

Digitizing Cultural Economies: 'Personalization' and U.S. Quinceañera Practice Online

Rachel V. González-Martin
University of Texas, Austin
USA

Abstract

This article discusses the coming-of-age event known as a quinceañera as symbolic-product marketed by cultural entrepreneurs. The author identifies online resources that affect the real-world practices of the event celebrated amongst U.S.-Latino communities. Drawing on the effects of integrating culturally mediated digital sources among members of contemporary youth generations, the author shows a decline in an emphasis on group identification of ethnicity and race and an increased valuation of generational affiliations in the age-based traditional practice. The author emphasizes the role of consumer-led participation in rearticulating the function of the quinceañera celebration in twenty-first-century U.S.-Latino communities.

From their iced mochas to their tech gadgets and social media profiles, a new generation of Quince girls is simply doing what it knows best: personalizing everything that enters their lives, and a Quinceañera is no exception.
—Hilda Gabriela Hernández, Founder, ModernQuinceañera.com

Digital Culture Influencers

The hot new accessory for the 2015 quinceañera season is honey. Hilda Gabriela Hernández, stylist and self-described “Quinceañera-Guru,” is the media maven behind the quinceañera-themed professional blog, “ModernQuinceañera.com, (MQ). This site caters specifically caters to Latina Millennial consumers eager to create the perfect “modern” quinceañera utilizing their generation’s facility with digital technology and attraction to niche media branding. On June 22, 2015, Hernández shares her advice for creating a natural-themed quinceañera as she simultaneously promotes her new role as spokeswoman for the National Honey Board’s “Sweet Quinceañera” 2015 advertising campaign. From do-it-yourself natural facials to honey-based party favors, Hernández urges her readers to make their events “flawlessly sweet” by patronizing the National Honey Board’s website for further creative inspiration (Hernández 2015, “Sweet”). The web presence of her quinceañera-specific party planning resource makes manifest the entangled relations between Latino traditions, American¹ consumer culture, and digital media.

The above example illustrates emergent patterns of digital cultural practice of middle-income American Latino populations, specifically the intersection of recognizable cultural forms and consumer culture. Ninety-five percent of U.S.-Latinos with a family income of at least \$50,000 use the Internet, and interpret active digital engagement as vital for social and cultural integration in the U.S. (Pew 2013, “Closing the Digital Divide”). This segmentation of Latino communities by income complicates

the practice of quinceañera celebrations by acknowledging distinctions in economic mobility as one factor affecting the character of material performance in the United States. The context of online digital performance implicates the potential for such material manifestations to emerge across the country, rather than being subject to specific limitations of regional or local marketplaces. The quinceañera as practice of consumption is thus connected to a larger national Hispanic marketplace.

The post, “A Sweet Quinceañera with the Honey Board and Me,” is just one of many on the MQ site that recognizes the economic potential of Latino consumers and, in particular, the efficacy of accessing ethnic consumers through tactics that monetize folkloric practices.² It is at the intersection of cultural practice and consumer intervention that I situate this work, focusing on how digital planning services function as new sources of cultural knowledge that impact the shared narrative of quinceañera culture among middle income Latino communities. I will illustrate how the consumer character of online quinceañera promotion fostered in a context of American neoliberal social politics creates a space from which quinceañeras are narrated as “personal” practices, and are implicitly distanced from connections to familiar communalist ideologies. At the same time, the personalization process is itself linked to the social experiences of a broader cohort of U.S.- American peers. Through a process of digital self-education, culture influencers like Hernández are resignifying quinceañera practice as a tool for marketing culture to heritage communities where experts dispense cultural knowledge as a valued symbolic product in short supply.

Hilda-Gabriela Hernández has spent the majority of her career in the field of cultural marketing, focusing explicitly on the niche market of quinceañera promotions. Most recently, she founded the Miss Quinceañera Pageant in California while also developing content for ModernQuinceanera.com (Hernández 2015, “Hilda Gabriela”). Using this online promotional forum, Hernández mobilizes the currency of quinceañera celebrations as indicators of both shared pan-ethnic Latino heritage and upwardly mobile class status, using her platform to appeal to the “next generation of change generators” (Hernández, 2013, “About Miss Quinceañera”). Her work implicitly connects to Marcus Hansen’s third-generation hypothesis, which claims that unlike second-generations, third-generations interpret possessing concrete connections to ethnic heritage as socially advantageous (Gans 1979). The social advantage of having quinceañera knowledge spurs consumer developments around the tradition, shifting the manner in which traditional knowledge is produced and circulated to the newest generation of participants. In order to fully understand implication of the digital consumer intervention into quinceañera practice, we must acknowledge how experiences of race and class affect access to and circulation of certain forms of cultural knowledge in the United States.

Latino Folklore and Cultural Studies Meets Practice Theory

Practice theory has much to contribute to the study of Folklore in U.S.-Latino communities. Studies of the representational practices of Latino populations are most prominently found under the heading Latino Cultural Studies. Such discussions

emphasize the subject-position of practice within communities, and spend less time investigating the object or practice under inquiry, often framing such discourses as “consequences of our own diaspora” (Fregoso and Chabram 2006, 26). The focus on socio-political significance raises awareness of the political stakes of Latino cultural representation in contemporary society. This macro view, which examines practice as a vehicle for emphasizing a kind of “presencing” of marginal communities within larger multivalent, hierarchical social systems, offers a complimentary analytical framework to the micro perspective often undertaken by folklorists examining contexts of locally-peopled small stories of performance (Bhabha 1994, 12). These two frames can potentially use the connective tissue of practice theory to address and fill gaps that methodologies privileging the broadly macro, or the specifically micro tend to overlook.

