FOUR

Barrio Affinities and the Diversity Problem

In late June 1968, the African American civil rights leader Whitney M. Young Jr., then president of the National Urban League, gave a searing keynote address at the meeting of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the leading association for architects in the United States. Young was known for his willingness to ingratiate himself with white government and business elites who could change the racially discriminatory employment practices that blocked African Americans from jobs.[1] At meetings with white elites, Young would frame African Americans as useful contributors to capitalism, economic assets for the white establishment rather than citizens with rights. For his approach, Young was seen as a "sellout," a traitor to black communities.[2] The Black Power movement, whose anticapitalist and antigovernment protests most clearly contrasted with Young's aim to integrate African Americans in the mainstream, was particularly vocal in denouncing Young as an "Uncle Tom."

Young's speech at the AIA was more aggressive and urgent in tone than his professional persona would have one expect. It was the late 1960s and the Black Power movement had set roots in African American communities nationwide. Moreover, the very year Young spoke, Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy had been shot to death. Riots had erupted in various cities. Young's usual nonviolent negotiation seemed of another era. "You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance," he rebuked the architects in the audience. He added, "You are key people in the planning of our cities today. You share

the responsibility for the mess we are in in terms of the white noose around the central city."[3] The violent imagery of the "white noose" spatialized the lynching of African Americans and illustrated the deadening grip of suburban white supremacy on cities. Used in 1958 by the Democratic mayor of Philadelphia, Richardson P. Dillworth, in an interview with *Time* magazine, the phrase was in wide circulation in the 1960s.[4] The 1961 US Commission on Civil Rights report on housing, *Life* magazine, and numerous politicians and reporters had all used this phrase to stress the gravity of a segregated metropolitan America. The wording was also part of the language that residents used to make sense of urban renewal. An African American resident told the *New Republic* in 1963 that "they want to keep the black neck in the white noose."[5] Young's attention to the role that designers played in this segregation gave the phrase an additional layer of relevance. He expected architects to resist the association and even anticipated architects' common defense against such criticisms, namely their insistence that their client's satisfaction was their primary responsibility: "Now, you have a nice, normal escape hatch in your historical ethical code or something that says after all, you are the designers and not the builders; your role is to give people what they want. That's a nice, easy way to cop out." But such objections did not convince Young. He insisted on taking the architects sitting in the audience to task for not building for a diverse group of users. Moreover, he suggested that a lack of diversity in the profession—African American membership at the AIA that year was 0.5 percent—was entangled with and responsible for the urban crisis. "One need only take a casual look at this audience to see that we have a long way to go in this field of integration of the architects. . . . I'm not sure yet whether I will charge you formally with discrimination."[6] He called, in sum, for the profession to make it possible for blacks to be the subjects, consumers, *and* creators of architecture.

Following his speech, which was reported on by the *New York Times* and televised in the Northwest, the AIA created a task force on equal opportunity and established the Whitney M. Young Jr. Award to recognize architects for their social work.[7] In 1971 the AIA actively supported a bill before the Senate to fund "community design centers" that attracted the support of urbanists of color working in inner cities across the nation, through the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).[8] That same year, African American architects started the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA). By 1972 "black and other" nonwhite groups were 4.5 percent of the total number of employed architects in the nation.[9]

If it seemed that a precipitous rise in urbanists of color was forthcoming, little actually changed by the first decade of the twenty-first century. In 2009, of the total 204,000 employed architects, 2.5 percent were African American, 6.9 percent were Latinx, and 4.8 percent were Asian.[10] Whites, more than 80 percent of the total employed architects, exceeded their share of the overall white population of the United States, which in 2009 stood at 69 percent. Related professions involved in the making of the built environment such as urban planners, who have had a closer relationship with city governance and thus have had to grapple with the issue of building for heterogeneous populations, were not a very diverse group either. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, whose statistics on architects are given here, does not offer a racial and ethnic breakdown for the total number of employed planners in the United States because, at less than fifty thousand people, they consider the population too small. However, the American Planning Association (APA), the leading national association for urban planning, indicates that more than 90 percent of its membership was non-Latinx white in 2004.[11]

Young's call for diversity in 1968 was premised on the idea that individuals of color were likely to feel responsible for designing equitably and inclusively. My interviews with architects, urban planners, and others practicing urban design in the early twenty-first century did not always bear out this connection. This chapter takes shape thanks to the multiple interviews I conducted from 2009 to 2015 with architects, urban planners, and urban designers located in Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Ohio, San Antonio, and Queretaro, Mexico, who either identified as Latinx or were designing for Latinxs and with Latinx culture. Among these interviewees were individuals who, like the architects Young addressed, only felt responsible for their clients, not low-income Latinx users of their designs. In the following pages, however, I primarily focus on three Latinx urbanists whose way of seeing and appreciating the barrio stems from a position of affinity with marginalized spaces and the people who live in them. The affective stance of kinship from which they look is best described as a barrio affinity, a scopic regime that values and frames the marginal.[12] These three urbanists recast the oft-devalued barrio as an innovative urban unit with qualities that they believe are worthy of inclusion in the fields of architecture and urban planning, and in housing industries, and worthy of moving out of the ghettoized space of the barrio. The end result of this affinity thus contributes to a sometimes reluctant distancing from the barrio.

The primary brokers discussed in this chapter are not responding to one particular era of crisis neatly delimited by time. They are responding

to a perennial condition of limited Latinx belonging and participation in the shaping of the built environment of cities. The response they chose—praising the barrio for inclusion, even if a limited inclusion—can, however, be traced to the radical movements of the late 1960s and 1970s.[13] The Latinx social movements of that period, specifically the Chicana/o movement, made cultural representations in the built environment an essential objective of activists. The activism of that time also reframed the problem that racialized minorities were perceived to present. Instead of racialized bodies being the problem, their lack of inclusion in white-dominated spaces became the problem. The brokers I focus on here tackle the issue of inclusion in the twenty-first century, when the lack of racial diversity was prominently discussed in the fields of urban design.

I examine Henry Cisneros, urban developer and former secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and his promotion of "Latino New Urbanism" in the building and housing industries. I also consider the work of Henry R. Muñoz, the president of Muñoz and Company, one of the largest minority-owned design firms in Texas, and as of 2013 the chairman of the National Finance Committee of the Democratic National Committee. In particular, I examine Muñoz's development of "Mestizo Urbanism." Finally, I examine James Rojas, an urban planner and author on urban issues. His concept of "Latino Urbanism" introduced various Latinx-influenced typologies of urban space to academics and journalists writing about cities. The affinity-based revaluation and recategorization of barrio spaces of these brokers suggest a desire to challenge white-dominant ideas of urban space, but the fact that so much of the urbanism they advocate for depends on ownership of and sanctioned access to property raises the question of just how much equity and inclusivity these representations offer the low-income, marginalized people living in barrios. Can an affinity for the barrio translate into improving the lives of actual barrios and the low-income people who live there? This question points to the power dynamics that brokering barrios—and its enthusiasm for representation—can conceal. In what follows, I examine the economic, political, and cultural impulses driving Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas to think of new barrio-inspired designs. Though each have their own motivations, collectively they are producing a shift in Latinx cultural politics of urban space that can teach us much about the challenges and possibilities of barrio visibility at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, when diversity and inclusion agendas intersect with gentrification-induced and subprime mortgage–led displacement and dispersion.

Latinx Social Movements and the Rise of the Barrio Broker

In my interviews, Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas revealed a common past filled with stories of Chicana/o activism. This past, as tangential as it may have been to their lives, gave their design ideas liberal heft. As prominently discussed in the manifestoes written in 1969, the Chicana/o movement identified barrios as crucial sites of activism and cultural empowerment.

El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán of March 1969 enlisted "all levels of Chicana/o society—the barrio, the campo, the ranchero, the writer, the teacher, the worker, the professional—to La Causa."[14] The *Plan de Santa Barbara*, adopted by a group of students in April 1969 at the University of California at Santa Barbara in an effort to establish Chicana/o studies programs in higher education, further zoomed in on a Chicana/o map of activism that emphasized barrios (and *colonias*, which were informal, unincorporated residential settlements found along the Texas border).[15]

> For decades Mexican people in the United States struggled to realize the "American Dream." And some, a few, have. But the cost, the ultimate cost of assimilation, required turning away from el barrio and la colonia. In the meantime, due to the racist structure of this society, to our essentially different life style, and to the socioeconomic functions assigned to our community by Anglo-American society—as suppliers of cheap labor and dumping ground for the small-time capitalist entrepreneur—the barrio and colonia remained exploited, impoverished, and marginal. . . . As a result, the self-determination of our community is now the only acceptable mandate for social and political action; it is the essence of Chicano commitment. . . . The best educational device is being in the barrio as often as possible. More often than not the members of M.E.Ch.A. will be products of the barrio; but many have lost contact with their former surroundings, and this tie must be re-established if M.E.Ch.A. is to organize and work for La Raza.[16]

The *Plan de Santa Barbara* redefined the segregated barrios and colonias as generative spaces where Chicana/o cultural identity, political protest, and community organization, where *el movimiento*, as the Chicana/o movement was sometimes called, could flourish.

By referencing this period of activism in their discussion of their own projects, Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas were asking that their ideas, in

addition to being commercially and institutionally accepted, be considered interventions in the exclusionary practices that continue to make barrios segregated, unequal places. Latinx studies scholar Randy Ontiveros writes that the Chicana/o movement purposefully declined to claim equality based on Chicana/o commercial participation and demographic growth, opting instead to demand recognition of their humanity and dignity.[17] Even though some of the projects of the brokers discussed here aligned with the current commercial and demographic hype around Latinxs, these brokers—some more than others—gave me the impression that they wanted to be considered the descendants of that political moment.

Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas were closely affiliated with some of the political leaders and activists who emerged out of the movimiento. Cisneros grew up in the west-side barrio of San Antonio alongside major Chicana/o activists, including Ernesto "Ernie" Cortés Jr., who founded Communities Organized for Public Services (COPS) in 1973; and William C. "Willie" Velásquez, who cofounded the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) in 1967 and the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project in 1974. Cisneros, who was about three years younger, attended the same Central Catholic High School from which Cortés and Velásquez graduated. As noted in the introduction to this book, Muñoz's cousin was Willie Velásquez. His father was labor organizer Henry "El Fox" Muñoz, and his mom, Elida, was a civil rights advocate. Rojas was the son of Chicana/o activists from East Los Angeles. He remembers playing in his backyard when thousands marched on the streets of East Los Angeles during the National Chicano Moratorium in 1970. In an article connecting his "Latino Urbanism" concept to the Chicana/o civil rights movement, Rojas remarked that the moratorium's effect on the community influenced his decision to become an urban planner.[18] Such relationships with Chicana/o leaders and struggles for social justice shape these brokers' affinity for the barrio.

Just as the *Plan de Santa Barbara* had done, Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas have sought to empower low-income marginalized communities by proudly elevating the barrio as a critical contribution to design and planning. As will be evident, they also sustain the *Plan de Santa Barbara*'s idea that Chicana/os have an "essentially different life style" by listing visual and spatial typologies they believe are "Latino" cultural preferences. Additionally, the *Plan de Santa Barbara* stated that the distance between the barrio and college-educated Chicana/o youth had to be reduced in order for the movimiento to engage in its most revolutionary aims. Rojas, Cisneros, and Muñoz established considerable distance from the barrio by leaving

to pursue higher education and employment opportunities, but they all returned.

In doing work inspired by low-income communities, all three brokers complicate the urban expert's relationship with low-income barrios. That relationship had been particularly untrusting and paternalistic throughout the twentieth century, when white experts were sent into barrio communities to assess Latinx housing and urban life and culture. There, these early experts purportedly found deficient and uncivilized Puerto Rican and Mexican urbanites. In the 1960s, barrio residents came together to explicitly resist the authority of the expert outsider.

In 1969 a "Barriology Examination," written by "Barriologist Emeritus, Antonio Gomez, PhD 'T,BRR," appeared in several issues of the Chicana/o *Con Safos* magazine to test Chicana/o readers on their cultural authenticity. The exam coined "barriologist" to refer tongue-and-cheek to Latinx "experts" learned in the knowledge and culture of the barrio. The provocative term could also be interpreted as an effort to parallel, perhaps even elevate, the status of barrio residents vis-à-vis that of the non-Latinx expert going into barrios to study the "other" for social science research or to condemn the barrio for urban renewal.[19] The term *barriologist* reclaims everyday residents as the experts of their own neighborhoods. They contrast the urbanists who displaced low-income residents, many of them people of color, to make way for a midcentury landscape of freeways, highways, and public housing towers.

Throughout the 1960s, barrio residents trained in urban design would give additional meaning to the category of barriologist. The Real Great Society Urban Planning Studio (RGS/UPS), founded by local Puerto Rican Angelo "Papo" Giordani, Willie Vázquez, Harry Quintana, and Victor Feliciano with professors and students at Columbia University in the wake of the East Harlem riot of 1967, nurtured local designers by following an "advocacy planning" model. [20] Urban planner Luis Aponte-Parés writes, in one of the few accounts of the Real Great Society, that RGS/UPS members took a critical view of architecture and planning professionals, including the Columbia University professionals with whom they had a conflicted relationship, and proposed an "architectural and planning resource completely controlled by the community."[21] The RGS/UPS members applied to design the language of community self-determination that their contemporaries in the Young Lords and other militant groups were cultivating. They committed to build locally and constructed vest-pocket parks and what eventually became Taíno Towers, a housing complex in Upper Manhattan.

They also participated in local protests for social justice, at times joining the Young Lords.[22] They worked toward their plan to "increase the number of indigenous architects and planners in East Harlem" by protesting meetings at the AIA along with a coalition of concerned planning groups and advocating for African Americans and Latinxs to sit on the City Planning Commission.[23] They eventually dissolved because of lack of funding, the difficulty of representing the various interests of the local community, and internal ideological and class differences between the Puerto Rican members who had grown up in the barrios of New York and those who had arrived in East Harlem upon graduating from college.[24]

In Los Angeles, Frank Villalobos, Manuel Orozco, Raul Escobedo, David Angelo, recent college graduates from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and the University of Southern California, dreamed of being "the architects and planners for Chicano neighborhoods." They founded the nonprofit Barrio Planners Inc. in 1970.[25] They had all come of age during the Chicana/o movement. Some of their families had been displaced as a consequence of urban renewal. Freeway construction, for instance, had forced Villalobos's family out of their east-side Maravilla barrio.[26] Influenced by these experiences and the ethnic affirmation of the Chicana/o movement, Barrio Planners concocted its slogan, "Let a hundred placitas bloom!," and created some of the most emblematic Mexican-themed landmarks in East Los Angeles. Barrio Planners designed Ramona Gardens Vest Pocket Park in Lincoln Heights and designed and advocated for sound barriers to line the San Bernardino Freeway that surrounded it.[27] The organization designed El Parque de Mexico, also in Lincoln Heights. Barrio Planners won city hall approval to design Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights and placed a *kiosko*, a band shell, donated by the governor of Jalisco, Mexico. The group designed the Whittier Boulevard arch and nearby Aztec-themed plaques as part of the area's revitalization.[28] Barrio Planners sought to include Chicana/o culture in urban design *and*—like its counterparts in New York City—encouraged the formation of local designers of color. In a magazine interview, Villalobos remarked that architecture is "in our blood. We have it in us. A large percentage of our people are in construction—they can as easily be architects."[29] Barrio Planners, like the RGS/UPS, would also, at least in its original nonprofit formation, cease to exist.

These early precursors focused on offering technical support and design skills to their local barrios. Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas abstract from the spatial and aesthetic configuration of low-income barrios the aspects that

they deem to be appealing for the fields of urban planning and architecture and the housing industries. These brokers produce new urban concepts by ruminating on their middleness—on the one hand, their existence between professional networks and the cultural and social capital acquired while studying at prestigious universities and, on the other, the barrios either in which they grew up or for which they developed an affinity. Indeed, while many of the brokers discussed in this book take on a transnational search for authentic Latinx urban cultures rooted in a Spanish-influenced Latin American heritage that they believe can help redeem Latinx urban life and culture, Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas turn to local barrios, even though they at times turn away from these spaces to build and enhance their professional careers.

They promote this brokering in a highly public way, in large part thanks to a pro-diversity platform that reshaped their industries. Indeed, the ways that Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas abstract from the low-income barrio to create new modes of urbanism apt for institutional inclusion and/or marketability cannot be fully understood without also understanding the many movements for inclusion that followed the Chicana/o and other radical movements of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Literary and Africana studies scholar Jodi Melamed writes that "the real victories that came from official, state-recognized antiracism in Cold War America," such as civil rights acts, "also stabilized political limits, interpretative tendencies, and economic forces that readjusted and inevitably extended U.S. and transnational capitalist structures of racial domination."[30] The radical black and Latinx movements of this period had tried to resist the co-optation that earlier movements had faced by emphasizing cultural decolonization and self-affirmation. As historian Vincent Harding put it, the ultimate goal of the social justice movements of the period was not to gain "equal opportunity employment with the pain deliverers."[31] Their demands, however, were eventually recruited into larger multicultural and diversity initiatives that focused on bringing in different bodies and different cultures but did not generate the racial and economic equality and structural change that the late 1960s and 1970s movements had demanded. Literary scholar Lisa Lowe writes that multiculturalism integrates "differences as *cultural* equivalents abstracted from the histories of racial inequality unresolved in the economic and political domains."[32] The critique of multiculturalism as abstraction that Lowe lays out is apt for understanding the work of Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas. By the late 1990s, when the careers of Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas were rising, the conservative backlash against this aesthetic multiculturalism encouraged liberals

to defend cultural representation and inclusion as a form of equality. I see Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas as having taken up this mantle. They were interested in using culture to redress representational inequality, a kind of urban crisis revealing the precarious belonging of Latinxs in cities.

By the time I interviewed Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas, diversity initiatives had subsumed much of multicultural discourse. The AIA 2009–13 Diversity Action Plan and the APA Diversity Task Force, instituted in 2004, rarely mention multiculturalism.[33] This shift showed a reluctance in presuming that diverse individuals would determine the cultural expression of design work. Such an idea, after all, would go against the prevailing mantra in the design professions that client needs dictate design solutions. In that vein of thought, lack of cultural diversity could only be solved by diversifying the needs of the client, not the architects. Increasing the racial or gender diversity of experts had larger institutional advantages. It was essential to fend off allegations of discrimination. Interestingly, according to these initiatives, it also facilitated the work of US designers among a global clientele. In doing so, they gave the impression that while demographic diversity counted in the United States, cultural difference was most valuable to a global clientele. Considering all this, the work of the brokers discussed in this chapter pushes the boundaries of a professional field of practice that is interested in embracing the diversity of practitioners but remains apathetic toward the cultural practices and trends of low-income communities of color living in the United States.[34]

It was clear during my interviews with Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas that as public figures accustomed to the limelight, they were not the usual subjects whose marginalized voices research on barrios commonly examines. At times, for example, Cisneros's answers to my questions sounded rehearsed. This may have been because of his high demand among reporters and conference organizers. A subsequent interview Cisneros gave Spanish-language television network Univision, of which he was president from 1997 to 2000 following his tenure as secretary of HUD, confirmed my suspicion. Many of the comments he shared with me were aired on that interview. Moreover, much information regarding the lives and careers of these three men has been published in various formats. They has been widely written about and they themselves have written about their ideas and projects. Yet the texts that cover their stories are not exhaustive, especially in regard to how barrios inspired their designs, which is reflected in their different approaches.

