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Ethnolinguistic and Gender Aspects of Latino Naming in Chicago: Exploring Regional Variation

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The naming behavior of ethnolinguistic minorities in the US can provide insight into a group's cultural stances, language ideologies, and even language planning efforts. This study examines the names of Latinos in Chicago, with a particular focus on those born by the second generation. Building on previous studies of Latino immigrant naming practices in Texas and Los Angeles, a comparative analysis of the ethnolinguistic and gender-related patterns of a corpus of 386 names is performed. Results show a general alignment of name type preferences across Latino communities but suggest there may be site-specific trends in the popularity of individual names. In terms of gender divergence in assimilative naming, an additional perspective is provided to complement previous conflicting findings.

KEYWORDS: Latino, Hispanic, anthroponyms, Spanish, ethnolinguistic minority, personal names, assimilation.

Introduction

Name conferral is a universal social practice through which collective norms and values are expressed and individual identities born (Alford, 1988). Such universality facilitates cross-cultural comparisons of conventions and trends, and provides a window through which to analyze power dynamics and socio-cultural shifts. Thompson (2006: 2) emphasizes names as "elements of language fraught with social implications that are worthy of linguistic research." Likewise, still relevant is Lieberson's (1984) invitation to discover the diverse intersections between the "linguistic phenomena" of names and specific societal conditions. In the context of the US Latino minority, the present investigation explores the sociolinguistic relevance of what Lieberson describes as the "orderly patterns occurring when large numbers of parents independently name their children" (1984: 1).

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Although ethnic minority names in the US have long been of scholarly interest, recently they have received an increasing amount of attention. Representing diverse disciplines, the ethnic character of personal names has been examined as it relates, for example, to housing discrimination (Carpusor and Loges, 2006; US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2002), the perceived appearance of multi-racial faces (Hilliar and Kemp, 2008), racially and religiously "mixed" children (Edwards and Caballero, 2008), colonial-era fugitive slaves (Laversuch, 2011), social status (Figlio, 2005), identity construction (Blair, 1991; Lombard, 2011; Parada, 2011, 2014; Thompson, 2006), and birth order (Parada, 2013). Personal names have also been utilized to study minority acculturation patterns (Lavender, 1988; Lieberson, 2000; Ragone, 2012; Silverman, 1991; Sue and Telles, 2007).

As early as 1982, scholars began to focus on the "contradictory demands of two cultures" reflected in the parental naming decisions of Hispanics (the ethnonyms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are used interchangeably throughout the article) in the US (Coltharp, 1981; Murguía, 1982: 75). Notably, two studies have examined large-scale Hispanic parental naming choices in Texas (Lieberson, 2000) and Los Angeles (LA) (Sue and Telles, 2007). Both studies report that, despite a minor trend towards choosing mainstream first names for their children born in the US, immigrant parents are partial to ethnic names which are representative of their culture and language of origin. These two analyses differ, however, in their explanations of the gendered disparities in naming sons versus daughters. While Lieberson attributes the greater selection of non-Hispanic names for daughters to the availability of names ending in the letter *a* (a hallmark feature of Hispanic female names), Sue and Telles do not.

For many generations of US American immigrants or minority groups, conformity in naming was government mandated or forcefully suggested (e.g. Gamella et al., 2014; Maass, 1958; Noel, 2002; Rennick, 1970). Such has been the case for many other minority populations throughout the world. Fortunately, as multiculturalism is increasingly embraced, there appears to be less overt pressure with respect to the onomastic decisions of minorities. According to Sue and Telles (2007), for immigrants and their posterity in the US, naming choices constitute cultural decisions that can be powerful indicators of parental commitment to majority integration and the expectations they have for their offspring. These choices are considered especially valuable because "they can be used to quantify competing cultural influences," and they "represent behaviors which are much more concrete than attitudes and opinions" (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1384–1385). In fact, due to their ubiquity, naming decisions are likely to be an earlier, less-constrained indicator of immigrant acculturation than other common measures, such as socioeconomic status, majority language proficiency, or intermarriage. On the reliability of onomastics in macrosociological research, Dumas (1978: 3), who used names to study the trajectory of puritanism, submits that "a culture's naming practices may reveal shifts in its value system as clearly as, if not more accurately than, articulated statements of value." Likewise, in his influential work on the historical naming patterns of different British-origin communities in the US, Zelinsky (1970) describes names as an ideal measure for studying cultural variation across time and space. Today, the naming behavior of ethnolinguistic minorities can provide insight into the underlying cultural stances, language ideologies, and even language planning efforts (Parada, 2013) that govern such practices.