Drawing attention to Latino cultural practice in the U.S. requires that scholars acknowledge the Eurocentric focus of “American” folklore scholarship. Bronner’s historical overview of practice theory in folklore and folklife studies asserts that methodologies of “American” folklore focus on performance over practice, with the author dividing scholarship between “European” and “American” sources, where American must be read as Euro-American (Bronner 2012, 23). Yet, while the work of scholars and practitioners emerging from the global south is absent in Bronner’s discussion of “American Folklore and Folklife Studies”, the work of folklorists of color in the United States resonates with the practice framework he outlines as emerging from a post-Soviet European context. With an emphasis on practice as a means of understanding “shared experiences within modernity”, this framework articulates the relationship of particular social and cultural groups to the state systems of power (26). Practice, as a repeated iteration of cultural performance, therefore takes on clear significances within communities looking to carve out sustained social and political presence within unequal regimes of power that correlate public visibility with social validity.

From the perspective of Latino Folklore and Cultural Studies, an emphasis on methodologies that foreground notions of practice offer a framework through which we can discuss how individualized cultural performances are rendered part of a collective process of resistance through attention to public creative acts that create communities of practice in the process. Maja Povrzanovic Frykman frames the study of folklore in European ethnological approaches around “communities of experience or communities of practice in places that are shared regardless of origin, and the ‘ownership’ of which is based on everyday use” (2008, 19). This connection of “ownership” to “use” becomes a paradigm that speaks to the complex cultural predicament of U.S.-Latino communities whose experiential realities of ethnic, linguistic, racial, and generational diversity—among other categories of difference—create cleavages around notions of an “authentic” *Latinidad* in the United States. Rather than a focus on origins, the framework of practice predicated on use, particularly shared use, has the capacity to foster discussions of cultural forms that can, at least temporarily supplant divisive arguments over authenticity by focusing on how select

practices are constructed, and how they circulate through shared community contexts. Although notions of circulation have continuously been at the heart of defining folklore as an informal cultural production, it emerges with renewed vigor among twenty-first-century Latino communities whose views on authenticity in cultural practice are often embedded in understandings of how cultural information should move through intimate, co-ethnic spaces resulting in shared practice.

This designation of “shared practice” requires that we interrogate not only the idea of “practice”, which Bronner defines as “observable, comparable actions perceived or presented as traditional”, but also how those practices come to be present among disparate communities through a process of circulation (26). In our present case, circulation is at the crux of our discussion, framing the way in which a Latino cultural form, the quinceañera celebration, is conceptualized as a cultural practice through an investigation into novel avenues through which celebrants are learning how to perform the celebration. An examination of the patterns of quinceañera production in national and transnational contexts creates a space to use practice theory in order to think about the quinceañera beyond its place as a gendered coming-of-age drama. This expanded view contextualizes the quinceañera within a system that prioritizes “social affiliation” over “individually constructed identity” (Bronner 32). In addition, I assert that a process of personalization in quinceañera practice links Latina youth practice to other cross-ethnic age mate peers. While it is not so simple to extricate these two contexts of signification, the social and the individual, from one another, a focus on quinceañera industries available to new generations of quinceañera girls, allows us to think about the collective implications of constructing the quinceañera tradition in 21st century U.S. communities.

In the past, the circulation of knowledge around such traditional practices as quinceañeras occurred in face-to-face contexts. Such a mode of circulation affirmed the celebration’s credibility as a folk tradition defined as it used an ideal person to person channel of communication (Bendix 1997). Young Latinas relied on the knowledge of previous generations of women to help usher them across an imagined threshold diving childhood from young adulthood. This process of knowledge circulation was understood to be tacit, in that young women were exposed to a culture of quinceañera through intergenerational participation—watching sisters and cousins undergo the process, viewing photo albums of mothers or grandmothers, participating in event of their age-mate peers. In this way, quinceañera production falls in line with H. M. Collins’ assertion of “tacit knowledge” as “understanding social and conceptual worlds by looking at practices” (Collins 2001, 107). This conceptualization of how knowledge circulates among co-cultural communities, assumes that to gain specific knowledge by observation one must be already intimately connected to the shared cultural framework in which a practice is contextualized. From a folkloristic perspective, traditional knowledge is that which is passed down through “face-to-face interactions” (Georges and Jones, 1995, 21). As a national community of diverse immigrant identities, U.S.-Latinos have struggled to maintain traditions that depend upon geographic proximity, as such idealized “face-to-face” interactions assume that

communities and families are geographically linked to a home community, or that participants are economically and politically empowered to move between state, national and international bordered spaces. Given the salient histories of tumultuous and violent domestic and international migration and displacement, these two factors cannot simply be assumed by populations identifying as Latinos in the United States.