"Latino New Urbanism" and the Newness of the Barrio

Henry G. Cisneros is the most high-profile advocate of "Latino New Urbanism," but the term was coined by Michael Mendez, a native Californian. Mendez first used Latino New Urbanism in his 2003 master's thesis for the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT.[35] In his thesis, Mendez proposed a new paradigm for urban practice comparable to "New Urbanism" but focused on Latinos' "cultural preferences" and a growing Latinx population whose socioeconomic mobility could provide housing and real estate industries significant profits.[36] New Urbanism, which developed as an antidote to suburban sprawl, homogeneous suburban environments, and automobile dependency, was known for promoting small-town, main-street, traditional styles with Victorian architectural styles.[37] In contrast, Latinxs, according to Mendez, require housing that "acknowledges Latino architecture and designs."[38] "Latinos' strong inclinations for close social interactions," wrote Mendez, "created a spicier new urbanism."[39] According to this way of thinking, New Urbanism, and Anglo-American architecture at large, ignored the urban practices and landscapes of Latinx-majority places to their own detriment. Latinx urban culture, Mendez argued, was an "untapped resource."[40] Among the Latinx "preferences" Mendez ascertained to be of value were adaptive reuse, compact neighborhoods, large public places such as public parks, and a strong sense of community.[41] "California Mission style or Southwestern adobe designs with courtyards or patios in the center of the home, and verandas situated in front of the residence" may also, according to Mendez, appeal to Latinxs.

Mendez barely mentioned the barrio in his writing but the photographs he chose to illustrate LNU show how essential the barrio was to his conceptualization. In his entry for the volume *Casa y Comunidad: Latino Home and Neighborhood Design*, edited by Cisneros and John Rosales, Mendez includes murals and houses in East Los Angeles and Fiesta Marketplace in Santa Ana. Both images are sited in Latinx-majority places, in or adjacent to barrios.[42] The omission of the word *barrio* underscores how LNU *aspires* to the spaces of upwardly mobile, propertied Latinxs. Mendez sanitizes the spaces of inspiration, stating that existing Latinx landscapes do not "radically digress" from middle-class housing styles and thus it would be easy to market LNU among public officials, non-Latinos, and middle-class homebuyers.[43] Mendez writes that LNU will contribute to an already

changing definition of "what constitutes the desired middle-class lifestyle in California."[44]

Mendez's LNU inspired various urban planners and urban planning organizations and was the subject of several conferences and events. The Transportation and Land Use Collaborative of Southern California (TLUC) created (a now defunct) website to circulate information regarding the LNU movement, which it broadly defined as a "public education initiative focusing on culturally appropriate development models for the growing Latino population." The TLUC also organized a symposium on LNU in 2003, promoted by the Smart Growth Network, a coalition of government agencies, including the US Environmental Protection Agency, and for-profit groups that promote urban development serving the interests of communities, businesses, and the environment. That same year, the University of Southern California brought together various scholars and practitioners at a conference to examine LNU. Inspired by Mendez's thesis, Katherine Perez, an urban planner and former executive director of the TLUC, and then executive director of the Urban Land Institute of Los Angeles, declared Latinos' placemaking practices a "healthier vision of the American Dream."[45] Many LNU advocates prioritized the owner-occupied house, but Antonio Villaraigosa, speaking about LNU at a conference mere months away from becoming the first Mexican American mayor of Los Angeles in more than a century, expressed admiration for building compact, multifamily, mixed-use developments.[46] These were the features that he found most useful for his low-income Latinx constituents. Thus, as planners and politicians celebrated LNU, they borrowed from Mendez's idea to fit their own needs and visions.

Prior to promoting LNU, Cisneros was a New Urbanism enthusiast. He was particularly fond of using New Urbanist styles in the redevelopment of public housing. While secretary of HUD from 1993 to 1997 under the Bill Clinton administration, he scorned the design of high-rise housing, describing it as coldly impersonal and holding its concentration of residents responsible for generational poverty, crime, and low expectations. A similar way of thinking had captured the minds of many for decades.[47] Legendary author Jane Jacobs penned her most stringent critiques against postwar modernist public housing in 1961. There were different stakes at play with the anti-high-rise public housing views of the 1990s, however. Clinton's neoliberal administration had privatized many features of the social safety net. By adopting a view of environmental determinism, Cisneros was able to rationalize the privatization of public housing. Specifically, he garnered

support for the HOPE VI program (the Urban Revitalization Demonstration program that was part of Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere), which demolished high-rise public housing and replaced it with low-rise, mixed-income, multifamily housing that followed the aesthetic tenets of New Urbanism, including Colonial Revival and Victorian styles of building.[48] The smaller, compact building scales were believed to produce "defensible spaces" that tenants, feeling a renewed sense of ownership over their buildings, would be more willing to watch over and care for.[49] Jane Jacobs's midcentury idea of "eyes on the street" morphed into an overt mechanism of community policing.[50] The smaller building scale had other serious effects. Thousands of public housing tenants were displaced from their neighborhoods. Some tenants were rehoused in existing, unrenovated public housing or offered Section 8 vouchers that could be used, landlord willing, in private housing.[51] No assurances were made that this new housing would be available in the same communities where the high-rise buildings were located. While HOPE VI was lauded for deconcentrating racialized poverty and providing low-income tenants with the opportunity to live in places aesthetically similar to market-rate housing, it was also denounced for disregarding the communities formed in high-rise public housing and displacing low-income tenants.[52] Critics questioned the program's attempt to create aesthetic parity when only a few of those once housed on site would be able to benefit from the new housing.

Still, Cisneros's interest in New Urbanism did not wane in the years after he left HUD. Rather, it was reenergized while working in private housing, where he believed LNU could be a major business opportunity. He was not as optimistic about the role of LNU in public housing policy: "I don't see it right now, overtly, but . . . this may all be included in policy." If it happens, it is most likely to occur, he added, in the Southwest and small towns or communities outside Los Angeles or in the Tucson area. We are just "at the beginning of [the] process," Cisneros stated, by which professionals in policy and private sectors mediate the Latinization of cities and respond to and build for a "Latinx lifestyle." Builders in particular, Cisneros thought, need to recognize the importance of catering to a Latinx population: "It is time to think about this group and build for them, and do it in a conscious way, and recognize that there will be market rewards for those who get it right. Frankly, I want to continue to explore that in my own career." By the time we spoke, he was an urban developer and executive chairman of CityView, an urban investment and building firm focused on moderate-income home buyers. His more emphatic promotion of Latinx-themed

built environments during this time was a reminder of how much more eager the market is to accept and absorb cultural difference, specifically an essentialized vision of Latinx urban culture, than a public urban policy invested in the idea of a universal citizen and in need of addressing diverse constituents.

Cisneros's upbringing in a San Antonio barrio appeared in our interview to be a major motivation and key to his penchant for LNU. Conveying his attachment to the barrio during our interview, he noted, "I've seen the nation, but I'm back in the hood." The barrio of Cisneros's childhood was not homogeneously low-income. Cisneros grew up in Prospect Hill, a neighborhood "populated by civil service workers . . . Latino GIs, like my father," who moved there after returning from World War II. The neighborhood was "*not* the poorest of the barrio," Cisneros observed, but rather an upwardly mobile slice in the largely impoverished West Side of San Antonio.[53] According to Cisneros, Mexicans in the neighborhood "did not feel the overt sting of discrimination," but outside the barrio "people may have been held down by the traditional prejudice of the economy."[54]

Marginalization was certainly evident on the West Side of Cisneros's youth. Many of San Antonio's Chicana/o movement organizations and events developed there precisely for that reason. Several of the leaders of the movimiento grew up alongside Cisneros. He recalled attending the same school as Willie Velásquez, who was three years older than Cisneros and had grown up in a low-income neighborhood on the West Side. Ernie Cortés was about four years older and had also grown up in a low-income area. Slightly younger than the city's Chicana/o movement activists of the 1960s, Cisneros was "not actively involved" in the local movement. He suggested that his upbringing explained his lack of participation in the radical politics of the time. His parents "were never on the front lines, picketing or engaging in activism, but they were all about service." Cisneros's father was "not inclined to carry a picket sign. He conveyed to me a sense of doing it within the rules, within the system." His father taught "citizenship to Latinos in the front parlor of our house." His mother was active in "neighborhood revitalization" and at eighty-six years of age was on the board of "two or three different organizations in the neighborhood." From an early age, Cisneros remembers that his mother inculcated in him the importance of taking a moral ground on the racial injustices shaping San Antonio. As a result, Cisneros noted that "most of my life has been about trying to change the system by cajoling . . . as opposed to beating it down from the outside."

Indeed, while obtaining his master's degree in urban and regional planning from Texas A&M, where he also received his undergraduate degree,

Cisneros was posted to San Antonio's Model Cities program, part of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. While doing this work, Cisneros began to forge his brokering skills between San Antonio's low-income Latinxs and city elites. He honed these skills with a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University and a PhD in public administration from George Washington University. Having accumulated a national pedigree, he returned to San Antonio and became the city's first Latinx mayor.

> Most of my life has been about being a bridge between the community and resources, power structures, and trying to be an honest interpreter and broker. . . . As mayor of San Antonio that was the role I played, an honest effort to deliver for the community, and yet recognize that the larger economic progress . . . was a precondition for the kind of opportunity we wanted to create in poor neighborhoods. . . . And so I was both a bridge in the sense of dialogue but also a bridge in the sense of ideas, of persuasion on both sides.

Cisneros emphasized how his brokering prioritized the interests of San Antonio's low-income communities: "I have never been able from a personal conscience standpoint to leave it behind." He always returned to San Antonio's barrios because he "cannot deny," "escape," or "ignore the difficulties of the poor people who live around me." To underscore this point, he added that he still lives in the house his grandparents owned.

