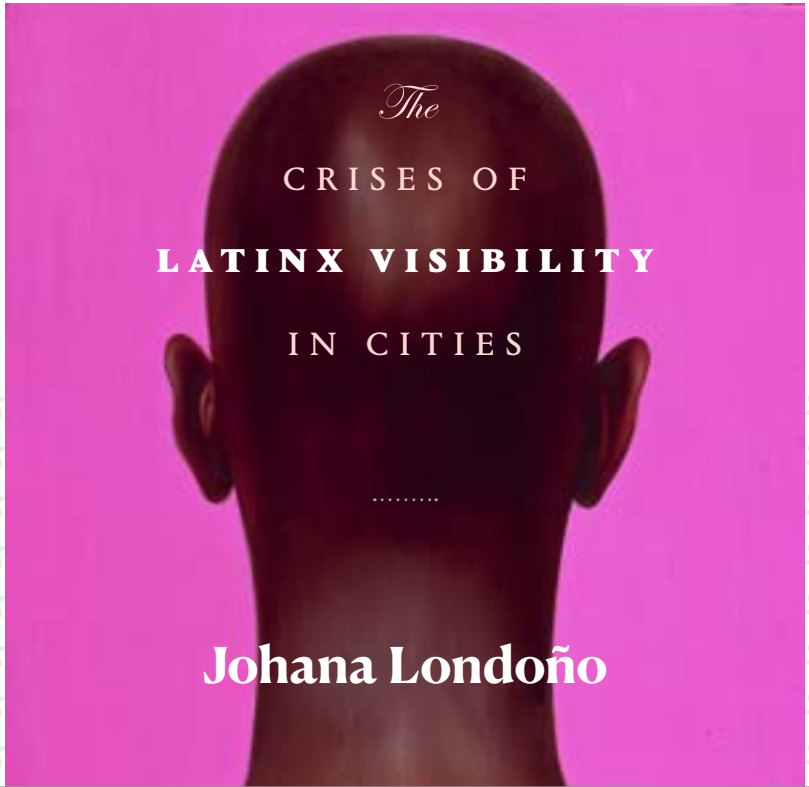
ABSTRACT BARRIOS



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THE CRISES OF

LATINX VISIBILITY

IN CITIES

Johana Londoño

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PREFACE

The Trouble with Representing Barrios

It was easy for me to fall in love with barrio environments and to feel that institutional trends somewhat validated the admiration I felt. Such a feeling would have been rare for much of the twentieth century. Barrios—generally defined as Latinx spatial concentrations—have been historically marginalized in US cities.[1] In contrast, in the early twenty-first century, while I was in art school in New York City, designers widely discussed the inclusion of messy, garish, and even impoverished landscapes in professional design. By then, architects Robert Venturi, Steven Izenour, and Denise Scott Brown had published *Learning from Las Vegas*. That collection of essays about the commercial storefronts of the Las Vegas Strip as observed from a car window had inspired a generation of designers to look at vernacular culture for creative inspiration.[2] There were critics of this type of work, of course. The theorist Fredric Jameson saw the trend as a postmodern "aesthetic populism" that espoused sociocultural inclusivity but was really at the service of a capitalist logic of exploitation and exclusion. Among design professionals though, the vernacular, that is to say the ordinary, nonprofessionally made built environment, was regularly heralded as an antidote to a modernist architecture perceived as sterile and socially indifferent, if not oppressive. Similarly, in the fields of two-dimensional design, vernacular urban culture was seen as an alternative to clinical, digital modernist typefaces, such as the ubiquitous Helvetica. It was precisely in a postmodern design context that I was first able to bring the barrio culture I had grown up in to bear on design circles. When my college typography instructor assigned us to

photograph street text for a new font project, I seized on the opportunity to include an ethnoracial difference that was absent from the modernist design curriculum that surrounded me; design history books assigned in my courses predominantly featured European and white American innovators, and white men were the majority in the design faculty at my college.[3]

I took a NJ Transit bus to get across the Hudson River and into Union City, the low-income barrio where I was raised, to mine the city for aesthetic inspiration. From my bus window, Union City's facades looked remarkably different from the professionally designed landscapes of power and wealth depicted in design magazines, commercials, tourism, and glamorous lifestyles. To fulfill my class assignment, I photographed the hand-painted lettering found on outdoor advertisements along Bergenline Avenue, the city's main commercial corridor, but I also took note of the Latin American flag colors on storefronts that catered to their respective national communities. I contemplated the inventive simulacra of painted stone and brick on business exteriors. The real materials, I speculated, were too difficult or expensive to come by. I saw murals of tropical, mountainous lands and colonial houses. I noticed Virgin Mary statues and artificial flower arrangements on the slivers of concrete that served as a "front yard" between the sidewalk and door. Though I would not know it until after years of academic research, this enthusiasm for postmodern vernacular was already evident among Latinx designers, such as graphic designer Pablo Medina's early twenty-first-century typography based on the Latinx commercial landscape in Union City (and the surrounding North Jersey area) and James Rojas's 1991 MA thesis on urban planning in East Los Angeles, the latter of which was also influenced by the Chicano movement of the 1970s.[4] Like them, I embraced barrio visuals as underappreciated assets whose value could enrich institutionalized design culture. I was, in the terms set forth by this book to describe the major actors analyzed herein, beginning to assume a "broker" identity by visually cataloging that which made spaces "Latinx" and adjudicating their value in relation to the aesthetic preferences of professional circles that in my mind needed cultural difference.

This book is in large part an assessment of that practice. Compromises are made to render barrio landscapes for mainstream consumption, compromises that are at times disconnected from the visuals of said barrios. Putting this aside for a moment, it is important to underscore that the mere desire to identify Latinx culture and life as a contribution to US urbanism is a notable contrast to the long-held view that low-income Latinxs clustered in space, in barrios, are unseemly urban subjects who pose a prob-

lem for modern cities. A sweeping view of twentieth-century urban history shows that the latter formulation has been the source of much attention. Throughout that time period and well into the twenty-first century, social welfare programs, assimilation efforts, health campaigns, redevelopment projects, urban renewal, housing regulations, social movements, and community organizing were debated as solutions to the ostensible problems Latinxs, and poor people of color, bring to cities. This book examines a less frequently discussed solution: the aesthetic depiction and manipulation of Latinx urban life and culture as a way to counteract the fear that Latinxs and their culture were transgressing normative expectations of urbanness. I refer to this as a brokered solution that differs from the work of artists and community organizers who have, since the Latinx social movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, altogether challenged the problem that urban Latinxs supposedly present by championing barrio culture and directly offering barrio residents murals, posters, community-based architecture, and gardens. This book focuses on a set of privileged actors whom I call brokers—a group of architects, urban planners, policy makers, ethnographers, business owners, and settlement workers—whose reactions to the barrio and its role in urbanization generated new Latinized landscapes. While the following chapters cover multiple instances of a brokered Latinization of space, the initial spark for the book was my personal encounter with a politics of seeing, appreciating, and representing barrio culture and life. Moving between the field of design, graduate school, and Union City offered lessons in the differing values attributed to barrio landscapes and their consequences for low-income residents.

In 2004, as a new graduate student in the New York University (NYU) American Studies Program, my interest in Latinx built environments was sustained by geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians whose research was expanding the field of Latinx urban studies. Their books and articles told of the potential of barrio culture to reshape a capitalist spatial order. With the exception of Arlene Dávila's pioneering research on the neoliberal marketability of Latinx culture in East Harlem's urban redevelopment and the community's opposition to it, these publications did not address the political contradictions of Latinized built environments. Nor did they highlight the brokers I describe here. Instead, the prevailing subject formation evinced in these works is defiant and engaged in political resistance and community organizing. This is a seductive and galvanizing narrative of Latinx urbanization. For example, at the heels of a 2000 census that reenergized talk of a Latinx "sleeping giant," Mike Davis

described a Latinx "magical urbanism" that was, despite unwelcoming policies, spreading across US cities and suburbs and reinventing dilapidated landscapes. Luis Aponte-Parés and Juan Flores respectively wrote about "casitas" and the accompanying community gardens that Puerto Ricans created as social and visual alternatives to a postindustrial landscape of loss in New York City's poorest neighborhoods. Raúl Homero Villa told the history of cultural and social activism against displacement in the Logan Barrio in San Diego. Mario Luis Small researched a 1960s Puerto Rican tenants' council whose organizing efforts compelled the Boston Redevelopment Authority to design a public housing development in a style reminiscent of colorful Puerto Rican houses. James Rojas argued that the East Los Angeles landscape was an underexamined alternative to urban planning typologies. Also referencing the murals, houses, and spatial configurations of late twentieth-century East Los Angeles, Margaret Crawford saw a landscape that reinvigorated the democratic possibility of public space. Gustavo Leclerc and Michael Dear referred to the "cultures of everyday life" in barrios as part of a larger "cultural revolution." David Diaz championed "barrio urbanism," specifically "Chicana/o urbanism" in the US Southwest and California, as a way to counter the racism that plagued the urban planning profession. Through works such as these, the built environment that Latinxs shaped entered academic literature as an object of activism, evidence of a Latinx population ready and willing to make its social, political, and economic mark against the odds.[5] Intending to follow in this vein, my graduate research began by examining the politics of Union City's Latinx landscape. The political dynamics I found, however, were different.

