuck there. Um, that shit is nasty as fuck.

But, yeah I mean the, the sadness that you see

and experience looking down on Bourbon Street um,

but yeah, just the sexual abuse that I experienced in the club my first year

when I realized like, huh, yeah, pe-not all people are <laughter> nice

and some people are gonna try and take advantage of you.

So yeah, that was like probably my darkest moment.

TDL: I’m sorry to hear about that.

030: Thank you.

TDL: Do you consider yourself a New Orleanian?

030: Uh, <laughter> no. I mean, no. It’s, being a New Orleanian I think it,

I like raise it up and I praise it so much and maybe it,

when I get to my ten year mark I’ll feel a little bit differently.

But also just, like, really feel like I’m from Miami

and I’m like, Miamian, I’m from Miami.

And so I think it’s also because I have such pride of where I’m from,

that I don’t feel comfortable claiming this place as my own

even though I’ve lived here for seven years.

TDL: Is there a New Orleans way of talking?

030: Um, yeah, I mean you hear it like, the ‘baby.’

Man, I love it when I talk to someone on the street

and they’re like, ‘how you doing, baby?’ I’m just like, ‘yeah.’

Um, yeah, there is. There is a specific way

and it’s really funny, um, with some of my kids who uh, have been here a little

bit longer.

You’ll hear this like, New Orleans Hispanic accent come out and it’s real sweet.

I really appreciate it.

TDL: So it’s like a blend of accents?

030: Yeah like Honduran New Orleans, yeah.

TDL: What does it mean to speak like a Latino?

030: Um, I was talking with this about my sister because she lives in New York
and she hangs out with a lot of Miami people
and she has a little bit of the Miami accent and, um,
she was talking about how she feels like she’s discriminated against
because of her little bit of Hispanic accent.
Um, and I’ve never really experienced anything like that. Quite the opposite.
When I was stripping I would play it the fuck up
and I would like <accented performance> ‘put my little Hispanic accent on
and it was like my little character’ and there wasn’t many Latina girls in the club,
so I was like, the Latina girl.
Um, but, she was saying that people don’t think she’s as smart as she is,
they question her intelligence, and um, yeah it was really interesting to hear that.
I guess I experienced the same thing in the club
but I think that’s also like people don’t expect strippers to have minds.

<laughter>
Yeah. <laughter> Yeah. Which is great because it helps,
I don’t know, it’s all a manipulation game. <laughter>

031: Mercedes
1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 031: You know that’s kinda generalizing, but I think that it depends.
3. Certain groups feel certain things.
4. You have groups of people that are really thankful and grateful
5. for the Latinos coming to rebuild our city.
6. Within those groups you have people also that don’t really want them here now um,
7. you have the White Hispanics that have been here for over thirty years
8. that have acclimated themselves into the culture so much
9. that they do not associate themselves as a Latino or Latina.
10. Um you know I think that with our political climate
11. and I will say this with the just the negative just awful verbiage
12. that comes out of the white house from our president is also
13. um kind of instigating and giving people carte blanche
14. to feel like they can be openly racist and they can openly discriminate.
15. Um, you know you just never know
16. because I have friends that have their issues or have their beliefs
17. and when I kind of and I hate to say this but I will say this when I educate them
18. because some people need to be educated
19. because they don’t read the news and even if they read the news
20. they just go with what one individual will say and take it.
21. It’s like you know do your homework.
22. Do the research. We have google now that can give you all the pros and cons.
23. You know, I grew up, I had to go to the library.
24. I had to go to the library and look at an encyclopedia.
25. Nowadays there is no reason for people to be so ignorant and just openly racist.
26. And so it’s really hard um you know.
27. It’s like they’re good enough to be your workers
28. but they’re not good enough for them to stay in this country
29. and receive the, the rights that they are entitled to.
30. You know, the benefits of just being a human being.
31. So I’ve seen a lot.
32. I feel like of course things have switched a little more negative you know um,
33. but the work continues.
34. Like we can’t let that bring us down.
35. We have to feel, we just can’t because you know it’s human nature to you know,
   stereotype.
36. It’s just human nature and…
37. TDL: Where do these attitudes come from?
38. 031: Fear. Fear. And people don’t like change.
39. And people, and I feel that it has to do with like um it’s just fear of the unknown.
40. You know, and then when you have someone, again,
41. like the president that sorta sets the tone for the entire country
42. and yet people don’t read the news and people just don’t think about it
43. and they just are like ‘oh…’
44. And it just perception, you know.
45. It’s almost like we live in a time now
46. that so many people have this veil over their eyes and don't want to remove the veil.
47. It’s kinda sad, cause I feel like those are the individuals
48. that really aren’t embracing life to the fullest. So it’s, it’s sad. It really is.
49. TDL: Do you feel like people feel threatened by Latinos?
50. 031: I do and the reason I feel that they that people feel threatened is
51. because I learned where I was able to see and experience this after Hurricane Katrina
52. when a group of Black Baptist preachers came to an organization
53. that I was running at the time um and it was the Hispanic Business Resource Center.
54. Um, it was a coalition of partners to provide holistic services immediately after Katrina.
55. And uh one of the comments that one of the, the pastors says to me
56. ‘your people are coming and taking our jobs’
57. and I thought <gasps> ‘Wow.’
58. And so you see that that fear is also creating more division
59. within the diverse communities within the minority communities.
60. Um, and I remember saying it is not our people stealing your jobs.
61. It is the owners or business owners that are hiring at less pay.
62. So when you have your people who know not, you know,
63. when you have locals they know not to take that,
64. then you have a Latino who’s at a point of
65. ‘I am trying to survive’ so now you’re playing both against each other
66. which, which is ultimately what the goal is, to create that division.
67. TDL: If you keep people fighting each other…
68. 031: Right. I, I had, I have had some amazing mentors
69. and one of my mentors says to me
70. and he used to have me come sit in his office
71. and we would just talk,
72. and he would say to me,
73. you know I admire your passion and your desire to change the world
74. but you do understand that the system is set up to keep certain people down.
75. Cause when you fix all the problems --, what will you do?
76. Um, I am married to a Caucasian man, a white man, a privileged man, you know.
77. Um, I grew up with nothing.
78. I grew up where I saw my family grow into having everything.
79. I am, I almost feel extremely privileged for being able
to tap into all of those different cultures and beliefs of life
80. and even down to the, the whole you know status thing in terms of economics
81. you know and financial wealth
82. it's ridiculous it's absolutely ridiculous
83. but it is, it is, it's, it's people wanting to be in control to keep others down,
84. um, it's people who feel threatened by someone who doesn't look like them
85. so it's just a lot of things it's a lot it's,
86. um, it's just I'm very aware of that um,
87. I enjoy sitting in conversations where people are like ‘Oh well --’s one of us’
88. and like what does that mean I’m one of you? Aren’t we all us? Aren’t we all one?
89. You know, um, but I’ve learned also to acclimate myself
90. so I can go into any neighborhood and any culture.
91. I’m have a full understanding of, you know, the dialects.
92. I have an understanding of how people live.
93. And it’s because my father had a grocery store in New Orleans before Katrina, um,
in front of the housing projects, you know.
94. So I grew up going to work there,
95. so I saw the differences of
96. going into a project and seeing how people lived and struggled
97. and then going to my home, which wasn’t anything big or better,
98. but it was still better.
99. I saw us grow into more
100. and I saw them not go anywhere you know
101. and then I so then that was, that, that’s what I grew up seeing
102. they, us, and I remember, but they are they are us
103. and my father would say that, you know?
104. Like one time someone came into the grocery store you know
105. they needed food and my father was like
106. go get what you need and just write, sign the I.O.U.
107. And I was like ‘why would you do that?’
108. How do you know if that person’s gonna come back and pay you?
109. And he was like ‘so I have a grocery store
110. and this mother needs to feed her kids so what do I tell her, --?
111. She’ll come back. She’ll pay.’
112. And he was like ‘they want the same thing we all do.
113. We cut our hand, we all bleed the same color.
114. Difference is the color of our skin but that’s what divides us.
115. TDL: Is the Latino community the same now as it was then, or haven things
changed?
116. 031: Oh, um, no. I’ve seen the change because I’ve seen the growth within me.
117. I’ve also seen the growth within the Latino community
and those individuals that came here those individuals that you know got an education.