By the time of our interview, Cisneros's development of an explicitly "Latino New Urbanist" landscape had yet to come to fruition but he was involved in several projects that, in their attempt to include Latinx culture and residents, would have somewhat fulfilled the criteria had it not been for the Great Recession. As chairman of CityView, he was building thirty communities in fourteen states by 2007 as well as providing "cultural advice" to KB Home, a builder and one of the largest mortgage lenders in the United States that had previously championed the decor of magnate Martha Stewart's multimillion-dollar homes in Long Island and Maine.[55] The company's newfound interest in Latinxs coincided with a housing bubble in the first decade of the twenty-first century that grew as subprime mortgage loans—risky, high-interest loans—were made available to Latinxs who had historically been unable to buy into the so-called American Dream of property ownership because of exclusionary housing policies. One of the projects CityView advised KB Home on was Lago Vista in San Antonio, a project with 428 homes.[56] Located in a poor industrial neighborhood "where nothing had been built in thirty years," Lago Vista

"completely sold out," Cisneros noted triumphantly. Two similar projects arose in Austin and Houston. All three had majority-Latinx residents and, according to Cisneros, all three "bridge[d] a suburban lifestyle and a Latino—not aesthetic—but Latino lifestyle. . . . There was no Latino aesthetic in the sense of Mediterranean aesthetic, but it was homey and in the way that we know Latinos would like." By 2010, foreclosures had forced out many homeowners from Lago Vista and KB Home became embroiled in the subprime mortgage crisis.[57]

Centro 18, another project Cisneros was involved in via CityView, also languished during the housing crisis. CityView and the private building company Kimball Hill Urban Centers had planned for Centro 18 to be a mixed-income development in the majority-Mexican Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago.[58] In a response to an opinion piece Cisneros cowrote about affordable housing for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, a local resident from Pilsen stated that Centro 18 was "not a step up for the 'salt of the earth'" urban residents on whose behalf Cisneros advocated.[59] Rather, the new development was "a wedge causing gentrification that would displace the immigrant working class who are truly 'the working people who make our neighborhoods vibrant.'"[60] In addition to writing articles in local papers, Cisneros attended a community meeting in Pilsen to help ease community relations as antigentrification community organizers criticized the project.[61] It all seemed to have been in vain. In 2008 the housing market was in crisis and Kimball Hill filed for bankruptcy.

Cisneros was an envoy of urban Latinidad. He visited barrios and appeared in major newspapers and conferences to put his years of brokering barrios, his association with Chicanx communities and their leaders, and his barrio affinity to work on profit-making projects. But his attempt to leverage his representational capabilities was weak when faced with the displacement and impoverishment of the very populations he claimed to be representing. Between 2007 and 2012, the roughly nine million foreclosures affected a large portion of African Americans and Latinxs, widening the wealth gap between black and Latinx, on the one hand, and white households, on the other.[62] These facts did not deter Cisneros from thinking that Latinxs would be central to the future of housing and urban development. In fact, he never even mentioned the housing crisis during our interview. This is striking, considering that his 2006 publication of *Casa y Comunidad: Latino Home and Neighborhood Design*, coedited with John Rosales, was published with the sponsorship of Freddie Mac, the government-chartered mortgage corporation that was accused of inciting

massive foreclosures.[63] Moreover, by 2011 when we talked, media pointed to Cisneros as sharing responsibility for the housing bust. Analysts pointed to policies Cisneros implemented during his tenure at HUD as the roots of the crisis and his close association with KB Home.

Perhaps because of these connections, Cisneros deemphasized the role of the expert in LNU: "I don't think that there is such a thing as anyone driving the Latinization of cities. I think it is happening demographically." "This is a long-term" process, he said, "in fact so long, that one could call it indefinite. But this will be the new pattern for the United States, going forward."

Seeing its spaces and aesthetics as first and foremost people-centered, Cisneros vacillated in defining the features of LNU. "I don't agree that Mediterranean in and of itself" is ideal, he said. "I live in a craft house myself." Cisneros added that Latinxs

> enjoy something beyond the pastels. They certainly don't enjoy . . . the monotonous tan of some modern subdivisions. There is also the handling of outside spaces, such as enclosed yards where children can play and be safe and the handling of the porch where people can sit outdoors. Latinos do enjoy the outdoors. Sitting on the porch in the evening saves some money on air-conditioning. The backyard, active, BBQs, family gathering . . . Families are larger. . . . A grandparent will have grandchildren over on the weekend. It all requires space. It requires rethinking the interior, how the cooking occurs. How do you put that many people to watch the Dallas Cowboys game on the weekend?

For Cisneros, family size and age, enjoying the outdoors, and being with each other were key to LNU. Cisneros drew again on his own experience growing up in the west-side barrio of San Antonio to describe LNU: "One of the most common things in San Antonio is family members living adjacent to each other. My sister-in-law lives across the street from me and my brother lives in the next house after that. My mother, three doors down from her." Upon reflecting on his upbringing, Cisneros concludes that "the way we live, define new urbanism . . . I don't know if I want to say [Latinos] are perfect, but they are New Urbanists."

Though the "Latino" in LNU largely serves as an adjective to New Urbanism, it is curious to also think of how the word *new* implies that there is something *old* about the barrio that LNU advocates, such as Cisneros, need to curate, refine, and market. In his book *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities*, urban planning historian David Diaz discusses

the development of Chicanx barrios in the American Southwest and how racist "Eurocentric urban visions" of urban planning and theory prevented professionals from recognizing barrio contributions to urban practice. To demonstrate how this exclusion persists in recent urban planning and urban studies scholarship, Diaz insists that "what is being claimed as 'new urbanism' is in reality 'barrio urbanism' or 'Chicana/o urbanism.'"[64] Diaz understands how a reformulation of the barrio as "new" erases the historical development of American barrios.[65] Unlike the antiracist politics running through Diaz's assertion that barrio urbanism is the "new urbanism," for Cisneros the link between new urbanism and "Latino cultural preferences" is one premised on maximizing market outcomes in a housing industry that had already found "new urbanism" and a growing Latinx home-buying population to be profitable. Unfortunately for Cisneros, this reliance on a housing market weakened by reckless choices undermined the very impact he hoped his ideas would have. The housing bust made plain that the repackaging of the barrio in its "new" LNU form would only be prized if it synced with the vagaries of the market.

"Mestizo Urbanism" and the Non-Blackness of Barrio Abstractions

I first came across Henry Muñoz and his work while researching the Latino-American Designer Archive at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City. The archive was begun less than a year after a group of cultural critics and scholars denounced the Smithsonian Institution's "willful neglect" of Latinx professionals and Latinx art in Smithsonian administrative offices, galleries, and museums.[66] At a panel inaugurating the archive, a group of architects agreed that because "traditional regionalist associations no longer describe the diversity of work produced by this multiethnic group," this archive was needed more than ever.[67] My encounter with Muñoz was thus the result of a growing realization that Latinxs should be represented in the art and design world. When I sat down to talk with Muñoz, he was the president of a design firm in San Antonio, one of the largest minority-owned design firms in the United States. He was also the chair of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission, an initiative seeking to establish the first Latino museum of the Smithsonian on the National Mall in Washington, DC. By the end of the 2010s, Muñoz, whom cultural critic Ed Morales has

labeled a "progressive technocrat," sat on numerous boards and councils, including that of the National Parks Foundation and the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.[68]

Muñoz's activist upbringing shaped his Latinx-influenced design: "I'm very much a product of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, but I lived in a very nice neighborhood and I went to private schools."[69] Muñoz grew up in a suburb on the north side of San Antonio. It was, according to Muñoz, as "1960s version of the American Dream as you could get." The majority population was Anglo white and only about 20 percent of the residents were of Mexican descent. The neighborhood was "very different," Muñoz opined, "from where Henry [Cisneros] grew up." Growing up in a middle-class environment while also spending almost "every weekend . . . on picket lines and marches" with his parents made him realize there were "different vision[s] of the United States." Negotiating these two worlds became a focus of his approach to design and the built environment.

Muñoz found his way into architecture in the early 1980s while working as a marketing director for the architectural firm he would eventually preside over two decades later. In the 1980s, the firm was run by white executives. A managing partner commissioned a public relations specialist to come in and do a study on the future potential of the firm. The study found that future growth depended on architects taking a more visible role in the local Latinx community.[70] As was the case across the nation, San Antonio saw large Latinx population growth in the 1980s. Particularly noteworthy for the firm was the fact that San Antonio's Latinx elites were also becoming more prominent. Henry Cisneros was elected mayor of the city in 1981. Historian Laura Hernández-Ehrisman notes that his "win represented a new alliance between Anglo and Mexican American middle-class leaders."[71] The consultant convinced the firm that Latinx elites serving as "school board trustees," for instance, would be the people making decisions about architecture in the future.

The firm's willingness to embrace local Latinxs encouraged Muñoz to stay at the firm even though he did not have a degree in architecture. One of his early projects was bringing National Public Radio to San Antonio, one of the largest cities in the United States to not have this service. After four years of working on this task, Muñoz became the founding president of Texas Public Radio.[72] The reaction, Muñoz recalls, was very positive. His partner at the firm supported this work because it exposed the firm to a wide group of people and improved its business network. "Our relations with the rest of the city became better. . . . We ended up being very

successful," Muñoz recalled. The firm's new approach to having a public face and having Muñoz as its representative was validated. With Muñoz's work, and partner John Kell's approval, the design firm went from being a "San Antonio country club firm" to a firm that was "primarily about public architecture and design."