We must then consider that tacit knowledge, in U.S.-Latino communities whose lines of consistent cultural memory have at times been cut by state sanctioned programs of linguistic and cultural assimilation, may be construed as a kind of luxury good, particularly as this mode of knowledge acquisition is idealized amongst scholars of folklore. For example, a young woman in Ohio who was documenting her quinceañera planning on YouTube by posting videos of her frustrating Google searches of phrases like “quinceañera dress.” In 2011, Paty³ was a fourteen-year-old Cuban American only child of the *only* Latino family in her neighborhood. We connected because I answered a query she posted on a Yahoo forum requesting whether it was appropriate to have a quinceañera even if she had one Latina parent. Her query was brief, but foregrounded that her Cuban mother did not celebrate a quinceañera, and could not offer her a cultural context through which to emplace her positionality as Cuban American into the tradition. Although breaking the proverbial research fourth wall, I felt compelled to write her and explain my research if only to assure her that I had observed many diverse quinceañeras that included girls (and boys) with only one Latino-identifying parent. This query, solidified that a new generation of Latinas is tech savvy but experiences barriers to accessing information about traditional practices, and is looking outside of family networks to online communities for cultural knowledge. A quinceañera emerging from such online queries might have trouble being accepted as traditional by pre-Millennial generations, as its mode of knowledge acquisition is supplemented by popular media and distanced from face-to-face intergenerational contact.

The notion of “distortion” that emerged from interpretations of folklore tainted by popular interpretation and commercialization could not have predicted the use of popular media in promoting the performance of traditional practice of racialized Americans residing at the edges of American folklore study (Dorson 1976, 5). Centralizing the perspective of Latino communities, we can reinterpret this sense of “distortion” by examining it as the inevitable product of liminal social existence that culminates in the creative “restaging of history” from the perspective of oppressed peoples who continue to battle socio-cultural stigma as pathologically undereducated and working-class (Bhabha 1994, 1). Therefore, an examination of innovative social technologies of knowledge circulation among U.S.-Latino communities becomes a vital location through which to examine how notions of authenticity are being refigured through commercial consumption.

The emergence of quinceañera-themed print media in the mid-late twentieth century served as a kind of recuperative process to reeducate U.S.-Latino communities of the quinceañera tradition (King 1998, Lankford 1994, Salcedo 1997). Such texts created formalized, published, English-language guides for constructing U.S.-Latino quinceañera celebrations, often using personal anecdotal experiences as “traditional”.

For example, Elizabeth King's *Quinceañera: Celebrating Fifteen* states, "[it] is traditional" for a quinceañera to be escorted by an "honor court" where "the quinceañera and her escorts make fifteen couples, each couple representing a year in the quinceañera's life" (King 1998, 14). Rhetorically, "Planning guides normalize different numbers of couples as traditional or appropriate," impacting group practice vis-a-vis *textual* authority (González 2014, 41)⁴. The definitive verbal structure of formal printed books requires that King frame her observations as facts. The authority of books and print media does not affect consumer actors as it did in generations past (Benhamou 2015). Such twentieth-century print media paved the way for less fixed but still explicit modes of knowledge circulation in the twenty-first century, such as specialty magazines, and—the most flexible—online platforms where specialized knowledge is continuously updated based on patterns in trending fashion and user-generated commentary.

Once tacitly picked up via observational practices in culturally saturated environments, knowledge is now being sought out in mass media and consumer processes that explicitly mobilize cultural forms to attract specific target audiences. A by-product of this culturally-focused entrepreneurship is the development of new circuits of knowledge that directly influence the practice of living traditions. While theories of practice can help us better understand how practices serve as vehicles of knowledge circulation, as "doing" and "learning" are intertwined to take practitioners from "a state of incompetence" to "a state of competence", the analytical frameworks of Latino Cultural Studies allows us to formulate why acknowledging the method through which U.S.-Latino youth communities are gaining knowledge matters (Collins 107).

Marketing Symbolic Ethnicity

Among US Latino communities, cultural industries surrounding the quinceañera celebration are thriving, appearing in myriad forms across the United States and in online spaces transcending the traditional limitations of brick-and-mortar establishments. While observers would presume that the most prominent quinceañera industry focuses on the ubiquitous gown, the most compelling industry is planning-services that profit from the sale of cultural knowledge. These business serve as knowledge brokers middling quinceañera culture to a new generation of U.S.-Latina youth. Planning services emerged at the turn of the millennium as national marketing agencies began recognizing the value of the Latino consumer and Hispanic Market (Dávila 2001). This moment of cultural value appears to capitalize on the rise of what Gans terms "symbolic ethnicity", or a way of being "self consciously ethnic" in the United States after ethnic experiences of differentiation have been lost to assimilation. Gans frames this state of ethnicity as characteristic of third- and fourth-generation middle-class "ethnics" whose dwindling concrete ties to a home country are often overlooked in favor "working class style" (1979, 6). Among diverse U.S.-Latino communities, it continues to be working class experiences that are foregrounded as quintessentially "Latino" to the detriment of new generations of middle-class Latinos whose experiences are not defined by a shared working-class ethos (Rodriguez 1996).

A discussion of the commercial intervention into contemporary quinceañera traditions acknowledging a shift in ethnic identification also marked by new modes of gaining access to cultural knowledge. This shift in how knowledge is being acquired, requires that we contextualize quinceañera practice beyond individual performance, or even a specific ethnic narrative, and think of its twenty-first-century iterations as part of a larger U.S.-based, neoliberal economic sphere that serves as a bridge between knowledge acquisition and knowledge articulation. Engaging with a Latino Studies perspective, this bridge must be examined as a function of access mediated by patterns of economic mobility that disproportionately affect the lived experiences of Latino populations in the United States. By creating online spaces of commerce specifically tied to the circulation of “rules” of quinceañera practice, cultural entrepreneurs are rearticulating the value of the quinceañera celebration among technologically literate U.S.-Latino youth communities of practice.