I conducted my research by walking, a practice that urban theorist Michel de Certeau preferred to the top-down, voyeuristic perspective that high, enclosed places, such as a bus, or the car in *Learning from Las Vegas*, offer.[6] I also interviewed locals. Both methods dissuaded me from falling into the trap of romanticizing barrio culture based purely on its visual differences vis-à-vis non-Latinx landscapes. Indeed, interview-based research offered two important lessons. First, my visual study of Union City while in college was a flat aestheticization of the landscape that overlooked the ways locals experienced the city. Second, the community activism and cultural resistance that prevailed in scholarship on barrios was not evident in all Latinx built environments. Some interviewees in Union City had little interest in discussing their built environment. They would interrupt my questions and demand to know if I was with "la migra" (immigration enforcement) or a vendor trying to sell them goods.[7] My focus on aesthet-

ics felt petty, bourgeois, removed from the issues affecting this vulnerable, policed community. To my chagrin, my visual preoccupation with the landscape betrayed a distance between me and the barrio I had grown up in. This distance, I realized, had been long in the making. By attending a magnet high school in a nearby middle-class suburb, I missed much of the everyday experience of walking on Bergenline Avenue during my formative teenage years. Whereas I felt a certain nostalgia for Bergenline, my friends who attended Union City high schools disdained it, perhaps because its familiarity felt oppressive, a reminder of economic stagnation and the difficulties ahead for those striving to join the middle-class mainstream. Friends and family visiting from Latin America would comment on how ugly Union City was, how it resembled a poor barrio in their native country. It became clear to me that my everyday distance, in addition to my accumulation of artistic cultural capital in college and an academic propensity to search for the political in culture, contributed to my appreciation of the city's built environment. Doing what was expected of low-income students—leaving for educational opportunities elsewhere—also cast doubt on my belonging. One interviewee, a Cuban storeowner on Bergenline Avenue, reacted astonished when, responding to his questions, I told him I was raised in Union City: "You talk like a really, *really*, white girl." I had trained my eye to see beauty and novelty in undervalued landscapes as a way to minimize the very distance I had accumulated throughout the years of living in white contexts. Now I had to come to terms with the fact that an intrinsic risk of that aestheticization was cultivating a privileged, selective, and socially distant gaze.

Many of the nearly sixty interviewees in Union City, Santa Ana, Los Angeles, New York, Miami, San Antonio, and Mexico City and historic and contemporary actors I encountered in archival research for this book grappled with how to aesthetically manage their social distance from the barrio. Some of them kept this distance reluctantly and do not self-identify as brokers. They are critical of how an assemblage of elites who decide how built environments look continues to require that this distance from the barrio be performed aesthetically. Others, including some who live and work in barrios, purposefully seek to visualize their distance, to abstract from the materiality of life in barrios, in an effort to accomplish higher retail returns and real estate values or emulate middle-class suburbia or newly gentrified spaces. Still others are implicated in a distance they are unaware of. In all cases, distancing is at the crux of the cultural politics of brokering that I examine in this book and which, through an analysis of the

built environment as a primary source, I argue is implicated in low-income barrio invisibility.

Invisibility, of course, is the result of more than the aesthetic brokering discussed here. Anti-immigration policies, gentrification, exclusionary housing practices, the policing of communities of color, and intra-Latinx racism have all made it difficult for Latinxs to be in public view in urban spaces. During the early stages of writing this book, I regularly visited the rental apartment where I grew up and where my mom still lived. There, the political and economic factors shaping Latinx visibility in urban space were inescapable and the possibility of redressing Latinx exclusion via aesthetics proved wanting, a reminder of the possibilities and challenges of merging the political and the visual.

My mom migrated from Medellín, Colombia, to Union City with me, a toddler in tow, in 1983. After a few months of living with family in a crowded railroad apartment, she secured employment at an embroidery factory and the two of us moved into a third-floor studio in a multifamily, owner-occupied house. The apartment had a side entrance that opened through an iron gate. Once at the gate, we would walk through a narrow path lined with garbage pails, and then take a left turn at the owner's backyard and go up metal stairs. The entrance was undesirable, but we were lucky to find housing. The large numbers of new immigrants and refugees entering the city barely fit in a landscape of worn-down row houses, where landlords were converting rental units into condominiums in an early effort to entice New York City gentrifiers, and landlords' discrimination created a severe housing shortage that hit low-income racialized Latinxs particularly hard. Our landlord, a light-skinned, middle-aged Cuban man, had agreed to rent to my mom, despite having disapproved of her being unwed and single, because everyone else who had viewed the apartment was, according to him, a "Marielito." That was the moniker given to the mostly dark-skinned Cubans who left the port of Mariel and arrived at Florida's shores after Fidel Castro reportedly proclaimed to "flush" his "toilets" of Cubans unfit for the revolution. Union City's established middle-class and light-skinned Cuban population, including the aforementioned landlord, suspected that Marielitos had lived with communist ideology for too long to truly appreciate capitalist values or follow a bootstrap ideology of hard work. Some worried the new arrivals would tarnish the reputation earlier Cuban migrants had established in the city's commercial and housing sectors. Race played a major role in the icy welcome Mariel refugees received. While dark-skinned Cubans arriving to the United States at this time had lived nearly twenty

years under a regime built on the expectation of racial equality, *light-skinned* Cuban Americans saw the new arrivals through the lens of racial hierarchies that prevailed in Cuba prior to the revolution and were validated by the institutional racism in the United States that denied black people equal access and opportunities.[8] Though my mom was the daughter of a dark-skinned man of indigenous descent, she was racialized as "una Italiana" and therefore deemed acceptable despite the landlord moralizing about our family. My mom took the apartment and in doing so made us complicit in practices that upheld the racial privilege of light-skinned Latinxs and left undisturbed the hold that elite Cubans had over the city's landscape, its shape, its aesthetics, and its ownership.

My mom lived in the apartment for twenty-nine years before receiving notice to vacate the premises. Those years saw major changes in the economy and population of the city. The once-dominant Cuban population had largely moved to nearby suburbs or metropolitan Miami. The garment industry that employed my mom and many others had mostly left the area by the 1990s. My mom, like many others, turned to the nation's public assistance programs for housing and food aid while working part-time jobs in the low-wage service and child care industries that had replaced manufacturing. Her use of Housing Choice Voucher Program Section 8, a federal program that appealed to those unable to get on what was then an eight-year wait list for public housing units, allowed her to pay 30 percent of her income on rent regardless of the landlord's rent increases. The multifamily house my mom lived in also saw major changes. A South American couple had bought the house in the 1990s and since then worked to gradually convert it into fewer units by evicting tenants or raising rents so that tenants would be pressured to move. There was incentive to do this. In Union City, owner-occupied dwellings with four units or fewer are exempt from rent control. My mom, who had the longest tenancy in the house, put up the longest fight to stay in the apartment. Housing officials at Section 8, as the program is succinctly called, were key to helping persuade the landlord to renew her lease. Section 8 had leverage in these negotiations. They could ensure that landlords would have a steady rent in their pockets instead of dealing with high tenant turnover or delinquent renters.

By 2011, however, the possibility of cashing in on the city's creeping gentrification outweighed the advantages that Section 8 offered. The homeowner next door was making plans to unite with my mom's landlord to capitalize on the street's proximity to the city's recently designated "gateway" area to New York City by selling their plots together as one large land

mass to the highest bidder—a private developer or Union City's municipality.[9] Thus, for the landlord, the benefits of removing my mom were higher than usual as gentrification intensified.

The landlord devised a way of kicking my mom out by avoiding necessary repairs and maintenance. In the year leading up to her move, the trash cans were overflowing. The path from the gate to the stairs leading to the apartment was pockmarked with the owner's dog's shit. It was nearly impossible not to step on the shit. Our feet barely fit in the space between one pile of shit and the other. The metal stairs leading to the apartment were rusty and with holes big enough for our feet to fall through. The metal fire escape was coming unhinged. Only a third of the fencing on the porch from which the fire escape hung was upright and sturdy. The ceiling was leaking. The wooden floors had holes. The shingles that covered the exterior of the house along the path leading to the apartment were falling off. When the state's building inspectors were called in, they were unwilling to pressure the landlord to make changes, preferring instead to condemn the apartment as unfit for habitation. A notice for evacuation came soon thereafter. In the letter, the landlord cited wanting to convert the house for single-family owner use. A few months after my mom left, the porch, metal stairs, and fire escape were fixed. The rent for the apartment was deregulated and if the landlord wished, he could rent the apartment without the constraints of rent control and well beyond the "fair market rent" Section 8 requires of participating landlords.

My mom confined her search for a new apartment to Union City because she wanted to keep the networks and conveniences to which she had become accustomed. She searched for an apartment that looked "mejor" (better) than her previous apartment because, she thought, if she (with the help of Section 8) were to pay significantly more for an apartment, it should be stylistically and structurally superior. She equated a "good" aesthetic of clean, modern buildings with a higher price in the way that nearby condo developers expecting a return on their new investments did. Contrary to a Latinx studies literature that examines the aesthetic preferences of low-income Latinxs in opposition to mainstream culture, my mom showed that low-income residents appreciate and perceive the aesthetics of new development and renewal projects to be visualizations of progress even when high-cost housing excludes low-income renters and consumers from those very lifestyles.[10] Indeed, unlike developers and buyers of real estate, my mom had few housing choices. Most apartments in her price range were substandard and smaller than her previous apartment. Additionally, she experienced dis-

crimination, including landlords questioning her profession, whether she had small children, and whether she worked in New York City—indicators of a person's gentrifier status. When calling to inquire about vacancies over the phone, her Spanish accent triggered quick hang-ups.