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Muñoz continued to cultivate the "public" side of the firm. In the 1980s, he served as chair of Leadership San Antonio, a program to cultivate the leadership skills of promising individuals, and was on the board of several civic organizations, including, among others, the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, which Muñoz called "the bastion of Anglo business leadership"; the Texas Park Research Foundation; the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center; and the San Antonio Symphony.[73] Despite his active participation in these organizations, Muñoz's family thought he could do more on a national scale. He recalls that in the late 1980s, his cousin Willie Velásquez, the prominent civil rights organizer, asked him, "What are you doing? Your legacy is activism and political involvement, and you're not doing anything with it." Velásquez suggested that Muñoz meet with his friend, Michael Dukakis, who was then a candidate in the Democratic Party presidential primaries. Within a few days, Muñoz was sitting with Kitty Dukakis at the Democratic National Convention listening to Ann Richards give her keynote address. Meeting Richards that night would lead to his appointment years later, when she was governor of Texas, as the first Latinx member of the Texas Transportation Commission, an agency that controlled billions of dollars in public money.

In 1996, after working with Governor Richards, Muñoz decided to return to the design firm and dedicate himself fully to its operation. He returned with a renewed commitment to ensuring the firm's success. As the new president of the firm and owner of almost 50 percent of it, he could control the direction that the firm would take. Serving on the commission taught him that the government was spending "money in schools and universities, and infrastructure" but the buildings they "were building did not look like me or like the young people we were hoping to inspire." For example, in his pre-LNU days, Henry Cisneros, Muñoz recalled, described an ideal architecture that was not the typical Spanish colonial but what Muñoz labeled "rural, Texas modernism."

National and regional politics also influenced his interest in bringing Latinx culture into the architecture profession. Against the anti-immigration politics of the 1990s and in favor of the concurrent rise of free

trade policy that he had championed at the state level as a member of the Transportation Commission, he thought a Latinized built environment would make a political statement of belonging. As Governor Richards fostered business relations with Mexico, San Antonio was in the midst of new developments geared at catering to the needs of a new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) era. For Muñoz, the timing was right to establish a new relationship with Mexico, one of economic *and* cultural cooperation.[74]

He consulted with professionals and found that schools of architecture, even those in the state of Texas, were uninterested in the idea of "Mexican American" architecture. The closest thing to this kind of architecture he found in professional fields was the Spanish Mission style. "Even the Latino architects," he said, were designing without taking into consideration the Latinx population in Texas. "I didn't understand why they could allow that to happen."

Seeking to challenge this dominant way of thinking about design, he began "looking around the community of San Antonio and the communities of south Texas trying to understand whether there was an architecture of people who looked like myself." He photographed the built environment of the barrios that he had not grown up in but had developed an affinity for. As he explained, "I fell in love with the kind of tacky homemade aesthetics. . . . I love rasquache." Engaging with cultural studies scholar Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, who describes rasquache as "the cultural sensibility of the poor and excluded" who create colorful, highly textured environments that relish in the idea that "more is more," encouraged Muñoz to further pursue the idea of rasquachismo in the built environment.[75] Moreover, artist Franco Mondini-Ruiz helped Muñoz see that "there was something about those principles in Latino urbanism: the way your grandmother would treat your front yard, little *tia*'s garden, with those tires around the trees, what [Mondini Ruiz] would call 'barrio baroque.'" As a result, when Muñoz saw a house on the West Side barrio painted an "interesting shade of yellow," for instance, he thought he had found the closest example of "Mexican American" architecture.

And yet the more he traveled through Texas, the more he realized the essentialist pitfalls of thinking of a "Mexican American architecture." In Texas alone, he saw a Mexican American population with varied cultural interests. Muñoz concluded that if he promoted "Mexican American architecture," he "would be just as exclusive as the people who are doing the German-inspired Hill country architecture." He was referring to the building

style of German immigrants in the Hill country of central and south Texas, a stonework style experiencing a revival of sorts among Texan architecture firms focused on luxury home construction.[76]

Muñoz began to consider other ways of making an impact in the field of design by developing a "Mestizo Regionalism" of "blended aesthetics."[77] The approach considered the proclivities of younger people who, unlike his generation, Muñoz thought, "don't need labels. They sample, as if it were music, and take bits and pieces that fit their identity. That is what this architecture is about. We don't live in a pure country, in landscapes of 'purity' [as in] the Spanish Colonial Missions." The Spanish missions erected in newly "discovered" spaces were, as Muñoz has us recall here, built at the expense of indigenous inhabitants. The formation of the categories of Mexican, Chicanx, and Latinx were less violent but nonetheless also exclusive. For Muñoz, ethnoracial changes to the population of the United States represented a new era in which absolute ethnic identities and cultural histories, at times cultivated to marginalize subaltern people, would be challenged.

Mestizaje, especially when defined as a cross between Spaniard and indigenous, a mixing that in the early twentieth century Mexican educator José Vasconcelos elevated to a "raza cósmica" (cosmic race) that would dominate the world, has a long history in the Southwest of the United States.[78] Chicana/o activists and intellectuals used it, as literary scholar Ilan Stavans explains, to craft their identities for the purpose of cultural self-determination during the civil rights era of the 1960s.[79] Rafael Pérez-Torres writes that "Chicana critical discourse" valued mestizaje because it helped "embody the idea of multiple subjectivities."[80] Gloria Anzaldúa theorized the "new mestiza" as an embodied, cultural, and spatial category of in-betweenness.[81] Muñoz's idea of mestizaje could be thought of in this vein, as a way to disrupt the static categories employed to describe built environments as either modern or vernacular, high art or low art, and populations as Mexican or American or Mexican American.

One of Muñoz's first proposed projects to include a "mestizo" language was the International Center at HemisFair Park in San Antonio, a building that would house several offices, including the North American Development Bank created by NAFTA. The building was a symbol of San Antonio's rising stature in binational politics. The building design had a hyperbolic paraboloid wall, doors that swung up for ventilation, and a courtyard that linked indoor and outdoor space. Local journalist David Anthony Richelieu wrote regular opinion pieces in the *San Antonio Express-News*, criticizing the

design and referring to it as a "leaning tower of *pesos*."[82] The San Antonio City Council, which had initially supported the design, began to backtrack. Councilmember Billa Burke noted that she would prefer a building similar to the "stone and stucco 19th century historic homes around the site": in other words, the design vernacular of German immigrants in Texas.[83] Similar arguments based on the Euro-American history of the area would also be used in the 1990s to dismiss Sandra Cisneros's purple house and Ricardo Legoretta's red library in San Antonio. Muñoz's design for the International Trade Center was canceled, and the project was passed along to a design firm specializing in German-inspired architecture. It was the first setback for Muñoz's idea of mestizo architecture and it underlined the challenges of doing design work that was visually different from the traditional Euro-American architecture public officials and elites were accustomed to.

Muñoz and his partner at the firm, Kell, persevered and moved onto other Latinx-inspired designs. An opportunity to test out mestizo architecture came in 1997, while Muñoz served as chair of the nonprofit Centro Alameda, an organization dedicated to the restoration of the Alameda Theater.[84] Built in 1949 in what was known as San Antonio's "Little Mexico," or "Laredito" neighborhood, the theater was open to Mexicans when many other spaces in San Antonio denied or limited their entry.[85] Legendary Mexican artists performed at the Alameda, such as Lola Beltrán, Pedro Infante, and Cantinflas, but by the 1990s the theater sat empty. Urban renewal and the construction of a highway had cut off the area from the city's West Side barrio and led to its decline. The theater's renovations were part of the formation of a "cultural zone" that would revitalize Little Mexico and celebrate local Mexican culture.[86] In collaboration with the Smithsonian, the theater reopened in 2007 in its new incarnation as Museo Alameda, a museum for Latinx art.[87] The Historic and Design Review Commission, which had chastised author Sandra Cisneros for painting her Victorian house in a tony area of San Antonio purple, disagreed with the architecture firm's new, stark modern design that replaced the theater's archways. Instead, the commission recommended that the Museo resemble the turquoise and multi-pastel-colored tourist market nearby that sells Mexican ponchos and sombreros. Instances such as these underscore the segregated spatiality of bright color. This neighborhood's history of barrio formation and its subsequent designation as a destination for a white tourist imaginary of what constitutes Mexicanidad made it seem less of a threatening site for a colorful building. Muñoz, determined to bring a contemporary style to the site, "drilled holes in all of their arguments" and

insisted that "the real architectural history of San Antonio is eclectic." To deflect attention away from the architects, Muñoz decided to consult with residents about the design. What many architects and urban planners call charettes, sessions in which locals collaborate and contribute to the design process, Muñoz and his colleagues called "design *pachangas*," celebratory focus group sessions. With the leadership of Jeffrey Ryan of Jackson and Ryan Architects of Houston, the input of Muñoz, and the design pachangas, the building's final design resulted in a stainless steel facade with cutouts resembling Mexican *hojalata* art arranged so that when the light hits, it appears to be a *luminaria*, a lamp (figures 4.1 and 4.2). Part of the building facade was awash in bright-pink paint, a brightness that paralleled that of the nearby tourist market but refused its colonial understanding of cultural value (figure 4.3 and 4.4).

Muñoz acknowledged that the symbolism of the building may not be legible to all viewers, including barrio residents: "Many people don't understand architecture, but they know when they feel good in a building. They can see something and say, 'I see myself in that.'" Besides, recognition was precisely what the design pachangas were for, to remind people that they had exercised their urban citizenship, that their ideas were heard and could shape the future design of the building even if, like in the case of some charettes, these ideas did not always materialize in the final design.