The utility of names in gauging ethnolinguistic affiliations may be especially great in nations like the US where there are currently few legal parameters restricting naming choices. Although positive attitudes towards linguistic and cultural integration may primarily drive parental selection of more mainstream names for their children, parents may also select these names because of the belief that they will diminish discrimination. Such a pragmatic motivation is documented by Souto-Manning (2007) in a case study in which a mother from Mexico renamed her youngest son from *Idelbrando* to *Tommy* on his first day of school to avoid the name-based stereotypes that her older sons, named *Antonio* and *Nicolás*, had experienced years earlier. Notwithstanding these common motivations, Latino naming patterns may exhibit variation due to disparities in the demographic, political, and sociocultural characteristics of their various communities. In other words, given the well-attested diversity among Latinos in areas such as Spanish language features, language maintenance, language attitudes, transnational ties, and socioeconomic status (e.g. Lipski, 2008; Potowski and Torres, forthcoming; US Census Bureau, 2011), it may follow that naming behavior varies as well across Latino communities in the US, even where there is a shared Mexican-origin majority.

This study explores the question of regional trends through an analysis of the ethnolinguistic and gender-based patterns of the names of second-generation Latinos in Chicago relative to those documented elsewhere in the country, i.e. LA and Texas. Following Silva-Corvalán (1994), I use the term "second generation" to reference those individuals who were born in the US to at least one immigrant parent or who were brought to the US before the age of six. The specific goals of the study are (1) to provide an ethnolinguistic typology of the names of Latino university students in Chicago, (2) to compare and contrast these trends with other Latino communities, and (3) to offer a third viewpoint on the heretofore conflicting explanations of the gender discrepancy in Latino naming (i.e. the higher rate of Anglo names given to daughters versus sons — more on this in the next section). The terms *Hispanic/Latino* and *Anglo* are employed contrastively throughout the article to describe and classify names. *Hispanic* or *Latino* denotes Hispanicized name variants of the Judeo-Christian (*María*, *Rut*, *Esteban*, *Graciela*, etc.) or Germanic origin (*Alfredo*, *Raúl*, *Carlota*, *Alicia*, etc.) traditions. Names of Hispanic or Meso-American origin, or those otherwise connoting a Hispanic/Latino identity in the US context (*Rey*, *Esmeralda*, *Yesenia*, *Itzel*, *Nayelis*, etc.) are also classified under these labels. The term *Anglo* represents anglicized variants of the Judeo-Christian (*Mary*, *Ruth*, *Steven*, *Grace*, etc.) or Germanic origin (*Alfred*, *Ralph*, *Charlotte*, *Alice*, etc.) traditions. It also includes other names of non-Hispanic origin common (or once common) in mainstream US naming practices (*Jennifer*, *Kimberly*, *Kelly*, *Glen*, etc.).

While the etymological and linguistic traits of the names were relied on for proper classification, considering the popular connotations of names was also important. Trends play a key role in the ethnically connotative aspects of a name. In the second section (Method), further information is provided on the classification process, including the methodological triangulation required for tapping into the ethnic perceptions of specific names.

Naming practices of Latino immigrants to the US

In a landmark cross-cultural study, Lieberson (2000) offers a detailed analysis of the naming behavior of several ethnic groups, including Mexicans, Southeast Asians, Jews, and African-Americans. Based in Texas, he compared the top 20 names chosen for sons and daughters among Mexican immigrant parents against those chosen by their Anglo counterparts, reporting a five name overlap for sons and a seven name overlap for daughters. Despite the general preference for ethnic-origin names regardless of gender, Lieberson concluded that the gender discrepancy in Anglo name bestowal was likely to be due to the greater morpho-phonological similarity between Hispanic and Anglo female names. In his view, the selection of Anglo names that end in "a" for daughters facilitates the continuance of "pre-migration tastes" when transitioning to majority-group names. As Lieberson notes, this persistence is evidenced by the fact that it is rare for Mexican-Americans to adopt a name like *Joshua* for their sons. On the other hand, the "o"-suffix in names for boys, which marks masculine gender in Spanish and in many Hispanic male names (although not as ubiquitously as the gender-linked "a" suffix in female names), is not as prevalent among Anglo names. In other words, Lieberson (2000) argues that the shift from minority to mainstream female names is easier because homeland trends intersect with US naming customs. Sue and Telles (2007) also observe a more rapid shift to Anglo names for daughters of Latino immigrants, but they do not attribute it to the cross-cultural significance of the "a" suffix. Rather, they suggest prestige factors and gender-discriminant parenting as possible explanations. I discuss these in greater detail in my review of that study, to which I now turn.

Sue and Telles (2007) measured rates of assimilation in an analysis of the top 20 and top 500 names given to Hispanic children, predominantly of Mexican origin, born in LA County in 1995 (with the exception of Pasadena and Long Beach). They analyzed the ethnolinguistic connotations of these names by coding each according to its place on a five-point "English-Spanish" continuum. On this scale, a "1" represented the most English names that had no language-opposite equivalent (e.g. *Ashley*), while a "5" similarly represented the most Spanish names without a corresponding English name (e.g. *Guadalupe*). A "2" was used for English names with Spanish counterparts (e.g. *Michael*), and a "4" was likewise assigned to Spanish names with an English counterpart (e.g. *Miguel*). Finally, a "3" represented a name that was considered native to both languages/traditions (e.g. *David*). Although the authors labeled the continuum using language names (English-Spanish), they adhered to the notion that a Spanish/Latin etymology is not always essential for a name to qualify as Spanish, but rather it is its connotations of Hispanic identity, because these "most accurately approximate parental understanding of whether names are Spanish or English" (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1393). Given that both Anglo (as defined in this study) and Latino names are derived from a number of different language sources, in adapting the continuum for use in the present study I have opted to increase the focus on the ethnically and culturally connotative aspects of names by replacing the descriptors "English" and "Spanish" with "Anglo" and "Latino". This is not to say that names do not carry linguistic connotations — they absolutely do — but such connotations may result more from the association of names with speakers of a language than from transparent linguistic origins. The coding scheme details are displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1 ANGLO-LATINO NAME CONTINUUM