The new apartment, a renovated unit in a sixteen-unit building constructed in 1900, costs nearly $400 more even though it is only slightly larger than my mom's previous apartment. A dirty hallway, sometimes littered with dead roaches, leads to the unit with shiny parquet floors and bright white paint. The apartment was not intended for someone of my mom's socioeconomic status nor for the building's long-term, low-income residents. When the building's tenants saw my mom moving in, they asked if they could stop by to view the apartment, among only a few the landlord had recently renovated. I was there helping with the move when two elderly Afro-Cuban women peeped in and with large eyes and a sound of slight disapproval said, "Hmmm esto esta muy lindo" (this is very pretty). The building's super, acting as a proxy for the faceless New York City–based limited liability company (LLC) that owns the building, had initially rejected my mom's tenant application, claiming that Section 8 recipients were prohibited from the market-rate building. Section 8 officials quickly checked the building's tenant history and upon finding current and previous Section 8 tenants told my mom to contest it. The building's super told her the apartment could be hers for $100 more than Section 8 policy allows (and even suggested that my mom slip the additional $100 without Section 8 knowing). My mom, who thought this apartment was the best that she would find, repeatedly asked the super to negotiate with the anonymous landlord on her behalf for the initial Section 8 compliant rent. My mom's application was eventually accepted. But the troubles she went through to rent this apartment, despite the fact that it is illegal in New Jersey to reject potential renters because they use Section 8 vouchers, is instructive of how the forces of gentrification are intent on changing the socioeconomic composition of Union City and reducing the presence of low-income Latinxs in the city. [11]

David Madden and Peter Marcuse call such urban vulnerability the "experience of residential alienation." The phrase builds on the concept of "alienation" frequently deployed in Marxist scholarship to describe how capitalism isolates the working class from society in order to extract value from them.[12] Low-income tenants in cities are alienated from the social and political relations that shape space, what geographer Henri Lefebvre calls the "production of space," and they are, with some exceptions, unable to consume, visibly imprint their culture in space, or feel they belong.[13]

This alienation is at odds with what a researcher of Latinx urbanism, accustomed to reading about resistant Latinx cultural expression in urban space, may expect to find. That is because spatial powerlessness and invisibility, landlord neglect and their literal shit, and the political economic structures that circumscribe tenant mobility and expression are much more difficult to bear witness to than Latinx commercial built environments and homeowner decorations. In Union City, for example, this alienation is invisible, but government-sanctioned Latin American Independence Day festivities and, by the 2010s, the rise of memorials to historical Latin American figures erected throughout the city are not. The brokered spaces of municipal parks, streets, murals, and plazas named after Cubans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Dominicans enjoy hypervisibility just as low-income tenants are subjected to ever more precarious living spaces and fleeting experiences of walking and consuming the city. This contradiction is not happenstance but key to the brokering described in this book. Visually conspicuous Latinx landscapes can galvanize, unify, and amuse. They are easy to fall in love with. Spatial disempowerment, in contrast, can be repulsive, difficult to find and mobilize around but nonetheless important to bring to light. In fact, it may reveal power relations that easily go unnoticed if we limit the study of the Latinization of the built environment to only what we *see* in public spaces shaped by community struggles over space, property owners, or those with control over property such as public officials. In Union City, where activist and community appropriations of space are absent, I found that the Latinization I found so appealing was contingent on access to the outer, visible features of property and thus rested in the hands of people with the privilege to shape public space. To put it a different way, reflecting on precarious renters showed just how consequential the role of the broker, and their privileged access to property, was in making a Latinx aesthetic visible in cities where low-income Latinxs were believed to be incompatible with urban progress.

And yet these brokers are underexamined. This book is an attempt to contribute to this gap. And while spatially disempowered people are not the focus of the book, they are critical in influencing how I analyze my subject matter. This book attends to brokers' production of space not to fetishize it as representative of Latinxs but to understand how representations of Latinidad can at times be removed from marginalized urban residents and their barrios. For while brokered spaces can be construed as humanizing Latinx urban subjects by their mere recognition and inclusion of difference, they are very much intertwined with circuits of capital that

value some landscapes and residents over others. In examining brokers, I want to draw attention to how much of capitalist urbanization's approval of Latinxs has been premised on the selective visibility of racialized and economically classed aesthetics, which is to say on an abstraction of barrios that produces a Latinization that does not interfere in the economic and cultural interests of normative urbanity: a Latinization that would not, in other words, enflame a crisis of urban belonging.

Union City is an example of a brokered Latinization where low-income presence is increasingly managed and contained. My experiences in the city animated my thinking of the outsized role that brokers play in making Latinx culture visible in urban space. But as a small city it does not, in the company of Latinx studies scholarship that addresses large metropolitan spaces, register as powerfully as tracing a brokered Latinization across multiple spaces and times. The book is organized to reflect the broader scope of brokering in several places where major twentieth- and twenty-first-century crises in urban belonging identified Latinx culture and life as excessive and where, in turn, brokers curbed these excesses. Though expansive, the book is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it underscores a long-term process whereby cultural representations of Latinx culture and life repeatedly coexist with anxious portrayals of Latinxs. In so doing, it draws attention to the inability of cultural representations to deter future crises from forming, a testament to the limits of a brokered Latinization of cities and a reminder that Latinx visibility matters, but the representations used to promote this visibility need to be read in light of their limitations and the actors who produce them.

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INTRODUCTION

Brokers and the Visibility of Barrios

I can't do barrio architecture for the University of Texas system. They would get very nervous. If you go in and say I want this to look like my Tia*'s garden that is in front of her house . . . they will go "what?"* / HENRY MUÑOZ, JUNE 2011

Sitting in the lobby of a luxury hotel in Manhattan, Henry Muñoz recounted the obstacles he faced when attempting to include barrio landscapes in clients' design projects. Muñoz, the head of Muñoz and Company, one of the largest minority-owned design firms in Texas, and a longtime political insider of the Democratic Party, did not fit the usual designer type. Instead of the minimalist, casual chic accoutrements commonly associated with creative workers, Muñoz wore a polished business suit that matched his neatly coiffed gray-speckled hair. Inside the Trump Hotel, where he requested that I meet him after graciously accepting to be interviewed, his power dressing took on an added aura of luxury. The hotel's "neutral" interiors and black glass exteriors professed an aesthetic superiority that catered to wealthy patrons. The irony of discussing the difficulties of representing barrios usually associated with low-income Latinxs in a place named after a man whose presidential campaign promised to build a border wall to prevent Latinxs from crossing and contributing to life in the United States was unknown to us that summer, five years before the 2016 election. Yet it was ironic in itself that Muñoz's concern for more

inclusive design was voiced in that space. The setting for our interview was a reminder of the contradictions that Muñoz navigated while pursuing an architecture representative of Latinx communities.

As with many of the architects, designers, urban planners, and other urban professionals I spoke with and researched for this book, privilege easily surfaced in my interview with Muñoz. Not all privilege is alike, of course. In contrast to the racially marked Latinx interviewees whose attenuated privilege was achieved through socioeconomic mobility, Muñoz was quick to note that his upbringing differed from that of his contemporaries who had been raised in marginalized barrios. Muñoz grew up in a lily-white suburb of San Antonio in the 1960s, a time when many Chicana/os experienced housing exclusion and segregation. He attended private schools. He began his career working alongside high-powered Texan and national politicians, a political network that would serve him well years later when his firm procured design contracts in the public sector. But he was also quick to stress that, beyond these advantages, it was his family's roots in community organizing that shaped his desire to include barrio culture and life in design projects. Muñoz's father, "el Fox," was a well-known Mexican American labor organizer and his uncle, William C. Velásquez, established the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project and cofounded the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and the Raza Unida Party, hallmark institutions of the Chicana/o movement's struggles for justice. As he grew older and took stock of his career, Muñoz believed he had a responsibility to continue his family's legacy and do work that was relevant to Latinxs living in the barrios of San Antonio and other Texan cities. In a previously published interview, he explained that this revelation came to him while looking for the "perfect puffy taco" in San Antonio: "I started looking around at the things that I saw in my own city that I thought were beautiful that I didn't think people particularly understood, and it had to do with the cultural imprint of Latinos in this country. . . . I just knew that I finally found what I was supposed to be about, and it was right here [in the barrio] all the time. I just didn't know it."[1] He told me further in our interview that he had grown tired of not finding an architecture that "looked like myself." He had examined the design pedagogy of various universities and found that "even [in] the schools of architecture in the State of Texas . . . nobody was interested" in designing with Latinx culture. "Latino architects had all been drilled into their head in architecture school that the appropriate architecture for the place that we lived in didn't look anything like the growth in demographics in the state of Texas, didn't look like . . .

their culture or reflect their aesthetic." In contrast to the aforementioned architects and their distance from local communities, Muñoz attempted to include barrio features in his design work. His firm's clients, however, even those who espoused diversity, were not as receptive to the idea. The University of Texas (UT), for example, had made an effort to serve the state's Mexican student population since the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) filed a lawsuit in 1987 for discriminating against the Mexican-majority border areas of the state.[2] It encouraged signing contracts with minority-owned businesses for campus construction, and even presented Muñoz and Company an award for contributing to the university's goal of a more "inclusive" campus by designing buildings whose construction employed workers from underrepresented groups.[3] However, and as suggested by Muñoz, when it came to aesthetics, the issue of diversity did not merit a similar representational calculus for UT. Unlike individual identities, designed landscapes do not count toward diversity numbers. What Muñoz referred to as "barrio architecture," the mimetic design of landscapes found in Latinx neighborhoods, could be construed as excessive and a long-term commitment compared to the cycling through of diverse bodies whose very inclusion in professional realms implied a familiarity with, if not desire for, assimilation. Built environments designed to be long-lasting marketing tools are subject to strict measures of normativity. Responding to the client, Muñoz ultimately decided to abstract nonfigurative elements from the barrio. His firm's building for the Math, Science, and Engineering Teaching Center at UT Dallas, for example, was pared down to an intense blue that was as indexical of Latinx culture as it was of the Swedish flag or a deep blue sky (figure I.1). Representational ambiguity was less controversial for institutional clients and less likely to make them "nervous" about public depictions of otherness in the built environments.

This book is about a long-standing anxiety over the spatial concentration of Latinx culture and life—specifically barrios—in US cities and the ways various actors with the power to shape the built environment, and a desire to represent Latinx culture, tried to lessen the perceived threat or, following Muñoz, the nervousness that barrios provoke.[4] *Abstract Barrios* is organized into chapters that discuss how environments were manipulated in response to the postwar "Puerto Rican problem," the "culture of poverty" of the 1960s, "white flight" in the 1970s and 1980s, the diversity problem gaining traction in design circles in the early twenty-first century, and turn-of-the-century gentrification and its cultural preoccupations. Though the time and space and characteristics of the subjects that inform

FIGURE I.1 ~ University of Texas at Dallas MSET Building, Richardson, Texas, 2007. Photograph by Chris Cooper. Courtesy of Muñoz and Company / Henry Muñoz.

their anxiety vary, these periods speak to a *longue durée* of "urban crisis" as it relates to the dilemma of Latinx belonging to cities and the concomitant work done to maintain or restore the economic viability and cultural normativity of mainstream urban spaces.