Another chance to explore Mestizo regionalism came with the design for a biotechnology building for the University of Texas, San Antonio, where in the late 1990s Muñoz had led a campaign that raised $1.2 million for the new campus.[88] Muñoz envisioned altering the campus, where brick and stone architecture dominates, by connecting *curanderismo*, folk-healing practices in Latin America, and the biosciences. Flat planes of bright color devoid of iconography were a theme in this project and others. The 2007 Fine Arts Center for the Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District was also designed to convey mestizo regionalism (figure 4.5). The center was built to serve two small cities near McAllen, Texas, where the population was more than 90 percent Latinx and nearly half lived below the poverty line. Since its construction was made possible by an increase in local taxes, the community expected to have its culture and needs represented in the new building. After various design pachangas, the design team decided to focus on the song "La Maquina Amarilla" (the yellow machine), a local *corrido* played on the radio during football season. Corridos, notes cultural historian Américo Paredes, are ballads that communicate the cultural conflicts between Anglos and Mexicans in the greater Mexico

area encompassing Texas.[89] The flat panels of the Fine Arts Center were mostly yellow, accompanied with elongated and variegated panels in shades of red, blue, and green arranged to visually represent the sound waves of the corrido. The colorful facade also, according to Muñoz, simultaneously borrowed from "an international modernism associated" with Mexico, the kind of Mexican modernism made famous by Luis Barragán and Ricardo Legoretta.[90] Moreover, the building's exterior was reminiscent of murals, which the firm's website says is its "most important gesture," one "that imbed[s] identity in the building and give[s] voice to the community itself."[91] No murals reminiscent of those seen on barrio streets were placed on the building, however, even though it would have been relatively easy to incorporate them into the design.

In a design for the University of Texas Health Science Center, Muñoz focused on the diseases that affect Mexican Americans living in south Texas. He presented the design, a "red sculpture that was inspired by the shrines that sit out on people's front yards," to a regent of the university with a Spanish surname. The regent rejected the design because, Muñoz suspected, he was made uncomfortable with "the idea that a yard shrine from a poor neighborhood of a barrio of Laredo—this guy is a multimillionaire—could be the inspiration for proper architecture." Muñoz learned that even in a Mexican American region and with Latinx decision makers, his design theory could be a hard sell. His brokering did not always appease clients worried about straying too far from normative landscapes.

Color can cause much anxiety and put Latinx belonging into question. As Muñoz succinctly noted in our interview, "color is *very* political." Specifically, he noted, the issue of color, as it concerns Mexican Americans and Latinxs, is one of assimilation. "People reject their tribe when they are trying to assimilate. If I want to be a successful banker on Wall Street, I am not going to walk in with a bright tie. I want a brick house; I don't want a stucco house that is painted red. I want to live in an upward middle-class McMansion, not a yellow house on the West Side of San Antonio." In another project for a school district in Latinx-majority La Joya, Texas, the project's coordinators saw the bright paint color he had chosen and "freaked out. They stopped the project." He realized that there were places where even a brokered barrio architecture would not be accepted.

Muñoz, like Cisneros, is hopeful that a brokered Latinx representation will not be so challenging in the future as the Latinx population continues to grow and call for cultural representation in public spaces. As more "decision makers recognize the value of the Latino situation, when they can see

FIGURE 4.1 ~ The "Luminaria," the cover on the exterior of the Museo Alameda, lights up the building's glass facade, San Antonio, Texas, 2010. Designed by Jackson & Ryan Architects in collaboration with Henry Muñoz. Photograph by author.

FIGURE 4.2 ~ The "Luminaria" design resembles the lanterns made of plain or intricately cut paper that are popular on the US-Mexico borderlands. Designed by Jackson & Ryan Architects in collaboration with Henry Muñoz. Photograph by author.

FIGURE 4.3 ~ Museo Alameda, San Antonio, Texas, 2010. Designed by Jackson & Ryan Architects in collaboration with Henry Muñoz. Photograph by author.

FIGURE 4.4 ~ The light and shadow play on the bright pink facade of the Museo Alameda, San Antonio, Texas, 2010. Designed by Jackson & Ryan Architects in collaboration with Henry Muñoz. Photograph by author.

FIGURE 4.5 ~ Fine Arts Center, Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District, Edcouch, Texas, 2007. Photograph by Chris Cooper. Courtesy of Muñoz and Company / Henry Muñoz.

an economic opportunity, a political opportunity," remarked Muñoz, "they are willing to accept a more adventurous design." In this vein, brokers of barrios, like him, will continue to play an important role.

> If these two years as chairman of [the National Museum of the American Latino] commission has taught me anything, it is that we are everywhere. We are going to continue to grow in terms of our influence. We are . . . in decision-making roles about what our environment, our cities, our neighborhoods, are going to look like in the future. That means that there will be a Latinization of the urban landscape because we are going to demand it. . . . And it isn't an image of purity. It is an image of mestizaje, of blendedness. I am of Mexican heritage, but I am very proud of my American citizenship. It is the two coming together; that dialogue is what makes our country what it is today.

To understand the politics of Muñoz's cultural mestizaje, it is worth recalling again the history of racial mestizaje in Latin America and, in particular, in Mexico. Critiques of colonial mestizaje in early twentieth-century Latin America nation-building processes examine how its implicit commitment to mixing masked the objective of whitening indigenous populations. Similarly, critiques of the term in late twentieth-century US contexts appreciate its ability to foster a sense of belonging among Chicanxs while also underscoring its continued subsumption, if not neglect, of the unmixed Latinx indigenous and black populations. Mestizaje thus

abstracts from subaltern groups while also encouraging new subjectivities that challenge colonial notions of valuable cultures and racial identities. An examination of Muñoz's design needs to grapple with the complex challenges and opportunities that an architecture using Mestizo language inherits. When Muñoz states that the mestizo "blendedness" he is calling for exists in "the rasquache in the abandoned inner cities of the United States," it is imperative that this not put black and indigenous community formations on the back burner. Muñoz implies, and his work as an expert navigating hostile reactions to low-income Latinx culture positions him to think, that this "blendedness" requires abstracting that which is too much, too Latinx, in order to create a new, "future" Latinization of cities. Even if such compromises are necessary, the oral and written language describing the design work of Mestizo Urbanism can recognize and discuss how abstractions may exclude other racialized populations and their urban spatial expression.

At the 2012 Design Miami/ fair, part of Art Basel Miami, Muñoz and Company installed a 6,700 square foot, temporary "Mestizo City." The city, which won a 2014 Design Award from the Texas Society of Architects and a Citation Award from the San Antonio Chapter of AIA, was surrounded by an inflatable border of storefronts reminiscent of high-end stores, such as Breakfast Tacos at Tiffani's, with a "modernist cube" at the center constructed out of lit Mexican Jarritos soda bottles in orange, lime, and fruit punch flavors (figures 4.6 and 4.7).[92] In a video promoting the installation, Muñoz described it as "a colonia on the border between the United States and Mexico. It is a place that is not permanent in structure but should be permanent in thought."[93] According to Muñoz, the colorful Jarritos bottles represent a "visual history of many of the phenomenon that occur in communities throughout the United States."[94] In an interview with *Texas Architect* magazine, Muñoz added that Jarritos "are part of everyday culture on both side of the Texas-Mexico border, and we thought the colors would resonate in Miami."[95] Color in this instance formed a transnationally expansive map of a US Latinization of cities. It was rooted in Latinx communities and Mexico and linked to San Antonio and Miami. Again here, Muñoz's use of color was a way of visualizing Latinidad in a public space evoking the xenophobic and racist policies of the border.

In order to enter and see the glowing, Jarritos-made center of the city, visitors were asked to create fake visas. The Mestizo City is there to "provoke thought," Muñoz said, and "have people begin to ask questions of what the imprint of Latinos has been in the past but also what it should be in the future." It shows, he added, that Latinx contributions "deserve

FIGURE 4.6 ~ "Breakfast Tacos at Tiffani's," part of the Mestizo City installation at Art Basel, Miami, Florida, 2012. Photograph by Christopher Paul Gutierrez. Courtesy of Muñoz and Company / Henry Muñoz.

FIGURE 4.7 ~ Jarritos cube, part of the Mestizo City installation at Art Basel, Miami, Florida, 2012. Photograph by Christopher Paul Gutierrez. Courtesy of Muñoz and Company / Henry Muñoz.

to be discussed" in major forums like Miami Design/.[96] The company's website described the installation as relevant to the recent election of President Barack Obama, who had won in large part because Latinx voters thought he would take a more pro-immigrant position. Muñoz, who also served as the national chairman of the Futuro Fund, a fundraising organization he created along with actress Eva Longoria and lawyer Andrés W. López, raised $32 million and was widely seen to mobilize Latinxs to secure Obama's reelection.[97]

Press materials highlighted the intersections of national politics and Mestizo City. Attending to the local politics of its location in Miami, however, reveals another layer of untapped urgency. In the late twentieth century, the neighborhood where the installation was located was surrounded by a majority Haitian community in the North, Puerto Rican and black Wynwood in the Southwest, and black-majority Overtown in the West. In the 2010s, all these neighborhoods were being scrutinized and assessed by gentrifying real estate developers. The erection of Mestizo City, and its colorful abstraction of barrios, in an area where low-income populations of color were at risk of losing their homes was a harbinger of the cultural workings of impending displacement—the cultures of low-income Latinxs could be carefully curated for consumption and entertainment but black populations were a liability to urban progress. Mestizo City, the most emblematic project of Mestizo Urbanism, was thus a missed opportunity to draw connections and alliances between communities of color undergoing a crisis of belonging in the spaces that capitalism had again deemed worthy of investment.