Those individuals that went and opened a business.

Those individuals that acclimated into the culture.

So you do see the growth.

But um, you still see it though, you know?

Like, I mean, like I walk in the room sometimes I’m the only Latina

and then I go out of my way to wear my hair curly so I can really represent.

And then like if I have to be very conservative, I’ll blow dry my hair, wear a very conservative outfit, um.

So it’s almost like, um, you play the role.

And I really do believe that.

Cause I was even asked that like from one of my mentors and this was a gentlemen who was must have been like in his seventies and he was like, ‘well how do you work, --?’ And I just was like ‘what do you mean how do I work?’ ‘Well how do you work?’

And I knew what he was getting at, you know, that stereotype of how Latinos will have a certain work ethic, so people of color have a certain work ethic and I remember my response was like ‘I work like you do. Just like you do,’ um.

It’s kinda like a man’s world and it is no matter how much we women fight <laughter>.

Total feminist, total believer that we could do things better but it’s a man’s world.

It is what it is.

So it’s learning to play the game.

It’s learning to kind of, you know I use all of that to an advantage to get the work done. That’s the way I look at it.

I’m not gonna sit here and be angry. I just can’t.

I will not let that consume me.

So I’m going to find our common goal and work together.

You may be the most racist whatever,

there is something that we have to do together we will we will have to do it together and that’s it, um,

so not everybody though some people you just are like walk away.

You don’t even engage, you don’t even try.

TDL: Have you experienced racism or mistreatment?

031: Oh, absolutely.

Oh my god, the first male that ever discriminated me was my father, you know, when I went to go work for him at the grocery store.

And he asked me how much I wanted.

And I remember we would plug the numbers in the calculator.
And I plugged the numbers and he says, ‘I can’t give that to you.’
He says, ‘because that’s what I give your brother
and he can pick boxes that you can’t and he can do more than you can,
so I have to give you a little less.’
And I thought, ‘what?’
Um, so I have experienced it.
Again, you know, when I dress how I dress how, you know, how I do my hair.
You know, I’ve always dressed very conservatively
just because it was in my up-bringing, um.
But I’ve, I’ve experienced it, um, I don’t let it bother me
and I think for me what I’ve learned is that I’m educated.
That’s my power. That is my power.
So I do not feel threatened if someone tries to demean me or, I do not.
If anything I kind of feel for them.
And I look at them like there’s something there that you just don’t get.
Um, and I’ve learned to, that’s because I’ve had to have that thick skin
because I’ve seen it happen.
Now my mother constantly would get discriminated against.
And you know I used to have to be her interpreter
so you know I’ve always had to defend her and defend myself.
And I remember always speaking up.
So no, no, it’s a moment of education again,
it’s a moment where I kind of turn the tables around
and there’s the saying within I don’t know like, with Episcopalians,
it’s just a way of being able to kind of educate someone
and put them in their place without being ugly, demeaning, cruel,
but just kind of just, again, some people you can’t, so.
But yeah, I’ve experienced it, completely. Many times.
Um and I guess sometimes I don’t even notice it
because I completely ignore it. <laughter>
TDL: Have you ever had any problems based on speaking Spanish in the city?
031: Oh yeah, I’ve had it,
where someone I remember someone says you shouldn’t speak that, um.
And I wanna say I just ignored them.
And then I will go out of my way to speak Spanish.
I will go out of my way to speak Spanish if I see a Latino in the room or Latina.
I don’t care who’s there.
If you feel offended or believe that I’m speaking about you
that’s just absolutely ludicrous. <laughter>
I mean like what are we, in elementary school?
Because if I’m gonna talk about you
I’m gonna do it in your language
and let you know what I think of you in your language.
Um, but, I guess again I just,
I was just born with fire, one of those rare people
like my husband says, we know you’ll speak your mind, --.