I have spent the last eight years conducting ethnographic fieldwork in different regions of the country, interviewing quinceañera girls and their families as well as the new generation of industry professionals. These culture influencers work in cultural economies and are creating and filling the needs of a newly developed brick-and-mortar quinceañera marketplace. Their current existence in the twenty-first-century U.S. economy is the product of the mid-twentieth-century shift toward segmented approaches to marketing to American consumer constituencies that framed distinct ethnic groups as discrete consumer target markets (Halter 2000). However, modern quinceañera industries are not only catering to Latinos as consumers, but are also marketing Latino culture as a product of specific consumption practices. This speaks to the agentic process of creating one’s own sense of cultural inheritance. Halter asserts that before the shift to an ethnically segmented marketplace people connected to objects that were inherited through families (2000, 7). Much like cultural knowledge, cultural objects become difficult for migratory and diasporic communities to maintain, and, therefore, a reconnection to heritage traditions may imply a relationship to a cultural marketplace. The consumer intervention into quinceañera practice, or the availability of quinceañera culture outside of exclusively private cultural spaces, serves as a catalyst for a process of ethnic consumer consumption that both signals a connection to an ethnic history, but also allows consumers to access such heritage outside of “sharply organized...ethnic group boundaries (2000, 7). To gain clarity on how the market is being used to access the quinceañera tradition, we must understand how culture producers are creating marketplaces.

The folkloric framework that posits cultural forms as flexible, situated social texts allows us to question where for-profit culture experts fit into extant social and familial networks of planning. Lash and Urry emphasize how the economy is increasingly becoming “culturally inflected” (1994, 64). Through modes of entrepreneurship, Latino culture experts draw on “soft” knowledge to tap into “non-rational”, or affective modes of marketing that put culture to work in both commercial and symbolic economies (Lash and Urry 1994, 108-109). This is particularly salient in the quinceañera professional industry still developing in the United States where

quinceañera celebrations are both symbolic and material cultural goods. As such, they become part of a competitive market of goods, in which rules and regulations are not dependent on symbolic capacity, but are directly linked to fluctuating social factors of socioeconomic class, geography, ethnic and racial identification, gender identity, citizenship, disposable income, and personal style. A shift in consumer resources that endeavors to draw in the widest swath of Latino participation often seeks to generalize the tradition in the United States, creating an inclusive pan-Latino tradition that deemphasizes elements of difference that might create boundaries between ethnic-national consumer audiences.

Formerly, planning a quinceañera depended on networks of close family and friends to actuate a coming-of-age event. The event that was realized through shared labor and economic support was as much a reflection of her collective community as the celebrant. The personalized and consumer-driven rhetoric found at *ModernQuinceañera.com* (MQ) capitalizes on and implicitly promotes a shift in the twenty-first century practice of quinceañera events in the United States. MQ's thematic posts such as, "What's Your Quinceañera Cake Style?" and "What's the Best Style of Quinceañera Dress for You?" (Hernández, 2015) establish and reflect a desire for customization in a systematic feedback loop, where the role of culture producer and consumer meet and blur. In this context, content is less an original creation and more closely defined as a process that Lawrence Lessig describes as "remixing." Lessig asserts that a remix text develops through processes of innovating content, particularly in the digital sphere, where innovation stems from re-contextualizing cultural references often, without considering the legal repercussions of copyright laws, and that blindness represents a normalized form of cultural literacy (Lessig 2009, 69). This perspective helps us frame notions of "authorized" and "unauthorized" performance of self in a contemporary society where personal expression is rooted in borrowing the ideas of others—some inflected legally, others inflected socially and culturally. In the context of digital quinceañera practice, preexisting cultural images are being recirculated and rebranded through a shift in medium—the digital materializing in real-life events as affecting the content of each consecutive post. Here the cultural world of quinceañera practice is being refigured by online marketing campaigns. Online forums privilege a quinceañera remix over a historicized original and appeal to Latina social subjects who view them as natural extensions of their everyday technological engagements. The influence of online interpretations affects real-world practices, which in turn creates inspiration for innovations in online content.

ModernQuinceañera.com, like other quinceañera online forums, requires the real-life performance and practice of planning for its efficacy as a consumer vehicle. Unlike other modes of online folkloric inquiry that examine the use of digital sources as alternate contexts for the production of new forms of cultural expression, I examine MQ as a hybrid digital space in the service of digital cultural economies.⁵ Its product is "cultural promotion" and as such straddles the online and territorial worlds. MQ uses the networking capacities fundamental to reaching youth audiences living in technological saturation, but at the same time it is fundamentally dependent

upon material enactments of culture for its success. Within a myriad of developing transactional relationships mediated by changes in business and technology, economic organization creates a new system from which the coherence and efficacy of quinceañera ritual practice is judged.