Group	Category	Description	Examples
Anglo	1	The most Anglo, no Latino counterpart	*Tiffany, Brian*
	2	Anglo name with Latino counterpart	*Rose, John*
Culturally neutral	3	Native to both traditions/languages	*Andrea, David*
Latino	4	Latino name with Anglo counterpart	*Rosa, Juan*
	5	The most Latino, no Anglo counterpart	*Luz, Jesús*

Note: Adapted from Sue and Telles (2007)

Whereas Lieberson (2000) measured name choices more restrictively, Sue and Telles (2007) employed the five-point scale in order to better capture the complexity of naming choices. They propose that culturally neutral names, which do not strictly connote one language or the other (e.g. *Andrea* or *David*), or names that are easily translatable (e.g. *Rose-Rosa* or *John-Juan*), provide "overlapping spaces that allow for immigrants and their descendants to choose a middle ground" (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1392). For example, they suggest naming a child *Juan* represents a more culturally conservative choice than *John*, but also believe *John* to be a more conservative choice than *Ryan*. Sue and Telles (2007) found that greater exposure to US culture (measured in terms of immigrant generation) correlated positively with the propensity to select Anglo names. However, they argue that choosing neutral or translatable Latino names is a strategy adopted by Hispanic parents across generations which simultaneously grants access to the mainstream and preserves ethnic ties.

As for the role of gender in immigrant naming, their results mirror those of Lieberson (2000) in that "[parental] attitudes favoring assimilation are particularly great when naming daughters" (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1385). They observed a tendency for sons of immigrants to be given traditional Hispanic names (codes "4" and "5"), while daughters were more frequent recipients of Anglo names (codes "1" and "2"). However, they concluded that this gendered difference was not due to the availability of terminal "a" Anglo names for females (only one of the 10 most widely chosen Anglo names had an "a" ending: *Jessica*), but to the simple popularity of female Anglo names among Hispanics. This greater popularity, they propose, could be influenced by one or more of the following: the prestige already attached to female Anglo names in the countries of origin (Evans, 2008); the stronger need immigrant parents feel to protect their daughters from stigmatization (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Waters, 1990); and the treatment of sons as carriers of tradition through names (Alford, 1988; Lieberson and Bell, 1992). The present article offers a third view of this heretofore inconclusive issue, with results coinciding with Lieberson (2000). That is, as will be shown later, the "a" suffix feature appears to influence the selection of mainstream names for daughters in the Chicago sample.

Latinos in Chicago

Following New York, LA, Houston, and San Antonio, Chicago has the fifth largest Latino (and Spanish speaking) population in the US (US Census Bureau, 2011). Constituting 28.9 % of Chicago's population, the Latino minority includes the fourth-largest Mexican and third-largest Puerto Rican communities in the country. These rankings represent the well-established and historically rich Latino presence in this Midwestern metropolis, an

excellent site for a comparative perspective on the sociolinguistic expression of Latino naming.

Method

Names were drawn from university course placement records for the years 2005–2007 in the Spanish for Heritage Speakers (SHS) language track at a large public university. After controlling for generation, the final corpus consisted of a total of 386 names of second-generation Latino students. At least 85 % of the names analyzed represented individuals of the second generation who were born in the US (versus abroad and brought to the US at an early age). The majority (84 %) of names in the corpus belonged to students of Mexican origin. Other backgrounds represented were Guatemalan (4 %), Puerto Rican (3 %), Ecuadorian (2 %), and Colombian (2 %). Individuals of a mixed Hispanic heritage made up 5 % of the group, the most common being Mexican-Puerto Rican. In all, there were 126 male student names and 260 female student names.

All names were coded following the five-point continuum criteria set forth in Sue and Telles (2007) and displayed in Table 1. While most names were easily classified due to clear cognate relationships (e.g. *José*/*Joseph*), other factors were also relevant. With regard to spelling, names were categorized according to the orthographical norms represented in their names (e.g. *Christian*/*Cristian*; *Anna*/*Ana*). In the rare case that a name listed appeared to be a nickname, such as *Freddy*, I coded it as is (i.e. code "2"), regardless of what it might have been an abbreviation of (*Alfred* or *Alfredo*). In other words, all names in the corpus, regardless of form, were treated as given names. If a name appeared to be an innovation, I coded it in accordance with the phonotactic constraints and spelling conventions of the language it most closely adhered to. For example, given its structural and orthographic similarities with surnames like *Mcoy*