So um, but I saw it just because I saw it with how my mother would be treated

and she would defend herself.

So I did, I saw it, how other Latinos have been treated.

And I will defend them. Oh I’ll jump in.

If somebody’s doing something or yelling, or whatever, I’ll jump in. Absolutely.

TDL: Can you tell me about your happiest experience in New Orleans?

031: Wow. There’ve been so many. Oh my goodness.

I can’t even think, what would be my most.

Getting married, because I never thought I’d get married, because I didn’t want to.

TDL: How did you meet your husband?

031: Um, so we both sat on a committee together.

A Committee --. For about three years.

But then we actually ran into each other at a mutual friend’s house. Yeah.

Um, I think like going to City Park with my parents

when we were little are memorable moments.

My dad always spent Sundays with us.

He worked seven days-a-week, though.

He got off of work on Sundays at noon, come home and he’d spend it with us.

So we did a lot of road trips. Just traveling.

We would go, we used to go across the lake in his Nova <laughter>.

TDL: My dad owned a Nova when we were in Puerto Rico…

031: Yeah. We had a Nova. We had a station wagon.

That was another memorable moment.

When my father taught me how to drive for the first time as a teenager.

He took me out, and we had a baby blue station wagon

that in the back you would open up and there were seats, those old ones.

And he taught me how to drive by parallel parking first.

He would not let me go forward, I had to learn.

So I am the queen of parallel parking. <laughter>

TDL: Could you tell me about an unhappy or frightening experience?

031: I wouldn’t say frightening,

and I don’t really wanna talk about it because I get really emotional,

but I will say I was here for Hurricane Katrina.

Yeah. I got stuck here.

And it was, I was blessed because I didn’t lose anyone.

I didn’t, like I didn’t stay long, but it’s just, I was alone here for a while,

and I saw, I was at the Convention Center, but I didn’t stay there the night.

And I got out.

And it was a group, but it was um, I wouldn’t say that I cry for me,

because I know my strength,

but it was really heartbreaking.

to see what happened and how people were just abandoned and left behind.

And um, I remember I had my backpack.

When I tell you I had one of those old phones so I could hear messages,
but I couldn’t call out.

And everybody was saying be strong, be strong.

You know my girlfriends in the Air Force, they wouldn’t let her land.

She couldn’t pick me up, but she was in, dropping things.

Like my friends were like we can’t come back and get you, and I was alone.

And the reason I stayed was because my mother got a kidney transplant at Tulane University Hospital.

And she was airlifted out.

And then I was supposed to go with her and they didn’t,

they put me on a canoe and sent me to the Convention, to the Convention Center.

And I was like, ‘what?’

So I had my backpack and I was just like,

‘alright God, you know, I’m cashing in all my good chips with you.

Just get me to my mom.’

And I remember walking there, seeing what I saw.

It’s um, disappointing, how our elected officials failed us.

And that’s, that’s really sad.

But it’s life you know, they do it, look what they’re doing with the immigrants now.

I mean, it was sad, sad. But like, I knew that I had to come back and help out. And I did.

So, it was a hard time.

TDL: Can we change directions and talk about your favorite thing about New Orleans?

Yeah, yeah. The food. The people. My goodness.

Let me tell how beautiful New Orleans is.

That during Katrina, when I walked alone the streets,

and I got to the Convention Center, there were two women that sat there

and said to me, ‘I know you, You’re –’s daughter.’ That was my dad’s name.

‘You come sit with us.’

And they sat there with me.

And they prayed with me.

And they offered me something to drink.

And I just remember thinking, ‘that’s New Orleans.’

I didn’t, I didn’t remember them. But they knew me. They remembered me.

I used to go to work at the grocery store, all my life, every summer.

So, you know, it’s New Orleans.

I love my city. I love it here. I keep coming back. I don’t leave. I leave and I come back.

But um, the food, we have the best food. My goodness. Yeah.

TDL: If you could change something about the city, what would it be?

I think I would, in a utopian world, change that,

change the way people look at other people.

You know, like, when I say look at other people

I mean every, every single one of us, you know.