With few exceptions, academic writing on the ethnoracial dimensions of the "urban crisis" has examined black Americans living in economically battered cities in the 1960s and 1970s and how their disaffection, protest, rioting, looting, and spatial concentration in ghettoes were thought to contribute to urban decay.[5] The link forged between racialized urban residents and dilapidated built environments has proven to be politically and economically damning. It entrenched ideas about which actors are viable contributors to modern urban landscapes. It also justified economic disinvestment and—once residents of color were no longer thought of as threatening or could be easily displaced elsewhere—reinvestment by way of gentrification. Historian Robert Beauregard writes in his wide-ranging exploration of the concept of "decline"

that representations of decay were projected onto landscapes to shape a pro-capitalist urban policy. "U.S.-style capitalism requires decline," Beauregard succinctly states, signaling a connection to economist Joseph Schumpeter's concept of "creative destruction."[6] Schumpeter, who coined the term during World War II, is frequently cited to note the incessant impulse of capitalist agents to demolish and build anew—or in some instances to create more subtle alterations to built environments—with the intention of increasing profit. A discourse of decline makes reinvestment, repurposing, and new construction reasonable if not necessary. Importantly, a language of decline not only enables the interests of urban capitalism but also protects racial interests, especially when a teleology of capitalist urban progress based on whiteness is under question—because a white population is either losing demographic power or having to share urban space with racialized others. When decline is yoked to black and brown bodies, it allows white and economically advantaged people, including light-skinned Latinxs, to distance and distinguish their urbanness from that of low-income people of color. As long as low-income blacks and Latinxs are deemed to be catalysts of urban decline, whites and the culture associated with whiteness could gain value and secure a role as savior of urban capitalism and assert the right to shape space. How whiteness is mobilized to save urbanism is not always explicit. This book shows how the normative values associated with whiteness seep into design styles and institutional prerogatives, including, at times, consumer-friendly diversity developments and Latinx cultural expressions rendered in brilliant, seemingly affirming chromatic colors. The built environment is, borrowing from Michael Omi and Howard Winant, a "racial project" that employs various signifiers to build on the racial hierarchies that social structures maintain.[7] It is a tool wielded by those who believe they have something to gain from what George Lipsitz calls a "possessive investment in whiteness."[8]

This book is not only in conversation with the oft-discussed period of "urban crisis"; it reinterprets and reperiodizes it by including multiple iterations of crisis and their cultural workings throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By focusing on an expansive urban crisis, I can better show how central Latinxs and their visibility in built environments are to both the formation and, with some manipulation, the appeasement of US anxieties about urban decline. In other words, I argue that Latinx visibility has been made key to the cyclical nature of US capitalist urbanism: its decay and the reconstitution of its normativity.

Not all actors discussed in the book outright discuss a "crisis," but I found the contexts in which they were working to be descriptive of such. This

book is an attempt to make sense of how these disparate moments connect. While I agree with several authors that extending "crisis talk" can serve as an excuse for capitalist elites to render their work as a solution to that crisis, the crises of urban Latinidad can also reveal, as Leo Chavez notes in *The Latino Threat*, how a perennial unbelonging has defined the Latinx experience in the United States and in particular how that unbelonging has shaped access to and expression in urban space.[9] This book asks what cultural tropes, tastes, subjectivities, spatial reconfigurations, and ways of belonging to urban America are created during periods of crisis and how they relate to long-standing barrios and the needs and self-representations of their low-income Latinx residents. This question suggests that crisis is generative. Indeed, a Marxist view sustains this idea and sees in these junctures a potential for interrupting a capitalist system. But these moments are productive in creating a wide range of visual landscapes, not only radical forms of expression but also those abstracted spaces that appeal to urban capitalism. Crisis, in other words, produces an urban Latinidad with varying politics of visibility.

Muñoz carefully managed the appearance of Latinx cultural difference in design in an attempt to avert the controversy that permanently fixing diversity—specifically the socioeconomic class markers associated with barrios—on a university campus pursuing revenue would have caused. For Muñoz, and the others included in this book who want to minimize these uncomfortable feelings, the inclusion of Latinx culture in public space is contingent upon its distance from that which has long defined the racialized barrio as a dense site for impoverished, undereducated residents and a blighted environment that, along with the ghetto, gives American urban life a gritty, depressed image. This distancing is enabled via iconographies, typologies, and aesthetics of urban life and culture that signal Latinx barrios in the United States but are not reducible to their living conditions and cultures. These cultural practices are an abstraction that allow Latinx culture to influence the built environment beyond the borders of the spatially segregated barrio, but at a cost.

The abstraction of Latinx urban culture spatializes the material and place-based barrio that has been a home and cultural center for many.[10] The circulation of iconographies, aesthetics, and typologies of Latinx urban life and culture can be read as a specter, a reminder of a history of social dispersal that has occurred over decades of (im)migration, displacement, gentrification, and suburbanization via subprime lending. It is reminiscent of what legal scholar Steven Bender calls a "legacy of loss," a dispossession of land, that hinders Latinx belonging to urban space.[11] Yet

even if attempts to make barrio culture acceptable to elites and design and housing professions resemble long-standing pressures to disperse and be placeless, they are driven by different feelings and responsibilities. While the actors who displace populations show an indifference to Latinx place-making, the actors discussed in this book make creative decisions based on an affinity for (some version of) Latinx urban culture.

Abstract Barrios focuses on urban planners, architects, designers, municipal government officials, settlement workers, policy makers, business owners, developers, and urban ethnographers who, like Muñoz, manipulate Latinx urban culture to make it visible in mainstream spaces. I refer to these individuals as "brokers" of the barrio who have stakes in how representations circulate and become visible in cities. The brokers in the book cover an expansive period of time spanning from a postwar period dominated by three subgroups—Cubans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans—to the early twenty-first century shaped by the migration and immigration of various other sub-Latinx groups. Major political and economic transformations drove Latinx growth in the United States over this time: the US annexation of Mexican territories and Puerto Rico, which created the foundations for migrant worker programs such as the Bracero Program and the Puerto Rico Migration Division; violent US imperial interventions in Central and South America; political regime changes in the Caribbean; and the rise of neoliberal policies that impoverished Latin American countries and forced many to flee to El Norte. The United States, as either a colonial or a neocolonial power, was involved in these processes, creating what journalist Juan González evocatively calls the "harvest of empire."[12] The brokers I discuss in my research are spread across some of the cities—large and small—where Latinxs concentrated during those six decades, including Los Angeles; New York; Miami; San Antonio; Union City, New Jersey; and Santa Ana, California.

Since the 1960s, brokers have been working at the same time that a set of scholars, activists, journalists, and art producers has produced an inner-city barrio culture that has become synonymous with the urban experience of Latinxs in the United States. The work of these latter actors in barrios has marked Latinx subjects more than any other geographic demarcation; it has fixed an urban, "inner-city" identity onto an otherwise complex and multiply located Latinx socio-spatial identity. Through their representations, Latinxs, and especially Mexicans and Puerto Ricans living in marginalized areas of US cities, appear as inner-city activists demanding equal rights and opportunities, artists challenging the culture of segregated landscapes, organizers invested in community formation, and builders nostalgically

re-creating Latin America's tropics. These recurrent subjects populate accounts of Latinx in US cities in order to counter, if not overwhelm, the delinquent, dysfunctional, and impoverished characters that unsympathetic observers of the barrio foreground.

While it is true that brokers are also actors producing Latinx urban culture, their production is not always located in barrios or resistant to normative landscapes. Thus, their work is best captured by the more encompassing concept of a Latinization of cities, a term that various scholars use to make sense of the varying power relations that shape Latinx communities.[13] These two urban concepts—barrios and a Latinization of cities—mutually shape each other, but they are different.[14] The role of the barrio as the primary urban Latinx site in the United States transforms and, at times, takes a back seat to a process of Latinization that has diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic actors. Examining the work that brokers do in this regard is essential to understanding how through it the barrio unfolds as an ongoing cultural force that shapes a larger process of Latinizing cities. For even as the barrio is sublimated, it is traceable, showing brokering's complicated politics of place and visibility.

The term *broker* used here echoes the use of *brokering* in previous scholarship. Historian William Leach employs the term to describe professionals, museum curators, investment bankers, corporate lawyers, and art school instructors who ushered in the rise of consumer culture in US cities in the late nineteenth century. It is also reminiscent of biographer Robert A. Caro's use of "the power-broker" to explain how city-appointed technocrat Robert Moses wielded his power over elected officers to carve out postwar New York City and displace large swaths of the city's most vulnerable communities. In ethnic studies, the term *broker* has had wide appeal. Historian Sonia Song-Ha Lee uses the term in a more positive light to describe the political empowerment of New York City Puerto Rican social workers and mothers who mobilized to assist their communities in the 1960s. Curator Mari Carmen Ramírez argues that as curators grapple with changes in US demographics, they must avoid stereotyping Latino American art as a "fantastic" nonwestern curiosity and instead adopt the role of a "cultural broker" that mediates between the increasingly diverse subjects of art and the museum audiences new to these cultural representations. Anthropologist Arlene Dávila uses the term to refer to spokespeople who, in contrast to "outside agents," act as community intermediaries in late twentieth-century redevelopment in East Harlem.[15] Political scientist Alfonso Gonzales writes how "professional middle-class and wealthy Latino brokers," who mediated between the state and

working-class Latinxs in order to conceive of immigration reform, were "locked into a game of perpetual compromise."[16] Similarly, in her study of Chicago, sociologist Mary Patillo elaborates on brokers' class privilege with a "theory of the middle" that explains how black gentrifiers in low-income black neighborhoods act as "middlemen" moving between institutions and low-income neighbors, at times vocalizing the needs of the latter and at other times showing allegiances to both sides.[17] Author bell hooks more forcefully critiques privileged black brokers, such as filmmakers and writers, who exploit the image of black violence for their own gains.[18] The individuals described as brokers do not always relish their position of power. The role may be foisted on some by a racist system that denies them the authority to exclusively navigate white social settings. These brokers are forced to take on a "double consciousness," to borrow from sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois, without being seen or recognized by the white establishment.[19] Historian Daniel Matlin uses the kindred term *interpreters* to describe black scholars and artists in the 1960s who, unable to take on other subject matter, were compelled to focus on black life and convey its value to white audiences. Most of these examples describe brokering as a contact point between the elite or upwardly mobile and marginal populations of the same ethnoracial group. They show how for marginalized nonintermediaries, brokering may simultaneously be an uneasy reminder of their lack of power and a welcome opportunity to have an intermediary communicate their interests. For the broker, especially those who are racial "others," the experience of brokering can be, channeling Gloria Anzaldúa, akin to being on the border, inhabiting a space that bridges two dissimilar worlds to create a new mode of being, knowing, and expression.[20] This book's use of *broker* aims to capture how diverse intermediary actors negotiate normative environments with barrios to create interpretations of Latinx urban life and culture. The brokers I discuss are united less by their professions, or their politics, than by how their aesthetic practice interacts with barrios to create or reimagine their built environments and people as solutions to the very crisis they are thought to represent.