TABLE 2 FLAGGED NAMES CODED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Name	Code Assigned	Female (F) or Male (M)
Janet	1	F
Karen	1	F
Dorian	1	F
Alaine	1	F
Jair	2	M
Karla	2	F
Elsa	3	F
Myrna	3	F
Zinnia	3	F
Claribel	3	F
Emmanuel	3	M
Israel	3	M
Berenice	4	F
Liset/Lisette/Lizette	4	F
Francisco	4	M
Rossyvette	5	F
Yanette	5	F
Maricela	5	F

Bold indicates names that required further discussion.

and *Mcowen*, and first names like *Jeannette* and *Annette*, the name *Mcollete* was assigned a "1" for "Anglo with no Latino equivalent." The ethnic connotations of names were also very important to consider because names can come to index one identity or another in varying degrees depending on their frequency of use in a given community or by a particular celebrity, among other reasons (Evans, 2008). In some cases, such connotations trumped morpho-phonological and spelling considerations (e.g. the names *Rossyvette* and *Yanette* were assigned a "5").Eighteen ambiguous cases were flagged for special attention (Table 2). Upon completing the coding of the corpus myself, I asked one first-generation and two second-generation local Latinos to do the same with the flagged names. These community experts were provided with the coding scheme and instructions that encouraged them to consider the following factors when coding a name: spelling, ethnic/language connotation, perceived frequency of use, and possible translations (Sue and Telles, 2007). The names for which the informants' classifications differed (marked in bold) were discussed as a group, after which all came to a consensus regarding the most suitable classification. Like Sue and Telles (2007), we found that most of the discussion surrounded whether the names had a clear ethnic-opposite counterpart rather than which ethnicity they connoted. *Liset/Lisette/Lizette*, for instance, was a high-frequency name in the corpus and, according to the three Latino informants, it connotes a Latino identity. The many prominent Latinas with this name, revealed in an informal Google search, provides further indication of its popularity within the Latino minority in the US. However, as it is a French diminutive form of *Elizabeth*, it was considered to have an Anglo equivalent (*Lizzy*) and was thus coded as a "4."

Finally, I tallied the entire corpus of names, according to the continuum typology, generally and gender-specifically. Later, in order to measure the individual frequency of the names in the corpus, I performed a type/token analysis. Orthographical variants such as *Liset/Lisette/Lizette* or *Cynthia/Cinthia/Cintia* were considered tokens of a single name type, and the most frequent spelling was chosen as the label to represent the combined variants. Orthographic variation was observed mainly and more extensively (i.e. up to three variants) among the female names, although there was one case among the male names (*Christian/Cristian*).

Results

Name type trends by generation

Table 3 displays the overall naming trends of the Chicago corpus. Second-generation names ($n = 386$), the focus of the study, were initially placed alongside the patterns of the first ($n = 84$) and third generations ($n = 52$). Although highly variable in sample size, they provide a means to consider how naming patterns may shift across generations for this particular demographic (Latinos attending a Chicago university). In contrast with the second generation, the first-generation names belong largely to individuals who arrived in the US between the ages of 6–18 years. The third-generation names belong to individuals whose parents are of the second generation, i.e. were either born in the US to immigrant parents or were brought to the country before the age of six.

TABLE 3 FIRST NAME TRENDS OF THREE GENERATIONS OF LATINOS ATTENDING A CHICAGO UNIVERSITY

Category	(Anglo)				(Neutral)		(Latino)					
Code	1		2		3		4		5			
Cross-Ethnic Counterpart	No		Yes		—		Yes		No		Mean	*n*
First Gen	11	%	5	%	26	%	30	%	29	%	3.60	84
Second Gen	23		8		16		26		28		3.27	386
Third Gen	33		12		17		15		23		2.85	52

The notable proportion of Anglo names (16 %) for the foreign-born first generation seems to show the popularity of and access to these names in the country of origin. However, the clear uptick in Anglo names across generations (16 % → 31 % → 45 %) suggests an increasing parental acculturation and shift in tastes, akin to the findings of Sue and Telles (2007). Also noteworthy in the data is the across-the-board prominence of Category 1 Anglo names over those with a Latino counterpart (Category 2). Further, the intensity of this parental preference appears to increase across generations, represented by a 6 % difference between Category 1 and Category 2 names for the first generation, a 15 % difference for the second generation, and a 21 % difference for the third generation. Because etymologically similar Anglo and Latino names (e.g. *Mary-María*, *Vivian-Viviana/Bibiana*, or *John/Juan*) tend to be traditional names often of biblical origin, Anglo names without a (clear) Latino counterpart (e.g. *Vanessa* or *Janet*) may be privileged for the innovative and less-traditional qualities they are perceived as having (Evans, 2008).