"Latino Urbanism" and Latin American Urbanists

I first met Rojas at the Latino Urbanism symposium in 2011 in Phoenix, Arizona, a conference named after the very concept he coined. Despite its title, the conference presenters largely discussed LNU. In an interview with Rojas, I asked him to explain what the relationship was. Latino Urbanism, he said, was distinct from LNU. Rojas saw LNU as concerned with the aesthetics and planning of "building *Latino* buildings," but the placemaking he is interested in "is more a collective, sociocultural activity. . . . It is more about how people use buildings." There is, he added, "a fine line between form-based and people-based. I think Latino Urbanism is people-based. . . . [It] is not a physical form. It is a way of using space." Rojas disagreed with urbanists who simply say "build a plaza, a church, a *kiosko*, and

they [Latinxs] are happy." Instead, Rojas sees his role as expert as dedicated to observing and encouraging the kinds of placemaking that Latinx residents themselves create. "People think of my work as a typology and it is not," he remarked.[98]

Rojas told me that he began to think about the spatial practices of the barrio while a graduate student in a course at MIT that discussed "good cities" and "bad cities." It made him think of where East Los Angeles, his hometown, and other Latinx-majority places fit into this dichotomy. "It's not the ghetto," he reflected. "Well, it's not the ghetto for me." Rojas was invoking the common way in which a black-white racial binary has shaped US geography into "bad" ghettoes and "good" suburbs. In this binary, the barrio takes on a position similar to that of a Latinx racial category—it can waver from one to the other side, black or white, lie in the middle, or outside of it. The desire to understand where East Los Angeles sat on this spectrum would shape Rojas's research and urban practice.

By the time Rojas was in graduate school, Chicana/os had defended and embraced the barrios of East Los Angeles. They had "enacted" a place, to use Rojas's words, despite the stigma and blight that planners and other elite urbanists associated with those places. Rojas admired this placemaking largely from afar. Distance is an important factor for cultivating an affinity for the barrio, and Rojas's distancing from the barrio began early. When he was in his late teens, Rojas moved from East L.A. to Alhambra, a then mostly white suburb of Los Angeles. As he explained, "You could see the contrast between East LA and middle-class America; it was really blatant. . . . I think that is where I started to [understand] differences in place." His family ties to East Los Angeles were further loosened when in the 1970s his grandparents' house in Boyle Heights was demolished to build part of a high school.[99] But it was precisely that forced detachment that may have escalated his interest in the place. His grandparents' house featured the key aspects that Rojas would cite later as being foundational to Latino Urbanism, including a small yard that opened to the life of the street. His grandmother's new house in Montebello was a small Spanish colonial revival house "on a conventional suburban lot with a small front yard and large back yard."[100] He recalls that when his extended family gathered there, "it felt crowded and awkward."[101] There was no equivalent to the street that had operated as an extension of his grandparents' house in Boyle Heights.

Rojas's experiences led him to believe that middle-class, white suburbs were very different from Chicanx houses in East Los Angeles. In his master's research, and in subsequent publications, Rojas concluded that Latinxs

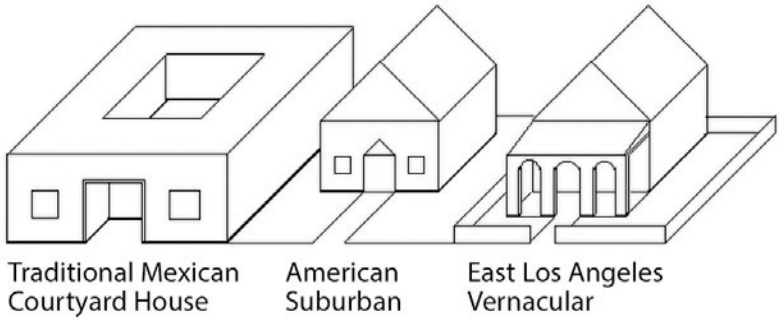

FIGURE 4.8 ~ Evolution of an East Los Angeles vernacular housing style. Courtesy of James Rojas.

transpose the courtyard space that sits in the center of typical Mexican houses to the front yard spaces of East Los Angeles houses (figure 4.8). The front yard of the transnationalized house in East L.A. was usually closed off from the street with fencing but as inhabitants engaged with passersby from their front yards, they were exposed to the public life of the street and they contributed to the identity of the neighborhood, an identity that Rojas described as distinctly working class. "Working-class Latinos," Rojas said, are "what you visibly see on the street. Whereas middle-class Latinos are in their car, in their house, you don't really see that. But the working-class culture is so strong, so vivid that you can't avoid it." For Rojas, the front yards of Boyle Heights create a kind of plaza that enjoins the private space of the house and the public space of the street. Rojas contrasted this spatial practice with the Anglo propensity to extinguish the social life of front yards and cut the front of the house from the street. He also contrasted it with the typical Spanish colonial plaza in Mexico. In his view, the front yard was unique to working-class Latinx urbanism. Working-class Latinxs repurpose spaces and use them in new and more intense ways than do whites who live in single-family detached homes—the "good" urban places.

Inspired by the work of Rojas, urban historian Margaret Crawford, and Architects, Artists, and Designers Opening the Border Edge of Los Angeles (ADOBE LA), a group of Latino artists and architects, argue that by altering their houses, the residents of East Los Angeles "remove them from the context of the mass-market values, and thereby decommodify them." Moreover, they add, residents' "pleasure in transformation and self-expression reclaim a central aspect of homeownership that many other Angelenos, obsessed with property values, have forgotten.[102] These revamped houses

are, Crawford and ADOBE LA add, "a vehicle for mobilizing social identity, making a publicly legible statement that provides residents with a new sense of agency" in a city that has historically segregated this population.[103]

Rojas described other noteworthy Latinx urban spatial practices. He pointed out that Latinxs walked more than other groups. Their use of public transportation, he said, offered a "grassroots model for sustainable transportation."[104] Latinx street vendors also exemplify a novel way to use space. Their temporary, mobile work stations add "a rhythm to the streets."[105] "In East Los Angeles every person, vendor and prop created the identity of place that was a genuine orchestration of events. Nothing," observed Rojas, "was pre-planned here by any architects, or urban designers."[106]

Rojas's critics say he generalizes based on his personal experiences and longings for the barrio. They also disapprove of the essentialism conveyed in the concept "Latino Urbanism." Certainly, the spatial uses and cultural practices that Rojas documents in Latinx communities can also be observed in non-Latinx spaces. Rojas recognized this and remarked to me, "Other ethnic groups in the United States do similar things to their houses." Still, he sustained that the visual and spatial activism of the Chicana/o movement created a distinct environment. While noting that African American civil rights movements influenced the formation of Chicana/o civil rights activism, he believed there were marked differences. In his eyes, "if you look at the Chicano movement in East L.A." in contrast to the concurrent African American movement, the Chicana/o movement was social activism "plus design." "We [Chicana/os] had buildings with murals. That makes it really unique. . . . The Latino presence in the city is really defined." A 1978 issue of *Radical America*, a magazine of the New Left, complicates the belief that muralism was distinctively a Chicana/o urban culture. The editors traced the origins of the community mural movement to 1967 Chicago, when a group of nearly twenty black artists painted "The Wall of Respect," under the direction of artist William Walker, in a neighborhood about to vanish in the midst of urban renewal.[107] The wall was demolished but its significance to the community lived on. One of the muralists involved in the creation of the wall recalled decades later that the mural was part of the 1960s and 1970s black arts movement that had affirmed black cultural belonging in urban space.[108] In the same *Radical America* issue, Tim Drescher and Rupert Garcia write that though the community "mural renaissance" was begun in black Chicago, "Raza murals" had existed prior to the 1960s.[109] "Chicano communities," they note, "are particularly rich in a tradition of public visual expression through murals, and this helps explain

the fact that more murals have been painted in these communities over the past decade than in any other comparable locations."[110] Rojas's observations were thus not new.

Contradictory statements on the origins of muralism in communities of color are the effect of black and Latinx segregation. This segregation reverberates in Rojas's statement. Of course, blacks and Latinxs sometimes lived in close proximity. Sometimes they shared the same neighborhoods. But when they did not, the divisions between their communities created competing spatial imaginaries that had long-lasting implications on the production of knowledge about the artistic innovation and built environments of each community. Rojas's discussion of the working-class Latinx yard takes on another meaning when juxtaposed, for example, with bell hooks's discussion of the centrality of the front yard and porch in her family's history. For hooks, her family's experience is evidence of a black "cultural genealogy of resistance."[111] She writes that it was "often" the case in her family's southern black community that "the rural black folks who lived in shacks on the edges and margins of town conceptualized the yard as a continuation of living space."[112] Numerous other scholars have in the past few decades recovered African American placemaking as a form of self-determination before, during, and after the civil rights movement. They describe an imprint of visual, ethnic-specific blackness on the built environment.[113]

Rojas's Latino Urbanism concept has been most often critiqued for its nostalgia and description of Latinx uniqueness. When we talked, he willingly engaged with these critiques and even conceded some of them, especially his nostalgia for the barrio. But he was also adamant about making sure that his ideas about Latinx spatial and cultural practice not be reduced to urban stereotypes. Latino Urbanism may have certain key features, but they did not wholly explain Latinx urban practice.

As if to further the idea that Latinx urbanism was first and foremost a community process, Rojas founded a participatory design practice called Place It! that offers interactive model-building workshops to elected officials, NGOs, and municipalities interested in engaging residents in the role of planning and design. The workshops target "overlooked stakeholders, such as women, youth, immigrants, and people of color," and show them how "to translate their dreams and ideas into physical forms and models."[114] At the workshops, a rasquache aesthetic of play is on full display. Hair rollers stand in for buildings, halves of empty Easter eggs represent domes, and colored beads, Legos, wooden blocks, and buttons make up the rest of the built environment.[115] The ways that participants at the workshops

repurpose these items inform the plans, drawings, or policy recommendations that Place It! creates for its clients. The workshops are, one might say—though Rojas does not use these words—rasquache planning extended nationwide to shape urban policy.