“Modern” Quinceañera Practice

Hilda-Gabriela Hernández’s *Modern Quinceañera* site is a unique example of a digital quinceañera context because nothing is for sale. It has become commonplace for Latina shoppers to do a Google search to seek out a discounted dresses through online retailers and encounter a section of their website that promotes the quinceañera event as a valued cultural tradition, even going so far as to paraphrase interpretations of its origin and significance. Quinceañera retailers recognize the value of contextualizing the cultural significance of potential purchases. MQ, however, is not a retail site. It does not sell dresses or discount bulk invitations or custom quince-sneakers—all of which are purchases that are only a few minutes and a few clicks away regardless of the ethnic composition of one’s neighborhood, city, or state. Instead, MQ provides cultural knowledge to middle-class aspiring, English-dominant Latina youth, seemingly for free. Hernández’s role is promotion of not only the quinceañera as an event, but also the consumer industry that surrounds it, of which she is an active participant. While she is a professional stylist and planner in non-digital spaces, the MQ site functions as a forum that not only promotes but also generates what I call “future-traditional knowledge” through the aforementioned process of remixing. While understanding that traditional practices are those that are tied to past experiences, both material and emotional, that have been pulled through time into the present, the practices being claimed on MQ are a blend of accepted cultural knowledge and innovation vetted for inclusion in the practice of quinceañeras based on their success in a youth-focused marketplace. These practices are informed directly by Hernández’s work with professional designers, stylists, and quince-girls themselves. In this context, while her posts are framed as broadly Latino, they are part of a remixing process directly connected to the character of Latino experiences emerging from identities cultivated in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Hernández’s informational posts on the MQ blog can be classified into three basic thematically-oriented categories: Accepted Knowledge, Remix-Trends, and Quince-Adjacent. Quince-Adjacent topics are those that the author includes to appeal to audiences, but do not *directly* address some aspect of quinceañera culture. For example, this category includes quizzes devoted to learning “What’s Your Cat Personality” and finally discovering “What Pinterest Breakfast Are You?” (Hernández 2015). Much like our first example post, which asserts that the 2015 season’s most sought after quinceañera accessory is honey, the contents of these posts have no symbolic connection to the quinceañera rite, or ethnic Latino heritage. Instead, these humorous posts are valuable because they contextualize the website firmly in the realm of American teenage popular culture, committed to personalizing cultural productions. They offer a vision of quinceañera consumers as included in the population of “digital natives”

of Generation Z (Benhamau 2015). This marketing demographic, born in 1994 or later, is characterized as unapologetically self-absorbed and shares a need for “constant connectedness” with their Millennial⁶ counterparts (Schneider 2015). I include them in this discussion to direct readers to consider how the notion of cultural authenticity marked by intergenerational ethnic gatekeeping is eroded by the inclusion of posts that disregard the need to constantly employ markers of a monolithic, shared Latino ethnic heritage. This notion of the “authentic” among U.S.-Latino cultural practice resides in assumptions of a shared working-class ethos, and resistance toward Americanization, where “American” is read as Euro-American. In my fieldwork, narratives of “authentic” quinceañera practice were breathed between the lines of every conversation parents shared about their daughters’ disappointing choices in dresses, limousines, food options, and more. Authenticity was an achievement of an event that was recognizably ethnicized, such as by actively including culturally specific food choices and music in Spanish. However, MQ contextualizes details like nineties *cumbia* music as outmoded additions to contemporary events.

Take the song “Mi Cucu” from popular cumbia band La Sinora Dinamita, for example. That song—along with a few other old school Quinceañera songs, were the epitome of a successful Quinceañera (Hernández 2015, “17 signs...”).

Through quince-adjacent posts, Hernández acknowledges the cultural pressures at play in the lives of her audience, speaking to their needs as a consumer market but also circumventing a need to promote an “authentic” quinceañera-product. Her posts, the product of a vocal Latina cultural entrepreneur, implicitly frame quinceañeras as multi-vocal consumer products, rather than cultural events defined by strict ties to singular, overly simplified ethnic markers. In this way, consuming distracting cat-culture online acknowledges Latinos as one offshoot of American youth audiences that are not solely defined by markers of race and ethnicity, even in the context of traditional practice. Here realities of class presentation and access to disposable income become defining factors in contemporary quinceañera practice. This divergence from an easily defined ethnic focus is further reinforced by the way in which MQ frames notions of temporality within the planning of the quince event, as well as how it is focused on youth rather than their parents, and as such is decidedly future-oriented. This orientation toward the Latina youth and original cultural production adds Latino cultural folkloric data to Dundes’ argument supporting the pervasiveness of futurity in a shared American worldview (1969, 57).

Accepted Knowledge

Seven of Hernández’s seventy-nine posts are dedicated to sharing basic information about the quinceañera event—what I refer to as “beginners-posts.” Beginners-posts, unlike others on the site, actively use Hernández’s personal quinceañera experiences to contextualize the tradition in current time. Much like earlier systems of folkloric transmission in which a knowledgeable grandmother might share her reflections on

coming-of-age with her granddaughter, Hernández uses her personal memories to generalize tradition. In a post titled, “17 Signs of a Throwback Quinceañera,” Hernández uses a photo montage to show her audience what quinceañeras used to be like—even including a photograph of herself as a *damita*⁷ standing next to a young woman whose full-length white dress with high collar and full sleeves could have emerged from the court of Louis XIV. Posts like these reinforce the shift in how knowledge is sought out by youth practitioners. Tacit, observable learning has shifted to explicit online-searches. This process of active knowledge acquisition also points to possible trends in Latino community practice, firstly the potential gap in familial knowledge due to a lack of experience. Secondly, the seeking out of such resources may indicate a lapse in familial relationships that would foster intergenerational exchange. Both factors create an opening for online consumer industries to broker knowledge to new generation.