Like, I wish there wasn’t like that racist, those racist people
and I wish there wasn’t discrimination, um,
so if I could change that, oh my god, that would be great.
Everybody would do Yoga <laughter>.
I would like, in England people do have, they take breaks for tea time.
Here I would force everybody, be like, everybody just gonna stop to do Yoga.
TDL: Is there a New Orleanian way to speak?
031: Yes and no. So we have dialects in neighborhoods,
so, you know, um, I think a New Orleanian will,
can tell when you’re a New Orleanian.
A New Orleanian can tell when you’re not from here, um.
So there is no way. You know, it’s just like a gumbo of, just a mixture of.
You know I do Spanglish,
and like, I will speak standard English if I have to when I’m at a business
meeting.
I can drop the f-bomb in like every other word
because I come from the hospitality industry also
so I know what that’s like.
Um, I can go into a neighborhood and speak their dialect, you know, um.
So yeah, I code-switch a lot. Yeah. <laughter>
TDL: How can a New Orleanian tell is someone isn’t from here?
031: I think the accents. Like the way they pronounce ‘New Orleans.’
And it’s so hard because like I can’t pronounce it how others,
I just know that when I hear it, you know.
Um, and, yeah, there’s just certain people you could just tell, just, the culture
also.
Especially when they’re like ‘you can take a drink to go?’
That’s when you know for sure <laughter>. Yeah.
TDL: What does it mean to speak like a Latino?
031: I would take that offensive. I would be offended by that. Yeah.
Because what do you mean, how to speak like a Latino, Latina? I speak Spanish.
Latinos and Latinas speak like Caucasians who speak English, like French,
they speak like that.
Um, so I would say ‘say something in Spanish’ would be more appropriate.
‘Could you say a sentence in Spanish so I could’ you know, something like that.
TDL: What if we are talking about Latinos or Latinas speaking English?
031: Oh yeah because people have accents and the way they pronounce things.
I mean we’ve gotten to a point where there is like this,
this meme of things, what our mothers would say and how they pronounce it,
and you know, they pronounce it their way when they mean something else, um,
or, so yeah, no, no, you hear the accent. Oh my goodness, absolutely.
You hear it with anyone who doesn’t speak English,
and I know, you know, so you do hear that.
And then with the Latinos, um, you know Spanish speakers, you have,
it’s very different like people say that like Puerto Ricans speak really, really fast.
Then sometimes Mexicans will use different word
that Puerto Ricans don’t know, Cubans also.
Cubans to me speak so fast that I’m like ‘wait, what? What did you just say?’
Um, so it’s, I think it’s also a cultural thing, you know.
Um, it’s linguistics. It’s just very cultural.
How did you, you know, we yell when we speak Spanish in my culture.
In my family we yell that people, my friends thought we were fighting.
It’s like, no, we’re not fighting. I just told my mom I loved her.
So, but you do hear the, the accents in Spanish.
And the Spanish speakers, oh, speak Spanish, um, and then that’s because,
when you acquire a second language, to have native-like, um, pronunciation,
you have to kind of acquired it before age like, teenage years. You know.
And then you almost have to be embedded into the language.
After puberty you, it’s very rare for you to be able to acquire native like pronunciation.
Unless you literally moved to that country and are living it.
That, those chances are much higher, yeah.
So the older generation, people that are here, adults,
oh you’ll hear the accents immediately.

032: Mariela

1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 032: Depends the people. Because, you know, different things that can happen.
3. An example, when I go to Walmart, uh, I wanna try and look for my mom something.
4. Sometimes the people, the people do not understand my English.
5. like they say ‘what, what did you say, I don’t understand. Repeat again, please.’
6. TDL: Are they nice about it?
7. 032: Depends the people.
8. TDL: Have you had many experiences like that?
9. 032: Um, in the school sometimes the students be like, not bullying,
10. but be like, laughter, ‘ahaha’ no pronunciation well the words or something like this.
11. But it’s a thing that I don’t care.
12. I can’t help the critics for the other people to beat up, then down.
13. TDL: Why do you think people have these attitudes?
14. 032: Um, I? with people that does not like the Latino people
15. with people that like the Latino people.
16. Sometimes when I, when I be with people that doesn’t like the Latino people,
17. they be like some rude, but they always maintained respect.
18. Always be like, ‘okay only tolerate you, only I wanna do my work and that’s it.’
19. But with the other people that like the Latinos, they always, ‘oh where are you from?’
20. They are very happy that I am say, “I am from Mexico.”
21. They “oh the Cabo, different place and different things.”
22. TDL: Can you think of an example of when someone was rude to you?
23. 032: Sometimes I think that depends to the people.
24. You know, the humor, the situations, sometimes that happens with me with the Spanish people.
25. TDL: How do people react when you speak Spanish in public?
26. 032: Uh sometimes when I speak, I speak Spanish with my mom around,
27. uh in New Orleans, they, doesn’t matter.
28. TDL: Has anyone ever been rude about that?
29. 032: No, no nobody be rude. Only be like ‘oh they are Latino.’
30. They also talk with us in Spanish. They told you, ‘hola.’ Different things like this.
31. TDL: What was your first impression of New Orleans?
32. 032: When I arrived to New Orleans, I arrived, I arrived here to the night, in the night.
33. I was like, oh, it’s pretty.
34. I was very awesome with the environment around.
35. Because when you see the, you see the ride that be to Texas to, to, to here, to New Orleans,
36. the, the ride, I see very trees, a different environment that I like it.
37. TDL: Is it very different from Mexico?
38. 032: Yeah. It’s very different. I think that it’s more better.
39. TDL: You like it better?
40. 032: Yeah.
41. TDL: What the most enjoyable experience you have had here?
42. 032: Um, my best exp-, my best experience in New Orleans was my first Mardi Gras.
43. My step father always told me about the Mardi Gras.
44. Always said, ‘oh, the Mardi Gras, they give you something.
45. They give you toys or different things.
46. They have a difference things for the family, only adults, different age.
47. I was like, ‘okay I wanna be in a Mardi Gras.’
48. My first Mardi Gras was very awesome, the people do different things.
49. Something, different things.
50. TDL: Did you go to a lot of parades?
51. 032: Yes, I go to a lot of parades with my little, with my little sister, with my little brothers.
52. TDL: Which was your favorite?
53. 032: My favorite parade was the last year. I don’t know the name. <laughter> Sorry.
54. TDL: It always fun, exciting. Can you think of an upsetting or frightening experience?
55. 032: Uh, a no fun experience in New Orleans.
56. I thought it was when I go to pay.
57. It’s not something with the, with the, with the New Orleans, but it was something.
58. When we go to the French Quarter and try to see the things, we go see like, ??.
59. And the person was say, ‘I don’t understand what do you say.
60. You don’t have the money for ? race, you can’t be here.’
61. I told the person, ‘I am be here, I can, I can be at the races if I want, because I am work.
62. That was, was the only ugly experience I have here.
63. But it’s okay. I can handle, you know.
64. TDL: What is your favorite thing about New Orleans?
65. 032: About New Orleans my favorite thing, is I am a person who likes the, you know,
66. the be together with different race, with different people.
67. The thing I most like in New Orleans is that, they have many different race,
68. like people, Asian and different people.
69. This is the thing I most like because they are similar, they are equal.
70. TDL: What would you change about New Orleans?
71. 032: Uh, I would like to change how the people, relate with other cultures,
72. with other cultures you know.
73. When we had different perspectives to the other people like,
74. you know, this person is Asian and they eat something nasty things and different things.
75. Like say, ‘open you mind. Are you in New Orleans?’
76. And you if you be in New Orleans they have different races after that or than we, than us.
77. They have Spanish, Spanish, French, and different, you know,
78. after that they come into the America. ? New Orleans.
79. TDL: Do you think people speak differently in New Orleans?
80. 032: Uh, yes. They have a different speaking in English.
81. Because when I was in the, in the other apartment were,
82. were like people that talked like native, like native from here,
83. and was different told us about the different little towns like Houma,
84. different, they have different speak. They speak differently.
85. TDL: Is there anything I should know about life in New Orleans as Latina?
86. 032: Um, life in New Orleans like a Latino is something, is something.
87. <bueno> In my opinion was something really
88. because I have a different culture to the people that were here.
89. I no wanna be racist <pero> you know the majority the people race is the black people.
90. I like that. I like that. But sometimes it’s like very, very hard to.
91. Because I have a friend that, that are they, that color.
92. And sometimes they say,
93. ‘oh I have a friend that always say that Latino people always have money in his pocket.
94. We can go to him and say ‘hey give me your money, you already have too money.’
95. I think that is a very, uh, hard experience.