While much of Rojas's master's thesis focused on Chicanx or Mexican placemaking, his concept of Latino Urbanism employs the more encompassing "Latino" ethnic qualifier that includes other Latinx subgroups in the nation and, according to Rojas, potentially links to Latin America: "I think that there is a movement towards a more pan–Latin American, Latino urbanism, that is looking at Caracas, Rio, Colombia, São Paulo, Salvador. All these patterns are being meshed together in the US. You can't tell a Salvadoran house from a Chicano house in East L.A., right? They look the same. . . . It's the same culture of the built environment. They are forging a bigger identity." Transnational thinking has influenced the work of several Latinx urbanists and their work with low-income populations.[116] Latin American urbanists focusing on sprawling, low-income neighborhoods have also interacted with Latinx professionals in the United States. By 2008, Rojas had worked with the Urban Think Tank, an interdisciplinary design practice started in Caracas, Venezuela, devoted to "social architecture and informal development."[117] Together they "looked at front yards, vendors, urban spaces . . . same kind of architecture and design, stucco, colors," and began to consider the possibility of a "PanAmerican Urbanism."[118]

However, Rojas told me he encountered Latin Americans who are "very Eurocentric" and do not understand Latinx-themed environments in the United States. In Mexico he has been asked: "'Why do *Mexicanos* [in the United States] want to create plazas . . . all these ranchos?' They should be creating Frank Gehry, and modern stuff." Similarly, architects who identify as Latin American or Hispanic and live in the United States resist identifying or engaging with US barrios in their design work. Informal conversations I had at conferences revealed that some middle-class, professional Latin Americans and recent immigrants from Latin America to the United States are unaware of the history of marginalization, disenfranchisement, and dispossession that has created a working-class Latinx identity and cultural formation in the United States. At one conference, a Mexican-based panelist exasperatedly asked why Latinx architecture was always thought to come from low-income communities and mentioned that "we" had a great diversity of architecture. At another conference where Rojas presented on Latino Urbanism, a Mexican academic living in the Midwest angrily said he did not identify with the Latino Urbanism that Rojas described and

suggested that the term *Latino* was overdetermined. These individuals are apprehensive about being interpellated in a category that they perceive as narrow at best, stigmatizing at worst. They fail to understand that the "Latino" in Latino Urbanism is not a socioeconomically, racially diverse subject of the Americas but a historically conditioned, working-class, racialized subject of the United States, one regarded as an abject urbanite unworthy of being reframed and elevated into white-dominated professional discourse, precisely what Rojas works to rectify. This racialized subject may have counterparts in Latin America's poor barrios, but its referent, as it pertains to Rojas's ideas, lies first and foremost in the marginalized barrios of the United States.

As was the case for Cisneros and Muñoz, Rojas believes that the future of Latino Urbanism depends on population growth. Latino Urbanism will change in the hands of the "immigrants coming up to the US from Mexico, from Latin America," he noted. Rojas's work reminds us that those who observe and theorize this ongoing urbanization will need to engage with and facilitate the agency and visibility of the new arrivals in the built environment. Moreover, they will have to grapple with the extent to which socioeconomically and nationally diverse Latin American immigrants will participate in an urban Latinidad historically framed along racial and class lines.

From Deficient Urbanism to Ethnocentric Expressions of Property Ownership

When I asked a Cuban Miami-based architect if barrios have specific spatial layouts or cultures that could contribute to professional urban design, he remarked that "Mexican Americans will probably answer 'yes' to that, and Cuban Americans will probably answer 'no.'"[119] It would be simplistic to assume that Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas all focused on barrios because of their Mexican American roots, but I take this interviewee as pointing to the different histories of Latinx marginalization in the United States that make it so that some groups, Mexicans in this instance, and low-income Mexicans in particular, affirm the cultures formed in segregated spaces. Cubans, especially those middle-class and upper-middle-class migrants who entered Miami after the Cuban Revolution, were largely concentrated in neighborhoods but did not take on a leftist political consciousness. Rather, their place identity cohered along the lines of entrepreneurship and anticommunism. Sociologists Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick do not mention

the word *barrio* in their classic book on Cuban place formation in Miami, preferring instead to use the more neutral term *enclave*.[120] The ethnic-centric urbanism that the brokers discussed here call for is inspired by predominantly Mexican American regions—south central Texas and Los Angeles—formed out of a US imperial land grab of Mexican territories in the nineteenth century. This regional concentration and the inequalities that formed in the process of dispossession continue to define the identity and cultural practices of many Mexican descendants living in the area. The 1960s was one moment when this cultural identity crystallized, galvanizing the Chicana/o movement. The sociospatial identity-making practices of that time reverberate in the work of these brokers and mark them as different in the eyes of the Cuban Miami architect.

These brokers advocate for the movimiento's principle of fighting for representation in white exclusionary realms. Principally, they embrace the barrio as a cultural force transforming expert urban knowledges and practices. Yet it is also true that these three brokers did not always follow the most radical politics closely associated with Chicana/o activism. Cisneros did not. Recall that he favored working "within the rules." Questions have arisen regarding the success of Muñoz's company and whether he has used political networks to obtain design contracts.[121]

These three brokers diverge from Chicana/o cultural politics of the 1960s and 1970s in another important way. Each of their paradigms subsumes the particularity of the Mexican American experience under the categories of "Latino" or "mestizo," allowing for a Latinx cultural politics to overshadow a Chicanx cultural politics. These semantic changes reflect the growth and internal diversification of the Latinx population. These three brokers, whose careers have taken them to many places outside the Chicanx-dominant Southwest, seemed to understand the significance, if not merely the marketability, of more encompassing labels. The use of these larger categories, as essentializing as they may be, is important because it serves as a reminder of the collective historical formation of this marginalized identity in US history. The lens of "strategic" essentialism, an idea examined by postcolonial and literary scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, elucidates the ways in which these categories may dually stereotype and enunciate group empowerment and social agency.[122]

Similar umbrella terms for urban paradigms surfaced in the early twenty-first century to name the practices of various ethnoracial groups. Architect Melvin L. Mitchell proposed a "New (Black) Urbanism" that "'re-integrates' black communities" in the United States.[123] The term "black

urbanism" appeared in urban planner Sara Zewde's master's thesis at MIT and at an academic conference at Goldsmiths, University of London. Neither yoked the term to "New Urbanism."[124] "Asian urbanism" has been an ongoing concern for practitioners writing about cities in Asia and US Chinatowns have kindled new urban development outside Chinese neighborhoods.[125] These reconceptualizations of US ethnoracial space are an understandable reaction to discrimination that segregated people of color in cities and characterized them as poor and lacking the cultural refinement necessary to progress into white spaces. These essentialized categories, like the categories invented by the three brokers discussed here, are also an understandable reaction to the lack of diversity in the professional fields. But these terms may stray from the earlier representational urgency and demands for structural change of the 1960s and 1970s activism if all they offer is more palliative aspects of the ghetto, barrio, or Chinatown.

Moreover, these ethnocentric paradigms can discourage alliances between multiple marginalized groups. In considering the unique social, symbolic, and geographic aspects of Latinx urban life and culture, Cisneros, Muñoz, and Rojas are, by omission, imagining non-Latinxs and their symbolic and material place in US urbanization as different. When Cisneros intimates the possibility of reverse assimilation by suggesting that carefully curated Latinx urban culture could appeal to non-Latinxs, the question arises whether the same is true for other historically marginalized ethnoracial concentrations. Asserting an essentialized Latinx urbanism lends itself to a balkanized, exclusive cultural commodification.

Besides disconnecting with other ethnoracial groups, the Latinx-centric urban paradigms discussed here eclipse the socioeconomic limitations that may make some more than others able to manipulate the built environment.[126] I believe this evasion is more the result of methodology and site specificity than of explicit socioeconomic class and racial bias. Because the ideas of the brokers in this chapter rely on visual observations, they tend to privilege Latinxs who own property or, in the event that they are not property owners, are able to modify the exterior spaces of property that are within the gaze of passersby. For example, Rojas notes about the community members he observes: "These residents might not even 'own' the place they live in but their presence and actions do."[127] This way of claiming space is less frequent in urban areas where high-rise buildings dominate the landscape. In the flatter, single- or two-family houses that dot the barrios of the Southwest and Southern California, renters may have more access to their exteriors.

As these brokers bring to bear a shift from a cultural politics of resistance to a cultural politics of innovation—the "new" Latinization of cities—they are not only recasting abject, criminalized, and marginalized barrio subjects. They are also upholding the ability of Latinx property owners or those with access to property to shape space.[128] Cisneros, for example, directly exalted Latinxs buying their way to the so-called American Dream with property ownership. Celebrating Latinx homeownership is noteworthy, given the pronounced history of marginalization and displacement that Latinxs, including property owners, have suffered.[129] But in its prioritization of propertied Latinxs, the brokering of the barrio emerges as a moment in the Latinization of cities whereby Latinxs living in low-income barrios are the objects of inspiration but the least powerful users of these developments. In order for these brokers to make their proposed paradigms relevant and applicable to Latinx (and, following the critique of ethnocentrism outlined here, non-Latinx) populations across the nation, they must attend to the challenges that renters face when trying to express their cultural preferences in space, such as regulatory urban policies, landlord rules that limit expression, and the gentrification and discriminatory housing practices that curtail the place-making practices of low-income people of color.

The brokers discussed here attempt to foster Latinx belonging to cities by presenting representations of Latinx urbanism. They are by some measures exceptionally successful at doing so. Their concepts have garnered much attention. Their paradigms convey the possibility of a large, expansive Latinization visible on the exteriors of a range of public and private built environments. Their Latinization of cities is pregnant with possibility. They also, however, bring to mind long-standing racial and class exclusions. They are, in sum, a reminder of how representations are minefields that need careful dissecting. The final chapter turns to brokers who abstract on site—in barrios instead of for other institutional or geographic spaces—and in doing so participate in gentrification.