Hernández, who includes the bare minimum of required reading for youth audiences accustomed to absorbing 140-characters or less at a time, shapes the quinceañera as a common memory for those “growing up Latino” (Hernández 2015, “17 signs...”). Online forums such as MQ potentially supplement the lack of memories in certain familial histories offering quinceañera advice that implicates existential crisis faced by Latino youth living interethnic experiences. Hernández’s use of memory calls on narratives of direct cultural contact that offers those distanced from the traditional practice comfort in her advice. The implicit narrative that comes with a playful, even mocking tone is that the “throwback” quinceañera has a singular character, easily enumerated and generalized through direct repetition, rather than being creatively remixed—a skill of contemporary quinceañeras and their attendant industries. For this post, the author organizes a series of photographs from her cousin’s quinceañera from what appears to be the late seventies or early eighties, as ambiguously “old.” The photographs and their jocular commentary offer visual accusations that link wearing white puffy-sleeved dresses, making your own favors, eating traditional regional Latino foods, taking awkward staged photographs with your parents, allowing an overly large quinceañera-court, and assembling decorations made from crepe streamers and balloons as outdated practices in need of remixing. The concept of remixing becomes vital here, since although change is desired, complete replacement is not. Quinceañera industries are still built on flamboyantly decorated gowns, ethnic food options, professional photography, and the choreographed group dance, but just in a new way. These modes of tradition are refigured as practices once dominated by informal relations becoming increasingly formalized. Formalization requires the consideration of ownership and intellectual property as culture producers, who make their living in cultural economies devoting themselves to recasting quinceañera traditions for current audiences. The recasting process requires feedback from audiences cum consumers, rendering ownership shared, but also contingent on the vitality of the consumer marketplace. This contingency, makes creativity precarious, but also reminds us that cultural economies are never fully formal or informal, but always serving both dynamic audiences and marketplaces. In one post, Hernández creates a divide between embarrassingly “old school” and “throwback” events

performed sincerely as antithetical to modern celebrations. To be a modern, “successful Quinceañera” one must both reference and transcend past performances (Hernández 2015, “17 Signs...”).

MQ is an amalgam of posts used to create and promote the professional image and goals of Hernández as a stylist who makes a living brokering quinceañera culture to Latino populations. In the category of Accepted Knowledge, Hernández’s “Throwback” was preceded by two alternate beginners-posts that introduce readers to basic quinceañera knowledge: “Main Quinceañera Traditions Explained” and “List of Main Things You Need for a Quinceañera.” In “Main,” Hernández spends no more than two sentences to explain each of five basic micro-rituals participants can expect during a quinceañera reception. The post includes five “traditions,” including practices of dress and adornment, the last doll,⁸ and the role of the father-daughter dance.⁹ None of these short references includes any manner of historical contextualization or illustrative specific examples. Instead, these posts appear to draw readers into sound bites of cultural knowledge, which begin a technologically-mediated exchange that the reader must complete through their own creativity. The lack of specificity in these texts creates a need and/or desire to explore the site further or in extreme cases, contact Hernández and solicit her formal, in-person planning expertise. Where doing and learning are intertwined to take practitioners from “a state of incompetence” to “a state of competence”, these posts open up discussions of the past only to foreground current trends in practice and the capacity of each participant to intervene in those practices through their own planning and execution (Collins 107).

Beginners-posts draw in those eager to learn and then supplement their cultural education with rhetorics of style that link them with innovations in consumption that have come to characterize current cultural practice. Posts often end with links cross-referencing similarly-themed supplemental posts. So while you might be laughing at unfamiliar “throwback” styles, you can easily click your way to current trends by designers being promoted on the MQ site. This cross-referencing frames readers as active consumers, vetting products within the digital cultural economy of quinceañera under the creative control of Hernández and her MQ site staff. The primacy of the present illustrated by the limited reference to previous generations not only reinforces particularly self-interested generational perspectives but also de-historicizes the significance of a quinceañera event. An intense focus on the here and now renders the traditional event as traditional in name only. While MQ uses the past as a reference point, it does so as more of a counter example than inspiration. I have witnessed versions of this type of advice in circulation around the U.S. in brick-and-mortar quinceañera professional contexts. Rendering the present as more important than the past is common rhetorical footing used to court Latino youth generations who find themselves relating better to cross-cultural age peers than to a fantasy of intergenerational pan-Latino solidarity. Due to shared consumer patterns, practices of coming of age such American “Sweet 16” celebrations are invoked as similar to the quinceañera, a sentiment implicitly apparent in the common use of the English moniker “Sweet 15”. Therefore, establishing a connection to a shared past becomes

unnecessary to appeal to the twenty-first-century youth quinceañera consumer. This pattern of future-orientation in the planning of quinceañera events, at least for new permeations of participants, need not index memories of past events, nor should it. The quinceañera is no longer a cultural mnemonic. References to past patterns of practice become inevitable incidentals, not central goals of the planning process. However, even with a draw toward the present for inspiration, it is a selective present perspective that is encouraged.

Unlike other online quinceañera resources, MQ does not promote a peer-to-peer forum. These sites often lose their appeal quickly, as immature or spam posts clutter already slow-moving conversations between individuals. Instead, MQ offers readers brief posts and encourages direct communication with Hernández and her staff of editors, as well as continually streaming commentary and visual engagement on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram where Hernandez has just under 5,000 combined followers. The collective body of beginners-posts, which make up a minority of the site's archive, appear to be of minimal importance to the "modern" quinceañera. Instead, rather than looking back, Hernández spends her time encouraging her audience to embrace the present in order to create the future.

Remix-Trends

Fifty-three of MQ's available posts are devoted in some way to sharing new trends in quinceañera style to eager audiences of Latina identifying readers. The posts create a body of texts that illustrate innumerable ways that American quinceañera culture is constantly under the creative construction of a range of professionals from designers working on runway fashion shows to journalists reporting on domestic disturbances at quinceañera events (Hernández 2015, "April Black Diamonds"; Hernández 2014, "Quinceañera Piñata..."). Mediated by different forms of interaction, which include videos, reposted news stories, visual "do's and don'ts" lists, and the occasional narrative story, Hernández's vision seems more apparent in the arranging and presenting of myriad forms of communication rather than the construction of completely new content. The quinceañera serves as a responsive, flexible vehicle through which to reach a growing Latino consumer base. Her key message is that of personalization.