This book specifically focuses on how brokers reframe barrio culture at moments when urban development, institutional neglect, economic decline, and gentrification threaten to make Latinx belonging to cities precarious. The work that brokers do to make the barrio digestible for mainstream audiences raises the question: What is so undesirable about the barrio, its residents and culture, that experts refrain from visualizing it in full? Because barrios in US cities are largely the result of unequal forces, reproducing barrio culture and spatial layouts, besides being parodic, would

make plain the failures of liberalism to treat all individuals equally. The abstraction of Latinx urban culture, on the other hand, renders Latinxs legible in normative spaces, urban discourses, paradigms, and lifestyles in a way that distracts from this long-standing, unequal status quo. Thus, the act of abstracting, its intertwining of culture, visibility, and politics, is implicated in a capitalist spatial order.

For some, urban abstractions are freeing precisely because they are not always wedded to didactic representational styles, such as the murals found in low-income barrios, or to static cultural signifiers of Latinx identity. In this sense, these abstractions echo widely known abstract modern expressions, be it in the fields of painting, architecture, or music, that are understood to break away from the staidness of tradition. That is not to say that brokering is a means by which Latinx urban culture becomes modern. That would elide the fact that many barrios were newly created or reconstituted by a midcentury urban modernization that segregated people of color in space. Whereas the infrastructure, aesthetics, and planning of white, Eurocentric urban modernity defined itself in opposition to the excess and unruliness associated with low-income, racialized spatial concentrations, people of color experienced the latter as intrinsic to urban modernity. For some Latinxs, segregation made it so that the barrio *was* the twentieth-century modern city. In this light, brokers' abstraction does not make barrios modern but is instead the aesthetic language of the contradictions of modernity.

Moreover, abstractions may animate Latinx inclusion in visual landscapes where it is rarely present. Some may even argue that abstractions are a form of resistance, but they also require caution, for positing that barrio culture exists in a realm beyond that of its segregated place validates faulty ideas of progress based on the virtues of mobility but blind to the troubles Latinxs continue to face when asserting their right to be grounded in place.[21] The abstraction of barrios links to an identifiable place while proposing the "melting" that Karl Marx saw as a quality of the universality and exchangeability of capitalism.[22] The dilution and dispersion of Latinxs and their culture to stave off a crisis cautions us not to assume that all Latinx visual representations are endowed with a politics that resists mainstream, white culture. Indeed, as the following chapters show, the representational politics of brokers vary.

This interdisciplinary, multisited, and multimethodological book uses the low-income, racialized, and grounded barrio as a category of analysis to reveal what is at stake in a brokered Latinization of cities. How are Latinx urban subjectivities transformed in conjunction with the cultural work-

ings of brokers? Brokers articulate anew urban Latinx subject formations and cultures and their significance to the barrio. By emphasizing the role of brokers, this book demonstrates that in addition to being a marginalized place that delimits socioeconomic belonging to the nation, the barrio has a complex function to play as aesthetic inspiration and generator of other modes of thinking about Latinxs and their urban culture.

Barrios: A Category of Analysis

Definitions of the barrio have evolved over time. Writers of the Chicana/o/x and Puerto Rican nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s describe a dichotomous midcentury racialized urbanization that made barrios and their inner-city counterparts—ghettos and Chinatowns—the cultural and political antithesis of majority-white suburbia. In "I am Joaquín, an Epic Poem" of 1967, Chicano activist Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, a leader of *el movimiento*, writes, "I have existed / In the barrios of the city / In the suburbs of bigotry." From the perspective of the barrio streets of New York City, Puerto Rican activist and poet Pedro Pietri wrote in 1969:

Juan
Miguel
Milagros
Olga
Manuel
All died yesterday today
and will die again Tomorrow
Dreaming
Dreaming about queens
Clean-cut lily-white neighborhood
Puerto Ricanless scene
Thirty-thousand-dollar home
The first spics on the block
Proud to belong to a community
of gringos who want them lynched
Proud to be a long distance away
from the sacred phrase: Que Pasa[23]

Both Gonzales's "Joaquin" and Pietri's "Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga, Manuel" represent a larger ethnic group, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in

New York, respectively. The geographic immobility of the characters that populate these poems stresses the restricted spaces inhabited by both ethnic groups in the United States in the 1960s. The emergence of the barrio as an urban "other" of the metropolitan area, as described in these poems, has a long and complicated story that is rarely discussed.

The history of the term stretches back to Moorish Spain, where distinct residential and commercial districts existed within and beyond the walled Medina, the religious, economic, and governmental center of power. Arabic words *rabad* (pl. *arbad*) and *hara* (pl. *harat*) were used interchangeably to refer to neighborhoods in general and at other times to specifically categorize the districts lying at the interior edge or outside Medina, where specialized markets and Christian, Jewish, leper, and other communities cast aside by the ruling power were located.[24] *Hara* eventually translated to *barrio*, though the latter term was phonetically closer to the Arabic words *barri*, meaning "outside" or at the "exterior," or *barriya*, meaning "open country."[25] One of the earliest documented uses of *barrio* occurred in 817 AD as the Christian Kingdoms of northern Spain sought to reclaim southern lands under Moorish control, what was known as the Reconquista.[26] With the reestablishment of Castilian Spanish, *rabad* was translated to *arrabal* and the use of *barrio* was further entrenched.

The subsequent Spanish urbanization of the Americas, under the guidance of the planning rulebook *Laws of the Indies*, did not lay out specific plans for building arrabales or barrios, but it did cite the latter, stating that "indios" (natives) living in "pueblos or barrios" should build the religious edifices necessary for their Catholic indoctrination. Barrios were also used to distinguish between socioeconomic classes of the same ethnoracial group. In colonial Costa Rica, barrio referred to a settlement composed of lower-class indigenous and mixed-race people located outside cities inhabited by Spaniards, whereas pueblo referred to a settlement of higher-class indigenous people.[27] Meanwhile, arrabales in colonial Costa Rica lay further out and were home to "mulattos, free people of color, and lower-class mestizos."[28] Throughout many Latin American countries, native, mixed-race, and black subjects made the edges within and the *extramuros* of the colonial city their home and place of work. Historian Guadalupe García notes that although period maps and plans visualizing the wealthy and powerful concentration in and around the plaza left out the built environment of the outer neighborhoods, their erasure did not preclude the Spanish crown from imposing legal rules that racially and economically subordinated already spatially marginalized residents.[29]

As the administrative power of the colonial city spatially expanded centuries after colonization, the status of barrios near the center fluctuated as they were incorporated and regulated. At times the barrio was elevated, especially vis-à-vis the arrabal, which either lost linguistic currency or was deemed inferior. Dominicans, for example, use *arrabalizar* to denote the process by which a barrio becomes a less desirable place.[30] In other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, the distinction between the two terms is not so obvious, and "to be of the barrio [*ser del barrio*]" is to be a poor, working-class individual with little means of spatial mobility. In Cuba a *barriotero/a* describes a person perceived to have vulgar manners.[31]

The "barrio" has also been neutralized and used to refer to any urbanized district regardless of income across Spanish-speaking Latin America and the Caribbean. The term's generic status is evidenced when adjectives modify it to connote a specific socioeconomic character. In Argentina, for example, a *barrio bajo* is a marginal, low-income place.[32] Affluent gated communities in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Colombia are called *barrios privados.* Slums are known as *barrios populares* in Colombia and *barriadas* in Peru and Nicaragua. Epitomizing neutralization, the term *barrio* was deployed for the business of US colonial administration in Puerto Rico. There, the US census used the term as a minor civil division (MCD) entity to officially map barrios that otherwise existed as imagined, fluid spaces among Puerto Rican residents.[33]

Over time, multiple variables made Latin American barrios abstract formations defined by culture and the imagination, not only social and geographic facts. In contrast, due to twentieth-century discriminatory policies of work, housing, urban renewal, and anti-immigration, barrios in the continental United States predominantly materialized into poor, working-class, and racialized places made concrete in juxtaposition to white spaces. This is the case in the three main strands of scholarship about Latinxs in cities. The first strand, which emerged at the same time as the nation's postwar affluence grew and propelled European immigrants and their children to the middle class, blames spatial segregation and socioeconomic and political marginalization on individual pathologies. Impoverished residents appear to pass down bad behavior to their children, who then pass it to their children in a cycle of poverty. Emblematizing this type of research is Oscar Lewis's *La Vida*. Similar to Patrick Moynihan's widely discussed *The Negro Family*, Lewis put the onus of poverty on impoverished individuals. Despite the liberal roots of both authors (by some accounts Lewis was a socialist and Moynihan an anticommunist liberal), their use of cultural and

behavioral attributes to explain poverty would gain most traction among conservatives in the following decades.[34] With this literature, the barrio becomes not just an ethnic enclave but a site of dire poverty, one of many "places of social stigma" equivalent to the degraded black ghetto, where, it is believed, dysfunctional residents are unable to reverse the dreaded fate of their communities.[35]