As for neutral (Category 3) names, although they continue to be an important source of names, they lose ground in favor of Anglo names for the second and third generations. As for Latino names, these are comparably favored by the first and second generations. This would seem to indicate that, although immigrant parents forgo neutral names in favor of Anglo names for their children, ethnic heritage names are nonetheless pervasive, comprising the majority of second-generation names, and even 38 % of all third-generation names. The mean "ethnic" scores of names (based on the five-point continuum) show the greater decline in Hispanic connoting names from the second to the third generation (0.42) than from the first to the second (0.33). This is suggestive of a particularly significant cultural and linguistic shift undergone within the second generation that influences child name selections (Alba et al., 2002; Fishman, 1991; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Veltman, 1983). Sue and Telles (2007: 1400–1401) noticed a similar transition between the second and third generations in LA in which Anglo names notably increased in frequency at the expense of ethnic heritage names. However, like the LA study, these data suggest that availing themselves of Anglo names with a Hispanic counterpart and culturally neutral names (comprising 29 % of all third-generation names) is a strategy that may permit US-raised Hispanic parents to integrate into the mainstream while maintaining ethnic ties.

TABLE 4 SECOND-GENERATION NAMES BY GENDER

	Category	Anglo %		Neutral %	Latino %		
N	Code	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
126	Male	12	8	14	32	34	3.66
260	Female	28	7	17	22	25	3.08

TABLE 5 TOP 20 HISPANIC FEMALE NAMES IN COMPARISON

Rank	Chicago, c. 1985	Code	LA, 1995*	Code
1	**Maria**	4	Stephanie	2
2	**Jessica**	1	**Jessica**	2
3	Yesenia	5	Jennifer	1
4	Cynthia	2	Kimberly	1
5	Adriana	4	**Maria**	4
6	**Diana**	3	**Vanessa**	3
7	Janet	1	**Elizabeth**	3
8	Liset	4	Daisy	2
9	Sandra	3	Karina	4
10	**Vanessa**	1	Jocelyn	1
11	**Elizabeth**	2	Melissa	3
12	Mayra	4	**Diana**	3
13	Monica	3	Gabriela	3
14	Alma	5	Alejandra	4
15	**Ana**	4	Karen	2
16	**Brenda**	1	Michelle	2
17	Carolina	4	**Brenda**	3
18	Iliana	4	Andrea	3
19	Johanna	2	Jacqueline	1
20	Sonia	4	**Ana**	4
	Mean	3.05	*Mean*	2.55

*Sue & Telles (2007)
Bold indicates names appearing in both the Chicago and LA lists.

Name type by gender

A look at the distribution of second-generation names by gender (Table 4) reveals more specific patterns. In general, the results are consistent with those reported by Sue and Telles (2007) and Lieberson (2000) in terms of the greater proportion of males with ethnic heritage names and females with Anglo names. For example, the difference between the male and female mean ethnic scores is 0.58, which is on par with Sue and Telles' reported difference of 0.54. Of all male names in the Chicago corpus, 66 % belonged to the ethnic-origin categories of "4" and "5," compared to 47 % of all female names, meaning that sons were given Hispanic names 50 % more of the time than daughters. Alternatively, at the other end of the continuum, the Anglo name categories comprised 34 % of all female names and yet only 20 % of all male names. In particular, daughters were more than twice as likely (28 %) than sons (12 %) to receive Anglo names with no Hispanic counterpart. There was also a slightly greater percentage of females with neutral names (17 % versus 14 %).

Female names in comparison

Table 5 presents the 20 most frequent second-generation female names within the Chicago corpus alongside Sue and Telles' (2007) reported top 20 names for second-generation female Hispanic births in their respective community of study (LA). While Lieberson (2000) analyzes characteristics of the top 20 names in Texas for 1990, he did not include the actual names in his report (the reason for their absence from Table 5). Although the Chicago corpus is by no means meager (n = 386), it is important to note that the LA and Texas studies were based on a much larger pool of names. Recall that the former analyzed the top 500 names of most LA county Hispanic births in 1995, representing 54 % of male and 68 % of female births for that year (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1391), and the latter considered the top 20 in the state of Texas in 1990. In addition, the Chicago corpus is composed solely of the names of university students who were born and/or grew up in the area. Given these imbalances, the comparative results should be taken with caution. The bolded names in Table 5 highlight those shared between the Chicago and LA lists. Note that, in the Chicago list, rankings 5–10 are equal in frequency, as are 11–13 and 14–20.

Of the top 20 names displayed for Chicago, seven are categorized as Anglo names (codes "1" and "2"), identical to the number reported for Texas, and not far from the nine Anglo names in the LA list. Observe, however, the coding disparities for the names *Brenda*, *Elizabeth*, and *Vanessa*. Bringing these names into alignment with the current study's coding (codes "1" and "2") would result in a total of 12 Anglo names in the LA list. The mean ethnicity scores in comparison are illustrative of the Chicago list's ostensibly more traditional content: 3.05 versus 2.55 (2.3 if coding decisions were brought to coincide on the three names mentioned).