On September 15, 2014, Hernández synthesizes her ideological connection to the quinceañera event as a "personalization of culture." In a post titled, "How Today's Quinceañeras are Personalizing their Hispanic¹⁰ Heritage," Hernández states that the quinceañera tradition as it is filtered through familial and informal sources is "not true to all Quinceañeras' lifestyles" (Hernández 2014, "How Today's..."). Here Hernández channels Pierre Bourdieu, attesting that to conceptualize the quinceañera practice, one must honestly assess the connection between lived behaviors and standardizations and economic systems in place to constrain them (Bourdieu 1998, 96; Parkin 1997, 375). Her statement is profound as it directly identifies the chasm between many lived experiences of Latino youth and the programmatic traditions that are assumed to represent their lives. She speaks for a generation of Latinas whose materialistic focus is often criticized by older generations as both self-involved, but more offensively,

as Americanized. Hernández explains that the desire to personalize the quinceañera is not a fault of a new generation, but an adaptation of lived experiences that vary from previous generations, made apparent in the heightened ritual planning process that reveals the complex and contentious negotiations between intergenerational values. The material culture of the quinceañera is composed of "...services that can (and are) customized to fit the birthday girl's personal taste" (Hernández 2014, "How Today's..."). She credits the character of this planning process as being "...due to the fact that young girls are growing up in an era where they can personalize everything they consume." This statement, rather than lamenting a loss of traditional values, reframes Latina youth experiences as American experiences, in particularly formed by American neoliberal capitalism that trains populations to filter their world through a process of consumer satisfaction, then to post that filtered image on social media for the world to see. Hernández boldly states:

From their iced mochas to their tech gadgets and social media profiles, a new generation of Quince girls is simply doing what it knows best: personalizing everything that enters their lives, and a Quinceañera is no exception (Hernández 2014, "How Today's...").

While her statements unapologetically integrate quinceañera practice into American cultural capitalism as an organic, community-driven process, one cannot forget that she profits from these realizations. Her direct gains come from her labor as a quinceañera stylist and product promoter, her site and her work build something far beyond the individual events she creatively engineers and the professional relationships she cultivates. MQ as a cultural text reveals a relationship between industry professionals and consumers that rivals previous generations' connection to patterns in family-oriented practice. This change, rather than framed as loss, can be viewed as a lateral shift from informal to formal economic relations contextualizing twenty-first-century Latino cultural forms into "neoliberal reconversion of culture" where cultural heritage is increasing privatized, and enacting it is a calculated decision (Colleredo-Mansfeld 2002, 160). Framing the quinceañera as a social asset, in line with Halter's claim that third- and fourth-generation ethnics reframe cultural differentiation as compatible with "middle class respectability" (2000, 9). Contemporary neoliberalism creates a new constraining factor in patterns of quinceañera practice. Previously the systems of influence surrounding the event were local and did not expect or desire to appeal to wider national audiences. However, with technological saturation that leads to digitally-connected lives constantly on display beyond local and family networks, quinceañeras are responding to the pressure of different systems of influence. MQ represents such a system. In the context of remixing traditional practice with trends in representations that transcend ethnic-national divisions, professional industries gain the capacity to systemize quinceañera expectations. Hernández's work does more than promote new modes of dress or musical choice; her trail of posts, accompanied by her personal branding, claims the quinceañera as a symbolic product rather than a cultural form or item of folklore alone.

As material consumption mediates ethnic identity expressed in the United States, we must consider what impact consumer intervention has on the affective character of the quinceañera event. Grant McCracken explores consumer practice as cultural practice, and from him I mobilize the term “symbolic product” to discuss how purchased goods are symbolically reevaluated as they are contextualized in home spaces (McCracken 2005, 27). I reinterpret the term to refer to the transformation of the quinceañera from an item of informal culture to one that continues to maintain symbolic value, but is also specifically affected by a formalized consumer process of digital cultural economies.

An “Unhomey” Quinceañera

In considering how the quinceañera is emerging in contemporary consumer systems, particularly those in dynamic online contexts, one cannot escape a question of the implications of “sentiment” within changing traditional practices. Here we return to the impact of shifting circuits of knowledge on the practice of twenty-first-century quinceañeras.

Quinceañeras have an affective quality in their production and their execution. The emotional ramifications of even momentary certainty in bodily presentation for who one is, through choices in body and event design, on the verge of change speaks to a celebrant’s need to feel in control of a pronounced moment of social and biological transition. The quinceañera rite has been framed as a place where communities come together and are created through a co-presence of shared labor and emotional investment (González 2014, 42). This response was primarily the product of familiar agents coming together personally around a single individual to mark a moment of personal transformation that was both a shared victory and a shared responsibility. However, as the quinceañera event is increasingly monetized, the event’s character has shifted, particularly visible in patterns of planning. If one imagines the quinceañera as a form of folklore and symbolic property, one whose meaning is no longer solely rooted in networks of family, the personal significance of the event appears to shift as well.