The second strand of thought critiques this cultural explanation as misguided because it blames downtrodden residents rather than pointing the finger at structural inequality. As early as 1979, social science researchers coined the term *barrioization*, akin to ghettoization, to name the political, economic, and social processes that force Latinxs to move into and stay in downtrodden urban spaces.[36] In this line of argument, barrioization in the Southwest is the result of Anglo theft of Mexican land during and immediately after the Mexican American war (1846–48) and the eviction of residents and use of eminent domain for the sake of midcentury urban renewal projects and freeway development.[37] It is also, in the case of Mexicans in California, the result of deportation and repatriation campaigns of the 1930s.[38] Dispossessed of land and in fear of removal, Mexicans resided in ethnic clusters. Indeed, the first response to the perceived threat of Latinx belonging in the United States was to segregate and concentrate Latinxs to form, in effect, barrios. In the 1960s, Chicana/o and Puerto Rican scholars and activists employed the "internal colony" concept popular among black scholars and US Third World leftists to describe the political alienation from urban centers and labor exploitation that barrio residents experienced.[39] The sense of prolonged marginalization and disenfranchisement central to barrioization and the making of second-class citizens continued to be discussed in academic literature through the twentieth century as discriminatory housing policies and policies that undereducated and overcriminalized Latinxs (i.e., the drug wars) offered residents few resources to make the barrio a safe, economically secure place to live.

A third strand of thought acknowledges while it also resists the reduction of the barrio to oppression and economic neglect. Authors under this framework favor a cultural studies approach that shows how residents use creative expression, including murals, lowriders, graffiti, music, and bright colors to challenge the barrio's socioeconomic marginality. Like the second strand, this strand grows out of the Chicana/o and Puerto Rican urban activism of the 1960s and 1970s when mostly young, politically conscious Latinxs turned to the barrio as a major site of struggle against unequal policies. Authors particularly focus on the work of artists and other local

cultural producers who were active in reclaiming spaces for creative expression and community affirmation in New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Chicago. Transforming the barrio from a disparaged place to a site of affective attachment and cultural pride gave form to a Latinx cultural politics of urban space that literary and cultural studies scholar Raúl Homero Villa's *Barrio-Logos* memorably calls *barriological*, a set of practices resisting external, top-down barrioization.[40] This community affirmation endures in contemporary celebratory accounts of the barrio and enlivens the arguments of those defending barrios undergoing gentrification and urban development.

All three approaches speak to the intimate connection between barrios and Latinx identity formation in the United States, created either from below in what ethnographer Mérida Rúa refers to as a "grounded identidad" or from above by scholars and policy officials.[41] In his book *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea*, sociologist Mitchell Duneier graphed the use of *ghetto* in more than eight hundred thousand available books via Google Ngrams to examine the history of this term.[42] Inputting the terms *barrio*, *Latino*, *Chicano*, and *Puerto Rican* in Google Ngrams shows that a use of *barrio* coincides with the rise of identity categories "Chicano" and "Puerto Rican" in books published at the height of Latinx social movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

Popular culture also reinforces the idea that to be Latinx is more often than not to be from the barrio. A 2011 Fiat commercial shows Jennifer Lopez driving through her native Bronx while saying in a smoky, confident voice: "Here, this is my world; this place inspires me to be tougher, to stay sharper, to think faster. They may be just streets to you, but to me they're a playground." Ironically, while the commercial attempts to appeal to an audience favoring authentic urban grit, Lopez's shots were filmed in a studio in Los Angeles and later superimposed onto the street panoramas of Bronx murals and people playing and walking.[43] Locating Latinxs, be they celebrities or ordinary people, in inner-city barrio spaces with murals can be uplifting; it can affirm the value of usually disparaged spaces and populations. But as numerous scholars of race, American studies, and geography remind us, space is a crucial mode of racializing people.[44] The fixity of the inner-city barrio in Latinx representations can perpetuate spatially discriminatory ideas of where Latinxs belong in US society. Latinx studies scholar Lisa Marie Cacho writes that the barrio is among a list of "so-imagined 'lawless' places" that are "ontologized" and central to the criminalization of people of color.[45]

The editors of *Beyond El Barrio*, Gina Pérez, Frank Guridy, and Adrian Burgos, question the benefits of maintaining the barrio as a spatial category of

analysis for understanding Latinx urban culture and identity. They worry that similar to how the ghetto influences perceptions of blacks regardless of where they live, attention to barrios reproduces racialized assumptions of where bodies of color are located.[46] While taking great care to state that they do not intend "to suggest a notion of 'post-barrio' that jettisons the barrio concept completely," the authors' overarching argument assumes that the study of barrios has been exhausted, and that the spatial entity itself is a solid concept.[47] Instead of the barrio, the editors promote thinking of Latinx urban community formation through a transnational framework of analysis and social variables, such as gender, sexuality, citizenship, and popular culture.[48] As they explain, "The notion of moving 'beyond el barrio,' therefore, is a reminder to Latina/o Studies (as well as to other) scholars to be attuned to how new social and spatial relations beyond the academy create new ways of knowing and being that can challenge the assumptions, questions, and frameworks we employ in our scholarly work."[49]

These are, without a doubt, well-intentioned efforts to advance scholarship about Latinxs in cities, but the urge to move beyond the barrio may lose sight of how barrios over the twentieth century have lingered in spatial imaginaries, policy discourse, and design practice. As urban planner David Diaz writes about late twentieth-century urban planning, "the cultural impact of *el barrio* has superseded its historic center and is at the precipice of influencing urban society more broadly."[50]

Rather than eschewing a barrio category, *Abstract Barrios* proposes a fourth line that examines how brokers consider the barrio to be a generative, cultural, and aesthetic object of contemplation, inspiration, and angst with the potential to shape additional—abstract—urban formations, subjectivities, and cultures. Contributing to and expanding on research that links Latinx identity with grounded barrios, here I ask: What kinds of subject formations and cultures does the barrio create when it is not just a spatial context but a cultural force? How does the barrio influence brokers' inclusion and exclusion of Latinx urban culture in landscapes? By their very impulse to represent, brokers seem to obey the rules of "barriology"—that which Villa describes as a culturally affirmative engagement with the barrio.[51] But by brokering the barrio for mainstream audiences, they are distancing their representations from the very sites of their inspiration. As such, they point to various degrees and politics of an affirmative "barriological" practice.

For some brokers, especially those who are new to the barrio, social distancing translates to what Frances Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman describe as a hegemonic "tropicalization," a process analogous to an "ori-

entalism" that, recalling Edward Said, is an outsider's top-down, colonial representation of the Global South.[52] In an examination of the Harlem Renaissance as a site of US imperial influence, Fiona I. B. Ngô observes the impact of orientalism on ethnically marked urban space. Ngô writes that "orientalisms made the distant proximate, the national intimate, and the domestic foreign."[53] The simultaneous distancing from and intimate desire for the barrio that the broker with roots in the barrio—the "native" broker—experiences can lead to "self-tropicalization," an internalization and self-expression of colonial representations of the racialized "other."[54] Other brokers who exhibit an affinity for and understanding of the barrio may pull away—culturally or socially—from the barrio to engage with normative and top-down forms of urban culture that are unrelated to Latinx representations.[55] Intimacy and distance coexist in brokering. Attending to this dynamic reveals the politics of brokering the barrio.

Brokers unsettle assumptions that categorize creative work associated with barrios as a bottom-up, community expression. I argue that it is important to maintain the racialized and classed aspects of the US barrio as a category of analysis to make sense of brokers' distancing. Doing so allows us to question and interpret the meanings, associations, and values involved in abstractions and to scrutinize the degree to which the barrio continues to shape Latinx belonging and visibility in cities.

The Chapters

Henry Muñoz's abstractions and the problem they were designed to solve have historical precedent. They also have contemporary parallels. The book is organized chronologically to underscore the enduring appeal of these aesthetic strategies and the persistent crisis of Latinx belonging they are meant to appease. Chapter 1 focuses on the earliest example my research uncovered: postwar brokers on the Lower East Side who diverted from a dominant narrative that described Puerto Rican migrants and their emerging barrio concentrations in the 1940s and 1950s as the "problem" facing a modernizing New York City. To alleviate concerns about the social unrest and decaying built environment that the "problem" was thought to cause, urban planners, interior designers, Henry Street Settlement workers, architects, retail executives, and policy makers promoted idealized versions of authentic Puerto Rican culture in the interior design of newly erected public housing. Their ideas landed on the desks of New York City's art and

design elite. These "solutions" were aesthetic diversions that looked away from the barrios emerging nearby and looked toward transnational professional networks between Puerto Rico and New York to find an urban design deemed appropriate for facilitating migrant assimilation to New York City.

In the following decade, the 1960s, pseudoscientific discourse remade the crisis of Latinx belonging and described it as a "culture of poverty." By this time, barrios in New York City and elsewhere in the United States were more established and the crisis they represented seemed increasingly insurmountable. Chapter 2 examines the colorful abstractions that distract from this growing pessimism, beginning with visual and literary texts, including the film *West Side Story* and Oscar Lewis's book *La Vida*, that document New York City barrios of the era. I examine how social scientists, journalists, realtors, and other urbanists abstracted bright color from Puerto Rican–majority barrio contexts and used it as a device with which to modernize, humanize, and domesticate Latinxs in urban space, all the while risking the reproduction of racialized and stigmatizing narratives of poverty. I then use a wide array of visual sources from fashion, art, and literature, in addition to other more obviously spatial sources, to contextualize midcentury texts in a short history of brightly colored Latinidad. Bright color paradoxically barrioizes—renders Latinxs knowable and links them to poor spaces in the United States—and proposes a symbolic distance from barrios. The former aspect limits the spatiality of bright color while the latter aspect of color makes Latinidad redeemable and appreciable among a wide audience across class and ethnoracial differences. Color is one mode through which Latinx urban culture gains the privilege of visual and interpretative aesthetic abstraction, albeit not the same privilege long mobilized by white color experts in art, design, and architecture to create modern expressions unlike the mimetic representation of natural and man-made environments. Bright colors linked to Latinxs exist in a circumscribed space. To examine the power relations of color, I end the chapter with a history of colonization that deployed color as a way to racially *other* and render knowable and digestible foreign populations and environments that were otherwise considered too strange and threatening. A similar logic of color informs brokers' abstractions, including those more recently evident in the neocolonial spaces of gentrification. This chapter's analysis of color is the foundation for understanding one of the main abstractions evident in the book.