In terms of variety, the fact that the top 20 names in the Chicago corpus represent only 36 % of the total 260 female names suggests that Latino minority naming patterns (as observed in this sample) mirror majority practices with respect to the range of female naming options (Lieberson, 2000). A generally large pool of female names may also explain the distinct trends between the Chicago and LA top 20 lists, where a mere seven names coincided (indicated in bold). Although most of the remaining names comprising the LA list also appear in the Chicago list with a lower ranking (>20), the number one ranked name in the former, *Stephanie*, is entirely absent from the latter. Sue and Telles (2007: 1397) note that the top two names, *Stephanie* and *Jessica*, were also among the top 20 choices for non-Hispanic parents in LA. In his Illinois data spanning the years 1985–1988, Lieberson (2000) also reports the popularity of *Stephanie* (ranked 11.43) and *Jessica* (ranked 4) for non-Hispanic European-American birth names. Lieberson's (2000) data are based on what white US-born mothers claimed as their ethnic ancestry. The following European ancestries were included in his analysis: British, French, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, and Scandinavian. Thus, despite similar mainstream cultural trends between LA and Illinois with respect to these two names, only *Jessica* ranks highly in the Chicago data. Similarly, *Yesenia*, a prominent Latino name in the Chicago list, does not appear in the LA rankings. Perhaps inspired by a 1987 Mexican *telenovela* titled *Yesenia*, this name may very well constitute a case of a quick rise and fall in popularity for US Latinos. Whereas the release of the *telenovela* corresponds exactly with the birth years of the students whose names comprise the Chicago corpus, the absence of the name

Yesenia among the LA top names in 1995 suggests it may have been a short-lived trend. These examples point to the need for the availability of systematic diachronic analyses of the names chosen by Latino immigrant parents.

Further comparison of the Chicago top 20 list with the concurrent list for non-Hispanic European-American births in Illinois (Lieberson, 2000) revealed a total overlap of only two names: *Jessica* and *Elizabeth*. This represents significantly fewer than the seven name overlaps between Hispanic and Anglo births in Texas, yet approximates the three (*Jessica*, *Elizabeth*, and *Michelle*) in LA (between Hispanic and non-Hispanic births). From these data can be extrapolated the following: the Chicago and LA lists bear greater resemblance to each other (seven name overlap) than with their corresponding community/state non-Hispanic trends (two and three name overlaps, respectively). This supports the idea that Mexican-majority immigrant communities across the US have certain connective naming practices that seem to bear more weight than forces from the immediate majority culture environment. This finding is especially remarkable given the time differential between the Chicago and LA data, and speaks again of the need for both state/local and national diachronic naming data analysis for children of Latino immigrant parents. With the availability of large-scale data, it would be possible to analyze how the turnover of popular names among Latino immigrant selections compares with that of mainstream trends. That is, it would be of interest to know whether the trajectories of popular Latino immigrant name selections differ significantly from those of mainstream selections.

The high-ranking Anglo names in each of the lists (*Jessica* and *Cynthia* in Chicago; *Stephanie* and *Jessica* in LA) suggest "a strong and early trend toward assimilation" (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1397). The cases of *Stephanie* and *Jessica* contrast, however, with the other Anglo names in the lists, such as *Jennifer*, *Kimberly*, and *Daisy* in LA, and *Cynthia* and *Janet* in Chicago, which represent a lag behind dominant culture trends. In fact, even the culturally neutral names on these lists do not correspond to concurrent majority group trends (e.g. *Sandra*, *Diana*, *Monica*, *Vanessa*, and *Andrea* — none of which are found among the top 20 choices for non-Hispanics). The specific correspondence of the names *Jessica* and *Elizabeth* between the LA and Chicago corpora appears to be linked to the tremendous nationwide popularity of these names at the time (Lieberson, 2000). *Jessica* was highly ranked across various ethnic groups, including among the naming choices of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean immigrants in California between the years 1982–1986, as well as for African-Americans in Illinois in 1989 (Lieberson, 2000; Social Security Administration, 2015). But, as Sue and Telles (2007: 1398) point out, it is uncertain why these names do not show a similar popularity lag.

Although in 91 (35 %) of the 260 cases daughters in the Chicago sample received Anglo names, it has been shown that these converge very little on mainstream naming trends. The use of "recycled" names (Lieberson, 2000: 143–171), wherein "immigrants oftentimes choose English names that were once very popular among native whites" (Evans, 2008; Ragone, 2012; Sue and Telles, 2007: 1398) results in distinct trends, even though such parental selections may be perceived as a sign of total cultural alignment. The book *Freakonomics* (Levitt and Dubner, 2005) treats this topic at length in the context of African-American naming. Lieberson (2000: 98) discusses "cyclical reversals in trends" as part of the broader phenomenon of the "ratchet effect." These delayed trends "may reflect the global spread of English through mass media and transnationalism, in which

pre-migration tastes affect immigrant choices in the United States" (Lieberson, 2000; Sue and Telles, 2007: 1397). The name *Janet*, for example, highly ranked in the Chicago list, was among the top 100 most popular baby names in the US throughout the 1960s, but, by 1985, it had descended to the 207th rank (Social Security Administration, 2015). The name *Brenda* bears the same generational variance.