033: Rosita
1. TDL: How do you think the Latinx community is perceived?
2. 033: The perspective I think of the Latino community here in New Orleans they, um,
3. in New Orleans, it’s a very complex city and it has been very welcoming to Latinos
4. because it has a lot of similarities with Latin cities around the world especially Panama.
5. Panama and New Orleans could be twin cities, in every aspect culturally geographically.
6. The more research I do about it.
7. Uh, uh, two years ago I discovered that,
8. Um, the United Fruit Company was founded here in New Orleans
9. through the Pan American insurance company to serve the banana republics that were in
    Panama.
10. And that’s a direct correlation and everything kind of exploded from there.
11. So I think the, the visual how, how the Latinos are perceived here in New Orleans
12. are pretty much how all the minorities are perceived in the South, to their convenience.
13. They are very uh segregated.
14. That’s why most of the Latino community lives in Kenner.
15. Um, they have been given somewhat, some, uh, bribes and acknowledgement.
16. Maybe more than the African community or the Indian community.
17. And they have fought in culturally and I think because of of the cultural background
18. and the mindset that they have they have managed to achieve maybe a more particular
    role
19. than the other minorities but they are not recognized as much as they should be.
20. TDL: So what the community has has been fought for?
21. 033: Oh yes they have not been handed. No, mhm, nothing.
22. And a lot of people especially here in New Orleans are very ignorant to the fact
23. that the French Quarter was a Spanish Quarter.
24. And New Orleans was a Spanish colony it was a Spanish province before the French
    colony.
25. The --, and this is why, one of the main reasons why I volunteer as a docent there,
26. always brings about the Spanish heritage and the Spanish connections and the roots.
27. And when they, they talk about seeing the South
28. they always try to, to make the people see the south
29. not only through what we have right now but through the heritage.
30. And they have a fantastic exhibit right now about
31. this famous Spanish painter that did these portraits of the Spanish royalty
32. here in in New Orleans so people can actually see the connection, the Spanish connection.
33. Not always the French connection that people think they have.
34. So yes, I think it, it has a lot to do with ignorance, and, like the root of all evils,
ignorance.
35. But also because I think the Latino, uh, seeing what has happened to the, to the Black
community,
36. they they have tried to fight the wars in a different way.
37. TDL: Have you seen or experienced discrimination based on being Latino?
38. 033: Not towards me but yes towards the Latino community.
39. Um, you know, I remember the first time that I arrived here in New Orleans,
40. um, you know, ICE officers, not as much as they do it now unfortunately,
41. but ICE officers just showing up at Latino markets,
42. showing up at, uh, Home Depots after, especially after the storm all these,
43. um, manual labor would offer themselves in Home Depot, Lowes and what not,
44. and just showing up there and kind of raiding, harassing them.
45. Um, and, to this day, to this day.
46. My personal experience with that is that,
47. and I live in one of the most racist neighborhoods in New Orleans, which is Harahan,
48. and they call it the, the Harahan Gestapo.
49. And they will stop you for anything.
50. But because of my, because of where I live and what I drive and how I’m dressed
51. they cannot harass me too much.
52. But they still harass me.
53. They have, they still harass me.
54. They still harass me, they still stop me, they still uh, question a lot.
55. And, I, again, this is, I have,
56. I have been saved from a lot of that because of the so-called white privilege
57. which is only the privileged situation that I live.
58. But I see it in my housekeepers, that they have to, uh,
59. do the run around when they come to the house.
60. I have to bail them out many times.
61. Other housekeepers do, that their employers don’t speak the language so they call me,
62. so I can kind of intervene.
63. So yes this has maybe increased more now in this environment that were living. Yes.
64. TDL: Unfortunately, it does seem that some of these attitudes are more common now.
65. 033: It has, yeah, they have floated more to the surface.
66. People right now they think they have free reign.
67. They have free reign. They have, I mean, if he does it, why can’t we do it?
68. TDL: Do you think people in New Orleans feel threatened by Latinos?
69. 033: No. They don’t feel threatened.
70. I think they even welcome them more than the members of the Black community
71. only because Latinos are considered to have the best of both, both worlds.
72. They have Black heritage but they also have White heritage because of the mixed blood, for one.
73. And for two, because uh, Latino community don’t hold any grudges
74. against the communities here in the south.
75. They were not enslaved and they were not share croppers
76. like the Latino communities in California and in the northern parts of the U.S.
77. The Latino communities here in New Orleans came out of their free will looking for work
78. and, and migrating always looking for work.
79. And they have established themselves a third fourth and fifth generation out of their free will.
80. They were not forced here so they don’t really,
81. they are not, uh, seen as a threat to the White community but they are not seen as equals either.
82. TDL: What was your first impression of New Orleans?
83. 033: The, well the first, first, first, first time that I came to New Orleans
84. was in nineteen ninety four and I came to visit some of my friends that were in college.
85. And my first impression was the stark segregation
86. but very, very sublime and I saw,
87. and I came for, for Mardi Gras to visit my, my friends obviously,
88. but I saw this uh especially in the parades,
89. how it was only either, uh, Black bands or White bands.
90. And the Black kids were on one side of the, of the street
91. and the White kids were on the other side of the street.
92. And in Panama we have also carnival so we have, so called Mardi Gras,
93. and it’s always around the same time.
94. And everybody there just dances, and, and, and mixes and mingles and there’s no stark,
95. there’s segregation don’t take me wrong
96. because we have the, the conflicts with the Indian communities down there.
97. But the segregation that I saw here was very palpable, very palpable.
98. So that was one of the first things that struck me.
99. And how similar it was to Panama
100. in the culture and the influences and the food and the music
101. and that’s the other thing that I remember the most
102. the first time that I came to New Orleans.
103. TDL: What the happiest experience since you’ve lived here?
104. 033: Uh, well the recent, one of the most recent ones was, uh,
105. this past Saturday the -- celebrated its fifteenth year anniversary.
106. That was in two thousand and three I came in two thousand and four.
107. The, the museum was only a year old when I started volunteering for them.
108. And, for me it was beautiful to see how they had grown
109. and what a refuge it had become not only for me but for the community in itself.
They had a brass band.