In chapter 3, colorful abstraction appears at the largest scale examined in this book: Santa Ana, California, in the 1970s and 1980s, when the outmigration of white homeowners to suburbs, known as "white flight," and a

simultaneously growing Mexican barrioization set the stage for urban crisis. At the center of this crisis was Santa Ana's urban identity and the issue of which population—white or Latinx—could best sustain it. Santa Ana's brokers turned to Tijuana, Mexico, to alleviate anxieties over local barrio formation—what policy makers at different times referred to as a "menace" or "cancer"—with a transnationally inspired abstract Latinization. I use interviews, archival research, and visual analysis of the built environment to examine the result of their brokering: a colorful, four-block wide "Fiesta Marketplace" in the city's downtown. I make sense of how business owners and government officials managed to place this development downtown in the 1980s, when the city was the political center of conservative Orange County. Colorful Fiesta camouflaged a white revanchism intended to maintain control of downtown and distance Santa Ana from its growing barrios. Local Mexicans grew to love and identify with Fiesta and the larger Fourth Street on which it sat, nurturing the idea that this place subverted white dominance. As gentrification-focused revitalization began to replace Fiesta's Mexican-themed decor and the businesses that catered to low-income residents, however, white revanchism asserted itself and revealed the precarity of a brokered Latinization.[56] Thus, though Latinx consumers of Fiesta were initially thought to alleviate the economic losses of white flight, enthusiasm for white gentrifiers showed the long-standing perception of white subjects as ideal actors of urbanism. By naming whites as the agents of crisis, white flight also foreshadowed their return as the ultimate solution to said crisis. Chapter 3 thus shows how a brokered Latinization is a temporary solution, one that is conditional to white residential trends. This is a pattern that brokers themselves can change if they ally with local barrio residents and foreground their socioeconomic needs and culture of place.

And yet it is true that even powerful brokers are not always free to act upon the built environment as they would like or in ways that maximize the participation of low-income residents. Chapter 4 examines three high-profile brokers who, despite their elite networks, face challenges when trying to include barrio spatialities and cultures in the white-dominant fields of urban design. This chapter relies on interviews with developer and former secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Henry Cisneros; Henry Muñoz, the designer discussed at the beginning of this introduction; and urban planner James Rojas. These brokers are in dialogue with the representational politics of Chicana/o activism of the 1960s and 1970s but they are active in the 1990s and the following decade, a neoliberal period that saw a rise in the use of diversity measures as a

progressive solution to the still meager incorporation of Latinxs. "Crisis," as a descriptor for an ethnoracial group or urban decline, was largely absent at this time. Yet as Latinxs continued to face discrimination and exclusion due to culturally insensitive and impoverishing policies, as well as the lingering effects of historical oppression and exclusion from institutions and positions of power, spatially concentrated Latinx poverty remained at the center of concerns over urban decline. The brokers modernizing and promoting Latinized environments were sanguine that they could have an impact, in part because years of a multicultural ethos promulgated in educational sectors made it seem that more cultural inclusion and representation of people of color could redress negative views about Latinxs. But "more" continued to mean a mediated, managed diversity similar to that present since the 1950s (at least in this book) and sometimes, in the case of Cisneros, with an explicit commercial purpose. The nominal antiracist position of mid-twentieth-century racial liberalism had given way to a "neoliberal multiculturalism" that commodified the cultural contributions of people of color while still drawing lines dividing supposedly worthy and unworthy populations and their spaces.[57] The barrio in East Harlem, for example, as Dávila shows, became a space of possibility for a multicultural neoliberal practice while remaining a stigmatized site.[58] The brokers in this chapter tout barrios for their brightly colored, dense, pedestrian-oriented, street-centered, and family-focused spaces and insist on their relevance to the development of US cities and the design professions where dominant ideas of "good" urbanism ignore, if not devalue, Latinxs and their urban culture. Unlike other brokers discussed in this book, brokers here exhibit an affinity for the barrio that values and frames the marginal. Although categorizing Latinx culture and subjects as avant-garde is an understandable response to the marginalization of people of color, it is a solution that may accentuate the problem of underrepresentation it seeks to solve. I examine how these brokers' reliance on ownership of or access to property underscores the socioeconomic and racial disparity of a Latinized expression.

Chapter 5 returns to the site with which the book began—my hometown, Union City, New Jersey. This chapter focuses on Latinx business owners and city officials and how their abstractions disavow low-income Latinxs in order to appeal to gentrifiers. This chapter takes head-on a reoccurring yet heretofore latent theme of this book—the socioeconomic differences that brokers negotiate and sometimes aggravate. The chapter raises the question of whether brokering, as discussed throughout the book, is but another name for gentrification. Union City has a long history of avoiding low-income

barrio formation and its negative associations. Midcentury policy makers curbed the city's economic decline by resettling Cuban exiles and favoring middle-class Cubans with access to property. The cultural expressions and spatial visibility of subsequent arrivals of low-income Latinx immigrants have been policed to attract wealthier newcomers. Revitalization programs have more recently built consent around a taste for normative exteriors on the main commercial avenue in an effort to support gentrification. Meanwhile, interiors are colorfully painted and commemorations of dead Latin American figures pepper marginal streets of the city. Brokers arrange for this kind of Latinization thinking that even as they appeal to a potential influx of wealthier outsiders, they must manifest Latinx inclusion. This chapter closes by thinking about philosopher Henri Lefebvre's description of "abstract space" as a death-dealing process to consider how the city's dead Latin American figures, at first glance a contrast to ethnicity-depleting gentrification, point to an aggravated loss of Latinx urban visibility.[59]

The book closes with a coda that considers the latest high-profile moment in the *longue durée* of crisis, its Latinized solutions, and the visibility produced. In these last pages I look at the bright-pink "Prison-Wall" design for the southwest border that circulated in 2017 as a response to the Donald Trump administration's call for increased security to fend off an immigration crisis of its own making. Never to be built, the "Prison-Wall" is a hyperbolized example of the brokered barrio discussed in this book. In its capacity as an urban imaginary, it magnifies the dangers and benefits of abstraction. Here I explore what is at stake in the diminishment of low-income barrios and the concomitant cultural process of abstraction. If Latinx belonging in place is in perpetual crisis, are we moving into a future where abstract barrios rather than place-based barrios are the norm, as the title of this book suggests? What kind of vision does abstraction encourage and how can it more purposefully contribute to actual Latinx belonging in cities?

NOTES

Preface

1 The term used to describe the population of Latin American descent living in the United States has varied greatly over time. This book uses the term *Latinx* with the understanding that the "x" is gender inclusive and stands in for "a" and "o" gendered endings as well as allows for identities that complicate or refuse identifying with a gender. I use an "a/o" ending when referring to national groups in time periods when the "x" ending was not in use. For instance, I use Chicana/o, not "Chicanx," when discussing the 1960s social movements. Quoted material is unchanged.

2 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 2; Venturi, Izenour, and Brown, *Learning from Las Vegas*.

3 For example, see Meggs, *History of Graphic Design*.

4 Rojas, "Enacted Environment," 50; Rojas, "Latino Placemaking." For my analysis of Pablo Medina's barrio-inspired typography, see Londoño, "Barrio Affinities."

5 Dávila, *Barrio Dreams*; Davis, *Magical Urbanism*; Aponte-Parés, "Casitas Place and Culture"; J. Flores, *From Bomba to Hip Hop*; Villa, *Barrio-Logos*; Small, *Villa Victoria*; Rojas, "Latino Placemaking"; Crawford, "Blurring the Boundaries"; Dear, Villa, and Leclerc, *Urban Latino Cultures*; Diaz, *Barrio Urbanism*.

6 Though Michel de Certeau specifically disapproved of the scopic perspective that standing at the top of the World Trade Center provided, his understanding of visual hierarchies and the knowledge they produce translate to various scenarios. Certeau, "Walking in the City," in *Practice of Everyday Life*.

7 All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

8 Similar observations about the relations between refugees of the Mariel and established Cuban American exiles in Miami abound. See, for example, Sawyer, *Racial Politics*, 160.

9 Heyer, Gruel and Associates, "Union City Master Plan," April 2009.

10 Here I have in mind the literature on rasquachismo. See Ybarra-Frausto, "Rasquachismo."

11 "Tenants's Rights in New Jersey: A Legal Manual for Tenants in New Jersey," Legal Services of New Jersey, 2014, http://www.lsnjlaw.org/publications/pages/manuals/tenantsrights.pdf.