Even though immigrant Hispanic parents often gave Anglo names that did not coincide with non-Hispanic preferences for the same time period, Sue and Telles (2007: 1398) "[did] not interpret this as lesser evidence of assimilation." Indeed, the notable presence of once-popular Anglo names in both corpora "caution us against the total reliance on the cross-sectional matching method as a way of studying [the] naming practices" of immigrant Latinos relative to the mainstream (Sue and Telles, 2007: 1398). However, some work suggests that Anglo names characterized by a popularity lag behind the dominant culture, and which are phonologically compatible with Spanish (e.g. *Nancy* or *Karen*), may come to connote a Latino identity, or at least be perceived by their bearer as connoting a Latino identity. For example, Parada (2011) found that 11 out of 14 second-generation Hispanics in Chicago who had Anglo names preferred or were equally accepting of a Spanish pronunciation of their name. In addition, 12 out of those 14 at least moderately agreed that their (Anglo) names made them feel identified with Latino culture. Thus, the adoption of (once-popular) Anglo names by ethnic minorities may in fact come to serve as a marker of group identity, rather than of assimilation. More work is clearly needed to better understand this phenomenon.

Despite the greater compatibility which the Chicago and LA data sets exhibit with each other compared with local majority group practices, the incongruences just outlined (e.g. in the number of high-ranking Anglo names and in the popularity of particular names) suggest there may be local trends specific to each Latino community. Future work should pursue this idea more rigorously, as it would benefit from more comparable data sets in terms of the birth year(s) analyzed and the sample size. Because the LA corpus is based on birth data from 1995, and the Chicago corpus on births around 1985 (10-year gap, roughly), the name popularity differences exemplified (and perhaps even the typological patterns) may have little to do with place-based trends. Given the time differential, what can likely be gleaned with more certainty from the relatively limited overlap observed between the two communities is the following: the speed with which female names ascend and descend in popularity within a relatively short time span. Although this has been well documented in the mainstream (Chevalier, 2006; Orenstein, 2003), these data suggest it is a phenomenon of Latino minority group naming practices as well. The comparatively larger correspondence between the lists of male names (presented in Table 6) further underscores this notion.

Male names in comparison

Table 6 displays the corresponding selection of data for male names. Note that, in the Chicago list, rankings 2–4 are equal in frequency, as are 5–8 and 9–20. Consistent with the overall gender patterns in the Chicago corpus, which show a lower rate of Anglo names for males, the top 20 male names contain only two instances (10 %) of Anglo names, five fewer than among the top 20 female names: *Christian* (due to its spelling)

TABLE 6 TOP 20 MALE NAMES IN COMPARISON

Rank	Chicago, c. 1985	Code	LA, 1995*	Code
1	**José**	4	**José**	4
2	**Jesús**	5	**Juan**	4
3	Pedro	4	**Daniel**	3
4	**David**	3	Luis	4
5	Antonio	4	Kevin	1
6	**Daniel**	3	Carlos	4
7	Jaime	3	Jonathan	2
8	Rigoberto	5	**Jesús**	5
9	Alberto	4	**David**	3
10	**Alejandro**	4	**Christian**	2
11	Alfredo	4	Eduardo	4
12	César	5	**Miguel**	4
13	**Christian**	2	**Jorge**	4
14	**Christopher**	2	**Alejandro**	4
15	**Jorge**	4	Angel	5
16	**Juan**	4	Anthony	2
17	**Miguel**	4	**Christopher**	2
18	**Oscar**	3	**Oscar**	4
19	Ricardo	4	Bryan	1
20	Rogelio	5	Victor	3
	Mean	3.85	*Mean*	3.25

*Sue and Telles (2007).
Bold indicates names appearing in both the Chicago and LA lists.

and *Christopher*. Again, the LA corpus shows a greater degree of convergence with five (25 %) Anglo names in its male sample (*Kevin*, *Jonathan*, *Christian*, *Anthony*, and *Christopher*). A disparity is also evident at the other end of the spectrum: 14 of the 20 names are categorized as Latino (codes "4" and "5") in contrast with only nine in the female sample (see Table 5). With a correspondence of 11 names, the male names list shows a greater alignment with the LA data (recall that there were seven shared female names). Referencing Western naming practices, Orenstein (2003: 121) contends that "parents continue to be more conventional with their sons, more conscious of tradition and generational continuity," while "girls' names are more likely to be chosen for style and beauty," making them "both more interesting to track and more vulnerable to sounding passé." Tokens of the top 20 names accounted for 43 % of the 126 male names in the Chicago corpus, which exceeds the corresponding female names figure of 36 %. Even with the lower variability in male naming, it is interesting to note the contrasting trends between the two samples, particularly with regard to non-cognate Anglo names. *Kevin*, for instance, is a high-ranking Anglo name in the LA data, whereas it is absent from the Chicago corpus. Like *Stephanie*, this finding is unusual, given the top-20 popularity of *Kevin* for non-Hispanic births in LA in 1995 and for non-Hispanic (European-American) births in Illinois between 1985 and 1988 (Lieberson, 2000).