They had families and uh,
it made me realize how lucky we were to have places like this in New Orleans
that were so open to all kinds of mindsets and cultures backgrounds.
And it’s, that’s, that’s the thing that I enjoy the most about New Orleans
regardless of everything else that could be not in the surface
but maybe in the background as well.

TDL: How did you get involved with the museum?
033: You saw an ad in the paper.
I saw it and I, like I said the museum was very young.
They were looking for docents
and I thought that that was the best way to learn about my new home,
volunteering as a docent in the south and they really gave me a great education.
TDL: I’ve been there once about a year ago…
033: Oh you have to come back.
You always have to go back they have all kinds of things going on.
And I, and I can put you, if you want to interview, um, artist residence
and even people that work there that are also from Latino background.
You definitely have to go there.
TDL: I love going to museums…
033: And they had a, I think it, it ended already last weekend.
They had a wonderful exhibit by – who’s Puerto Rican at the --. Did you get a chance
to see it?
<Blows out>It was mind-blowing.
Yeah I think it ended last weekend but you could always,
and again, that’s another museum that’s always trying
to bring to the surface the connection of the Spanish and Latino heritage with the, with
the city.
TDL: Can you tell me about a less-than-pleasant experience in the city?
033: Well, one of the least pleasant experiences that I had was uh,
bailing out one of my housekeepers.
She was stopped just because she looked Latino.
And she was put in jail, she was thrown in jail.
I had to go bail her out and then we had to go different times.
And the way she was, she was handcuffed,
I mean, she was treated very poorly, because she’s poor and because she’s Latino.
And that’s when I realized, um, the so-called privilege that I had.
That I only have the white privilege but I have, I mean, if,
if I would drive the car that she drives, which I gave her so she could help me.
And didn’t speak English as well as I do and didn’t dress the way that I did,
I would probably be treated the same way.
So yes, that was one of the most unpleasant experiences
and that kind of put everything back into perspective
and made me remember, yeah, remember that you live in the deep south <laughter>.
Regardless of what they say.
They always say New Orleans is such a liberal city, but, this is still the deep south.
This is the south.
TDL: It is probably the only city in the south where I’d want to live, though…
033: Yeah. You just have to cross,
I went to Covington the other day, and there’s a very flourishing Latino community. I, in fact I went to visit some, some friends and I was really surprised. You don’t have to drive far to realize what a bubble you live in. TDL: What’s your favorite thing about New Orleans? 033: That’s a hard question. My favorite thing about New Orleans, uh..., in what field? In the music, in the food, in the neighborhoods? I think, I think the, my favorite thing about New Orleans is, is just the city built to welcome the broken and um, and how people from any part of the world, no matter the background, they can come here and start fresh. No questions asked. I think it’s just the openness of the city. I think that, that would be my favorite. It’s the energy. The energy and, and uh, the historical background that the city has. That has allowed it to be so welcoming. TDL: What would you want to change? 033: Uh, its’, its’ racial past. Its’ racist, racist past. Which probably was handed down by the Spaniards and the French who were the ones who, the first ones who brought slaves to the city, who were the ones who bartered with them. I would love to, it’s, it’s gonna be impossible to change but I think it would be good that they would come, uh, uh, settle with it. I mean, negotiate it and look at it in the face. And in that note, I really did not, was not, uh, happy that all those statues of confederate soldiers and what not were torn down by the only fact that that was a reminder to the city of what they had done and I think if the mayor wanted to do something about changing the, the racist mindset of the city, he should have concentrated more on helping the schools and the children that are here. And giving them, um, more outlets for them not to be on the streets and not, because I personally believe that being hungry and, and being on the streets and having your parents work three or four jobs a day, it’s going to contribute more to violence and to racism than tearing down statues. I think that was just a political what-not, circus of thing and it’s not gonna fix anything. It’s a political stunt, yes. And I think it did more to open the rift than to close it. TDL: How many years have you been here? 033: <laughter> Fourteen. TDL: Do you consider yourself New Orleanian? 033: No. I don’t. I, I don’t because I’ve lived in so many places. My heart, every, in every place I’ve lived, I’ve lived in Panama my first twenty years of life, and then I lived two in Costa Rica. I also lived two in London and five in Italy, and I went every summer to Spain when I was growing up. So I cannot be considered, I cannot consider myself New Orleanian because my heart is kind of spread all over. But I consider, right now I consider New Orleans my home
because my children were born here and they are being raised here.