12 Madden and Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing*, 53–83.
13 Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

Introduction

1 Jennie Badger, "The Visionaries, People Who Are Changing the City: The Cultural Activist, a Leader in Latino Art and Architecture Discovers His Life's Passion in the City's Barrios," accessed April 20, 2010, http://www.henrymunoz.com/.
2 In the past two decades, the UT system has increased its funding in the border area. And since 2003, when the state's population become majority-minority, several UT institutions have been designated "Hispanic-serving." "It Took a Lawsuit to Improve Higher Education," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 28, 2016.
3 For more on UT's commitment to working with minority-owned businesses, see "Firms Honored for Building Diversity into Projects," *University of Texas at Dallas News Center*, January 12, 2011.
4 Considering that some segregated barrios were the result of racially exclusive housing policies intended to put Latinxs out of sight in order to appease white concerns over interracial mixing, it may seem odd to say that barrio concentrations generate anxieties. However, this is not a contradiction. Both Latinx barrio concentrations and Latinx spatial dispersal are threatening; they underscore the challenges that come with the spatial presence of low-income Latinxs in the United States.
5 Notable publications discussing the urban crisis in relation to African Americans are Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Steinberger, *Ideology and the Urban Crisis*; Matlin, *On the Corner*. One exception is Llana Barber, who in *Latino City* squarely relates the development of Latinx Lawrence to a postwar urban crisis.
6 Beauregard, *Voices of Decline*, 7, 241; Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.*
7 Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 13, 125.
8 Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment in Whiteness*.
9 Chavez, *Latino Threat*. For more on how elites construct and manipulate crisis narratives, see Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*; Weaver, "Urban Crisis"; Bayirbağ, Davies, and Münch, "Interrogating Urban Crisis"; Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*.
10 A comparable argument regarding black urbanization can be found in Shabazz, *Spatializing Blackness*.
11 Bender, *Tierra y Libertad*; Harvey "Right to the City."
12 J. Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*.
13 The Latinization of cities is best described as the process by which Latinxs or non-Latinxs create an urban culture and environment that is readily associated with Latinx culture and people. My use of Latinization follows the encompassing approach to Latinidad that Frances R. Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman discuss in their book on "tropicalization." For these authors, Latinidad dually points to representations imposed on Latinxs and representations that challenge normative, hegemonic ideas of Latinx culture. Agustín Laó-Montes and Arlene Dávila also distinguish

between "Anglo strategies of Latinization and Latino tactics of self-definition and self-representation." Moreover, I use the term because the noun suffix "-ization" underscores a process of creating Latinx urban environments that the terms *Latino urbanism* and *Latinx urban life and culture* may unintentionally reify. See Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, *Tropicalizations*, 15; Laó-Montes and Dávila, *Mambo Montage*, 4.

14 The term *urban* is also a semiotic minefield. Sociologist Neil Brenner critically analyzes the ubiquitous use of it (and urbanism) and its multiple referents, arguing that the field (of urban studies) suffers from "theoretical indeterminacy." According to Brenner, what exactly is meant by urban or urbanism in a world that is increasingly urbanizing at different rates and in different ways is unclear. The use of *urban* in this book refers to a location in metropolitan areas. Differences in the "urban" contours of places will be discussed as necessary. Brenner, "Theses on Urbanization," 90, 92.

15 Leach, *Land of Desire*; Caro, *Power-Broker*; S. Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*; Ramírez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic'"; Dávila, *Barrio Dreams*.

16 A. Gonzales, *Reform without Justice*, 9.

17 Patillo, *Black on the Block*.

18 hooks, *Where We Stand*, 94.

19 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*.

20 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands, La Frontera*.

21 Scholars have written about the urgency of gentrification and its destabilization of Latinx places. See Dávila, *Barrio Dreams*. Mérida Rúa theorizes the significance of "groundedness" in Latinx urban belonging that is important for thinking of the implications of gentrification. Rúa, *Grounded Identidad*.

22 For an exploration of Marx and Friedrich Engels's quote "all that is solid melts into air," see Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*.

23 R. Gonzales, "I Am Joaquín," 86; Pietri, "Puerto Rican Obituary."

24 Torres Balbás, "Estructura de las ciudades hispanomusulmanas."

25 Corominas, *Breve diccionario*, 87.

26 Menéndez Pidal, *Léxico hispánico primitivo*, 87.

27 Velázquez, *Diccionario de términos coloniales*, 16–17.

28 Velázquez, *Diccionario de términos coloniales*, 11. Velázquez cites a 1676 document from the National Archive of Costa Rica that describes "los mulatos, morenos libres y mestizos bajos," living in arrabales. Translation mine, with the understanding that in seventeenth-century colonial Latin America, *moreno* could describe either a person's brown skin color or a black person whose freedom elevated them above the *negro* category. For more on the fluidity of racial categories in Latin America, see Wade, "Race in Latin America."

29 García, *Beyond the Walled City*, 45–46. For a discussion of colonial walls in Puerto Rico, see Dinzey-Flores, *Locked In, Locked Out*, 11–12.

30 Uribe, *Diccionario de dominicanismos y americanismos*, 73.

31 Cárdenas Molina et al., *Diccionario del español de Cuba*, 63.

32 Seco Reymundo, Andrés Puente, and Ramos Gonzáles, *Diccionario del español actual*.

33 In their article about the 1910 and 1920 censuses, scholars Kristen Velyvis, Theresa Thompson-Colón, and Halliman Winsborough include the following statement writ-

ten by D. A. Skinner, "Supervisor for the District of Porto [*sic*] Rico," to the director of the census in Washington, DC: "These barrios, with the exception of a few urban barrios in the larger cities, have no fixed geo-graphical boundaries, the division lines being purely imaginary, thus making it very difficult clearly to describe their limits. This being the case, it can easily be understood how difficult it would be to divide the island accurately into enumeration districts and to describe the limits of each district." Skinner's letter is located in the US National Archives, Washington, DC, Record Group 29, Entry 254. For more, see Velyvis, Thompson-Colón, and Winsborough, "Public Use Samples," 26.

34 Coates, "Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration."

35 Sociologist Ernesto Castañeda proposes the term *places of stigma* to parallel the common "categorical processes" that produce barrios, banlieues, and ghettos. Castañeda, "Places of Stigma," 185.

36 Camarillo, *Chicanos in Changing Society*, 53–78; J. Gonzalez and Portillo, "Undereducation and Overcriminalization of U.S. Latinas/os." Importantly, Daniel D. Arreola reminds us, in his work on South Texas, that "not every Mexican American barrio is the equivalent of a ghetto." See Arreola, *Tejano South Texas*, 83.

37 Vigil, "Barrio Genealogy," 366; Villa, *Barrio-Logos*, 1.

38 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 225.

39 Barrera, Muñoz, and Ornelas, "Barrio as an Internal Colony." In advocating for Latino "self-determination" and "community control" of land, the Young Lords connote the idea of the "internal colony." See Young Lords, "13 Point Program." Also in 1969, young Chicana/os wrote a manifesto that described the need for the self-determination of their community, "el barrio and la colonia." See Chicano Coordinating Council, *Plan de Santa Barbara*, 9.

40 Villa, *Barrio-Logos*, 6–9.

41 Anthropologists and geographers have shown that place figures prominently in identity formation. See, for example, Low and Lawrence-Zunigais, *Anthropology of Space and Place*; Crow, *Geography and Identity*; Gupta, *Culture, Power, Place*; Yaeger, *Geography of Identity*; Shabazz, *Spatializing Blackness*; Rúa, *Grounded Identidad*.

42 Duneier, *Ghetto*, 82–83.

43 Jim Edwards, "Everyone Hates Jennifer Lopez's Fiat Ads (and She Didn't Even Go to the Bronx to Film Them)." *Business Insider*, November 22, 2011, https://www.businessinsider.com/everyone-hates-jennifer-lopezs-fiat-ads-and-she-didnt-even-go-to-the-bronx-to-film-them-2011-11.

44 See, for example, Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place.*

45 Cacho, *Social Death,* 9.

46 Pérez, Guridy, and Burgos, *Beyond El Barrio*, 2.

47 Pérez, Guridy, and Burgos, *Beyond El Barrio*, 17.

48 Pérez, Guridy, and Burgos, *Beyond El Barrio*, 8.

49 Pérez, Guridy, and Burgos, *Beyond El Barrio*, 6–7.

50 Diaz, *Barrio Urbanism*, *73.*

51 Villa, *Barrio-Logos*, 6–9.

52 Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, *Tropicalizations*, 1–17; Said, *Orientalism*.
53 Ngô, *Imperial Blues*, 7.
54 Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, *Tropicalizations*, 11.
55 In her study on Asian designers in Manhattan, Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu examines how Asian designers' "intimacy" with family and fellow Asian workers in the garment industry inure them to fashion trends that commodify Asianness. Tu, *Beautiful Generation*, 17–19.
56 Geographer Neil Smith examines the revanchism underlying gentrification practices. See N. Smith, *New Urban Frontier*.
57 Melamed, "Spirit of Neoliberalism."
58 Dávila, *Barrio Dreams*.
59 Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 387.

Chapter 1. Design for the "Puerto Rican Problem"

1 See, for example, the widely influential exhibit series "What Is Good Design?" that began in 1950 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).
2 Mural Unveiling—Invitation List, Box 73, Folder 73.5, La Guardia Community Center, Mural Competition, 1959–1960, Henry Street Settlement Records, Social Welfare History Archives, Andersen Library, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis, Minnesota (hereafter HSSR/SWHA).
3 Helen Hall to Craig Barton, Executive Secretary of B. de Rothschild Foundation of NYC, March 14, 1957, Box 73, Folder 73.4, La Guardia Community Center, Mural Competition, 1957–1958, HSSR/SWHA.
4 Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 214.
5 For a multilayered account of the "Mexican problem," see Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*. For work on the "Mexican problem" as an issue of assimilation, see Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*. The "Mexican problem" sometimes referred to the underdevelopment of Mexico and its "lazy" and childlike indigenous and mestizo population; see G. Gonzalez, *Culture of Empire*. For more on the "Mexican problem" defined by Mexicans living in house courts (a West Coast version of tenements), see Fuller, "Mexican Housing Problem in Los Angeles"; McWilliams, "Mexican Problem"; Lewthwaite, *Race, Place, and Reform in Mexican Los Angeles*. For more on the "Mexican problem" as a refugee issue, see Romo, *History of a Barrio*, 92; Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*.
6 Muhammad, *Condemnation of Blackness*, 20.
7 For more on how European immigrants were differentiated from Anglo-Americans, see Jacobsen, *Whiteness of a Different Color*.
8 Hereafter the "Puerto Rican problem" will be referred to as the "problem."
9 Plunz, *History of Housing in New York City*.
10 Parallels between European immigration and Puerto Rican migrants are found in the work of midcentury Puerto Rican anthropologist Elena Padilla. Moreover, she echoed