In terms of overlap between the Chicago data and concurrent non-Hispanic Illinois trends (Lieberson, 2000), three names coincided: *David*, *Daniel*, and *Christopher*. This number is slightly greater than the two female names shared between the two data sets, and in two of the three cases reflects the more traditional (often biblical) aspects of male naming. Sue and Telles (2007) similarly report a three name overlap in foreign-born Hispanic and non-Hispanic naming choices for sons in LA: *Christian*,

Anthony, and *Bryan*. However, these names differ from those shared between the Chicago and non-Hispanic Illinois corpora in that none is biblical and they are all Anglo names (codes "1" and "2"). Recall also that Lieberson reported a five name overlap between foreign-born Hispanic and Anglo choices in Texas, although it is unknown what types of names (or which particular names) were shared.

Motivations for gender divergence in assimilative naming

In Table 3 it was shown that, in line with previous research, daughters in the Chicago sample were far more likely to be given an Anglo name than sons. As for the influence of the "a" suffix — a gender marker which Lieberson (2000) contends facilitates the transition to mainstream names for daughters — the Chicago data appear to support this view. Of the 91 total female Anglo names (codes "1" and "2") in the corpus, over one-third (35 %) ended with the letter "a" and, in the top 20, five of the seven (63 %) Anglo names ended in "a" (*Jessica*, *Cynthia*, *Vanessa*, *Brenda*, and *Johanna*). Such a conclusion contrasts with Sue and Telles' (2007) judgment that this linguistic trait did not appreciably impact the types of Anglo names chosen by Mexican immigrant parents in LA. Their finding that only one (11 %) of the nine Anglo names (*Jessica*) in the top 20 fit this description was, of course, influenced somewhat by their coding decisions, which differed from this study in the particular cases mentioned previously. Had they included *Brenda* and *Vanessa* in the count, the total would have reached three out of nine (33 %), which is still proportionately smaller than the corresponding Chicago figure.

Discussion and future directions

Woods (1984: xiv) aptly describes the first name as a highly connotative cultural label, which can serve as "almost a code word that communicates nationality, religion, age and even degree of Americanization of its bearer." Indeed, a given name serves as a long-term label with the power not only to convey, but also to help form a sense of ethnic identity and even commitment to the language it represents. Accordingly, it is likely that the implicit understanding of the connections between names, ethnic affiliation, and language is at the heart of Latino immigrant parental naming practices.

This investigation, which focuses on regional aspects of the names of second-generation Latinos, highlights the need for further comparative work on Latino onomastics in which such factors as US region of residence, national/regional origin, religious affiliation, social networks, and socioeconomic and legal status are considered. What ideologies and power dynamics might guide the negotiation of naming decisions when considering these variables? Research along the line of geographic variation should include locations differing in Latino density, as well as urban and rural residing subgroups. Given such disparate histories and conditions within the Latino minority, comparative analyses using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies could generate insightful data to guide developing theories of Latino naming. Based on the data examined in this study, Latino immigrant parents in LA may more readily adopt Anglo names for their children than those in Chicago. This would support the view of a US Latino landscape that defies simple categorization and demands a more nuanced approach, whether in scholarly work, in ideology-laden popular and political discourse, or in practical matters such as business marketing.

Further, it is of interest to examine how the growing yet seemingly opposing forces of globalization and multiculturalism play out in immigrant naming. For a local example of sociolinguistic divergence where convergence might be expected, Labov (2012) presents evidence showing how dialects of US English are becoming increasingly different from one another, even as national media and unfettered communication are believed to have a leveling effect on dialectal diversity. On the one hand, immigrants may be arriving in the US already heavily exposed and/or subscribing to past or present mainstream US onomastic culture. On the other hand, multiculturalism may be leading to an increased tolerance, appreciation, and even prestige afforded to minority group names (Moss, 2015). To study the effects of these forces in the context of the Latino minority, a first step would be to determine how Latino immigrant naming today differs from the 1985/1995 data presented here. Would data from present-day Latino births in the US reflect more or less dominant culture assimilation? Such diachronic gauging would also facilitate comparative insights into the nature of onomastic trending (in terms of name turnover, trajectories of trends, etc.) in minority versus majority populations in the US.

Another line of research which merits attention is that of the parental motivations behind the gendered differences in naming in US Latino communities, including the actual or perceived social repercussions of a departure from these gendered norms. A related matter has to do with the rise of alternate gender markers in Latin American regions and (1) whether/how these trends persevere in the post-migration US context where they are not shared, and (2) how gendered assimilative naming is affected as a result. For example, Social Security Administration (2015) data show that, in Puerto Rico, the "ys" suffix is becoming a highly productive gender marker (e.g. *Julianys* or *Alanys*). In 1998, six of the 100 most popular female names in Puerto Rico had this trait. In 2014, the number had risen to 14, showing the strength the trend is gaining. In this particular context, the move away from female names ending in consonants other than /s/ seems to come at the specific expense of Anglo names, which were more frequent in previous years. Region/country of origin data such as these are necessary in order to tease apart the effects of pre-migration/heritage culture tastes versus acculturation on the naming practices of a given Hispanic group. This includes the question of how immigrants from cultures varying in terms of innovative naming comparatively adapt to US naming norms.

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