But if I had to move back to Panama or to any other place then that would be considered my home.

But that being said, I also don’t consider myself New Orleanian because the New Orleans don’t consider me a New Orleanian.

I think a New Orleanian considers another one a New Orleanian if you are born and bred here, and also depending on what neighborhood you were born and where you were bred.

TDL: So you have to be born here?

033: Born and bred.

TDL: How long do you have to live here if you weren’t born here?

033: You would have to ask that to people that have been living here for numbers of years but I know Latinos that came here in the fifties and they don’t consider themselves New Orleanians.

TDL: Is there a specific way New Orleanians speak?

033: Absolutely. And that’s, and that’s another, uh, thing that’s very similar to Panama. Panama for being a hub like New Orleans is a hub, they have a very hybrid accent that cannot be pinpointed. And I think it’s, it comes from all the influences, from all the different cultures that have come here to New Orleans. Same thing in Panama.

TDL: What marks someone as New Orleanian?

033: The different words that they use to describe things. Uh, I remember, uh, for example the first time that, one of the first places that they took me to eat was Mother’s, and I love oysters and they ordered me a, an oyster poboy and I didn’t know what a poboy is and they come say it’s a sandwich. ‘What is a poboy?’ Uh, the way that they described the poboy, ‘I want it dressed.’ What do you mean dressed?

Um, the way that they pronounce certain words.

I, I say um, [ʌm] and they say here [ˈsimɪnt]. And, and different things like that. You really have to be, and I learned this from my husband and from my husband’s uh, mother’s side of the family.

There are what they call here Y’ats.

And I thought that she was from Brooklyn when I first met her. ‘Wait, what?’ And then they told me, ‘no. These are Y’ats.’

TDL: So just like the same people came here as went to New York…

033: Yes. Yes. And my mother-in-law’s uh, family, they’re all Italian. They all Italian. That’s on my mother’s side and my father-in-law’s side they’re all German.

And Germans, and Irish, yeah, yeah.

And it was very particular when I met them.

I really thought that she was from Brooklyn. <laughter>

TDL: Can you tell if someone is Latino by their speech?

033: Yes.

TDL: How?
033: It’s uh, if you are a Latino
you’re going to recognize their accents according to the country and the,
and the words that they use.
Same thing here in, in New Orleans. Yes, I can know.
TDL: You can tell what country they are from?
003: Yes. Yes. From the accent. First from the accent and then from the words that
they use.
TDL: Is there anything important about the experience of being Latino in New Orleans
that we haven’t talked about?
033: Uh, well, let me think. I think you, you,
I think you’ve cov, you’ve covered all the bases,
but I think something that is, um, when they think about the Latino community
I think uh, another complete research should be done just um,
 focusing on the um, on the female workforce,
which is right now the ones who is, who are really taking the reins,
and who are really leaving the, um, footprint on the, on the Latino community right
now.
The ones who are really the bread-winners,
and this is because uh, after Katrina and all the hurricanes
and all the disasters that happened later,
most of the men that came to work and build up the city moved to another, other cities,
but the women stayed behind cause of the children that they, that they bore here.
And so they created jobs for themselves and they created a new life for themselves
and that’s, um, that’s an aspect of the Latino community that is not been acknowledged
and that’s something that you definitely should look into.
APPENDIX C.

VOWEL PLOTS

CHAPTER 4 VOWEL PLOTS
CHAPTER 5 VOWEL PLOTS
APPENDIX D.
STATISTICAL MODELS

Conditional inference tree for nasal tokens of /æ/ without network metrics.

Conditional inference tree for nasal tokens of /æ/ including network metrics.
Random forest for /æ/ nasal tokens without network metrics.

Conditional inference tree for /æ/ system without network metrics.

Random forest for /æ/ system including network metrics.
Conditional inference tree for /æ/ tokens without network metrics.

Random forest for /æ/ tokens without network metrics.

Random forest for nPVI by token including network metrics.
Random forest for nPVI by token without network metrics.

Conditional inference tree for nPVI by token without network metrics.
APPENDIX E.

PYTHON AND R SCRIPTS

Python script for network analysis.

```python
import networkx as nx
from networkx.algorithms import bipartite
import csv
from operator import itemgetter
import pylab as plt

# create bipartite graph
B = nx.Graph()

# read in participant nodes
with open('part_nodes_final.csv', 'r') as nodecsv:
    nodereader = csv.reader(nodecsv)
    nodes = [n for n in nodereader][1:]
part_node_names = [n[0] for n in nodes]

# read in neighborhood nodes
with open('neighborhood_nodes_final.csv', 'r') as nodecsv2:
    nodereader2 = csv.reader(nodecsv2)
    nodes2 = [n for n in nodereader2][1:]
neighborhood_node_names = [n[0] for n in nodes2]

# add neighborhood and participant nodes to graph B
B.add_nodes_from(part_node_names, bipartite=0)
B.add_nodes_from(neighborhood_node_names, bipartite=1)

# read in list of edges
with open('neighborhood_edges_final.csv', 'r') as edgecsv:
    edgereader = csv.reader(edgecsv)
    edges = [tuple(e) for e in edgereader][1:]

# add edges to graph B
B.add_edges_from(edges)

# check graph info
```
print(nx.info(B))

# draw bipartite graph
bip_node_labels = {node: node for node in B.nodes()}
nx.draw(B, pos=nx.spring_layout(B), labels=bip_node_labels)

# project bipartite network to single level graph named G
G = nx.projected_graph(B, part_node_names)

# check graph info
print(nx.info(G))

# draw projected graph
# option 1
node_labels = {node: node for node in G.nodes()}
nx.draw(G, pos=nx.spring_layout(G), labels=node_labels)

# write file for cytoscape
nx.write_gml(G, 'neighbor_net.gml')
xn.write_gml(B, 'bipartite_net.gml')

# calculate betweenness centrality - how many times on shortest path
bet_cen = nx.betweenness_centrality(G)

# calculate closeness centrality - average shortest path
clo_cen = nx.closeness_centrality(G)

# calculate eigenvector centrality
eig_cen = nx.eigenvector_centrality(G)

# calculate harmonic centrality
har_cen = nx.harmonic_centrality(G)

# create sorted dictionaries
sorted_betweenness = sorted(bet_cen.items(), key=itemgetter(1), reverse=True)
sorted_closeness = sorted(clo_cen.items(), key=itemgetter(1), reverse=True)
sorted_eigen = sorted(eig_cen.items(), key=itemgetter(1), reverse=True)
sorted_harmonic = sorted(har_cen.items(), key=itemgetter(1), reverse=True)

# print and view data
print(sorted_betweenness)
print(sorted_closeness)
print(sorted_eigen)
print(sorted_harmonic)

# calculate k-connectivity
nx.k_components(G)

R script for calculating Bhattacharyya’s distance.

library(adehabitatHR) ## this gives us BA score functions
library(sp)
library(dplyr) ## for cleaning the data so that we have at least 5 observations in each cluster
library(ggplot2)
library(tidyverse)

vow <- read.csv("C:/Users/Tom Lewis/Desktop/Dissertation/Files/Analysis/Vowel Comps/vowel_space_comparison_clean.csv", header=T)

### identify vowels with at least 5 tokens in each sample
vow %>%
  group_by(Vowel, Pre_Katrina) %>%
  summarise(n = n()) %>%
  filter(n > 5) %>% ## to make sure there are 5 tokens in each sample
  na.omit('FALSE') %>% ## omit subjects with NAs (i.e. <5 tokens) in the Post Katrina sample
  na.omit('FALSE') %>% ## omit subjects with NAs in the Pre Katrina sample
  mutate(subvow_nola = paste(Vowel)) -> SubVowCheck_nola ## create list of vowels with enough tokens in Pre and Post Samples

### filter out vowels with fewer than 5 observations in each sample, or the for loop will crash
vow %>%
  group_by(Vowel, Pre_Katrina) %>%
  mutate(subvow_nola = paste(Vowel)) %>%
  filter(subvow_nola %in% SubVowCheck_nola$subvow_nola) -> vow2

## Create empty data frame to put the BA data into
bhattdat_nola <- data.frame(subvow_nola=as.character(), Bhatt=as.numeric(), stringsAsFactors = FALSE)

subvowp_nola <- unique(vow2$subvow_nola) ## Create list of vowel and sample combinations that will work
r=0
for(i in subvowp_nola){
  r <- r+1
  dat_nola <- subset(vow2, subvow_nola==i)
  bhattdat_nola[r, 1] <- i
  matnum_nola <- as.matrix(dat_nola[,c("F1", "F2")]) ## BA score step 1
  labsnum_nola <- dat_nola[,c("F1", "F2", "Pre_Katrina")]) ## Add category labels (Pre_Katrina = T vs. F)
  df_nola <- SpatialPointsDataFrame(matnum_nola, data.frame(labsnum_nola)) ## BA score step 2
  ba_nola <- round(kerneloverlap(df_nola[3], method="BA")[1, 2], 3) ## calculate BA score
  bhattdat_nola[r, 2] <- ba_nola ## assign BA score to the empty data frame
}
write.csv(bhattdat_nola, file="C:/Users/Tom Lewis/Desktop/Dissertation/Files/Analysis/Vowel Comps/bhatt_data.csv")
APPENDIX F.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Full vowel data, full nPVI calculation data, and audio recordings are available online. See http://thomasdaniellewis.weebly.com for more information.
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The social networks of minority ethnicity group members in Washington state. Seattle, WA.


**BIOGRAPHY**

Tom Lewis is a Ph.D. candidate in the Interdisciplinary Program in Linguistics at Tulane University. His work focuses on developing interdisciplinary mechanisms for exploring language use in Latinx communities in the United States. He seeks to incorporate insights and methodologies from variationist sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, critical theory, sociology, and Latinx cultural studies in order to pursue a research program dedicated not only to improving understanding of language use in this community, but also to contributing to the political and social demarginalization of U.S. Latinxs.