In following McCracken’s notion of “homeyness,” I claim that that through an ongoing process of institutionalization, the quinceañera event’s attractiveness no longer lies in its capacity to integrate a new member into the collective experience of society, but rather to set them on a path of individualization. “Homeyness,” as McCracken describes it, is an affective relationship with consumer goods, where purchased objects are stripped of their “commercially assigned meanings” as they are personalized and integrated into one’s home-space. In his view, when an object’s value is rearticulated in intimate space, it becomes informal, perceptually becoming “reassuring” and even “riskless” (McCracken 2005, 38). Many might consider these material flourishes as what gives a house the sense of home. I propose that the consumer intervention into planning quinceañera celebrations refigures the goals of a quinceañera celebration as decidedly *unhomey*.

This unhomey quality is a product of compromise among contemporary communities whose cultural knowledge is being supplemented by consumer industries, whose investments in the celebration are precariously linked to relevance in the marketplace. While the functionality of quinceañera events was materially linked to family engagement and creative co-production, the intervention of consumer industries has the potential to modify the function of the celebration in multiple ways. First, although informal networks of family shared knowledge through generations, the formalization of blog posts creates an authoritative information loop generated using neoliberal cultural logics that create distance between families, and intimacy with industries. Even short posts become a digital written record, vetted by culture experts and integrated into the real-world practices of celebrants. Second, this form actively disarticulate events from specific ethnic identification, creating a common “Latino” community of practice. While this is unifying in a national context, the loss of inter-ethnic markers does a disservice to Latino communities whose new immigrant status render them subordinate to the majority narrative of more established Latino populations. This process complicates narratives of authenticity, as the celebration becomes generically Latino. Lastly, an American neoliberal logic privileges a forward thinking Latino consumer market that prioritizes present and future-oriented thinking among communities, minimizing the usefulness of quinceañeras as historical mnemonics. As consumer intervention supplements a lack of personal and communal narratives around quinceañera events, it also erodes the mnemonic capability of the event, as participants cannot contextualize themselves in a larger narrative of family and community history. These three results of consumer intervention shift how the quinceañera potentially functions among U.S.-Latino communities of practice. Individualized performances unite young Latinas within a framework of American integration through a process of consumption where identities are constructed through commodities. However, rather than seeking commodities to articulate relationship to the past, they restage the past by explicitly ethnicizing middle class consumption through the marketing of tradition. Quinceañera events represent a brand of customizable social currency that allow Latina youths an innovative way to market their personal social value as both an ethnic minority and social majority. In this context, quinceañeras, though joyous occasions, are anything but “reassuring” or “riskless.” They represent a social struggle for idealized *personal* visibility, mediated by the pressures of ethno-cultural acceptance and an alienating process of consumer integration. Although seemingly sad, this assessment allows observers to focus on how Latino communities are performing identity in culturally unauthorized ways. One must ask, however, whose “culture” are we actually using as a point of reference, and just what makes up that culture?

Marginally authorized acts of consumer practice mobilized by quinceañeras of Generation Z foreground national identity over ethnic-national identity. The digital consumer intervention creates a quinceañera event that does not prioritize cultural nostalgia or the emotional needs of an audience, but instead privileges individual identification. A transformation is possible because, although it is popular, quinceañera

rites are not a *requirement* of Latino community identification, merely a benefit. As such, rather than a “rite of passage,” it might be more accurate to categorize the event as a “rite of initiation” (Sims and Stephens 2005, 119). Here, rather than being initiated into a community of ethnic peers, Latina youth are being incorporated into a brand of American cultural citizenship predicated on consumer status. Latina social subjects are making and unmaking Latino cultural worlds as the byproduct of their unique engagement with generationally specific practices in the digital cultural economy. As cultural economies surrounding the quinceañera tradition continue to grow and change, the consumer ritual that characterizes the twenty-first-century planning process will be an intense site to observe the rite’s role as a strategy of status unfolding in the digital age and on a global stage.

Rethinking Circuits of Knowledge and Digital Environments

The goal of this work has been to consider new ways that cultural knowledge is being circulating around twenty-first-century technologically literate Latino communities. Drawing specific attention to shifts in modes of circulation, in particular the online quinceañera blog *ModernQuinceanera.com*, I consider how theories of practice, especially notions of tacit knowledge systems, can be used to investigate the stakes of a shift from face-to-face to digitally mediate forms of knowledge circulation among Latina youth searching for quinceañera guides online. Online forums offer a vital resource for third-generation, English-dominant Latinas who desire to engage with the practice of quinceañera as an expression of their Latina heritage, but desire to supplement their own knowledge about the celebration. The MQ blog serves as one example of a system of online digital forums where traditional knowledge about quinceañera coming-of-age celebrations meets neoliberal consumer capitalism. While these spaces define themselves as contemporary resources, their narratives cannot be disentangled from their consumerist goals. A microanalysis of the organizational schema of MQ’s quinceañera blog posts reveals how knowledge systems implicating rules of modern quinceañera tradition in the U.S. are necessarily being made explicit by cultural entrepreneurs who benefit from articulating formerly tacit cultural knowledge. The site represents one node of a larger commercial project that blends digital and brick-and-mortar quinceañera services where rather than being shared, cultural entrepreneurs are marketing cultural knowledge. The presence of such services make manifest the ways in which U.S. Latinas are seeking out commercial resources to aid in traditional practices. And although a connection with the capitalist marketplace does create a sense of alienation between new iterations of the coming-of-age celebration and the expectations of generations whose celebrations were centralized in particular family histories, it reinforces new patterns of knowledge acquisition that characterize twenty-first-century folkloric practice. While broad conversations of “ethnic” cultural productions have asserted generalizing principles of the role of commodity acquisition and identity formation, the stakes are particularly salient for U.S. Latinos whose identities are over generalized as pathologically working class and willfully un-American. Quinceañera planning services highlight how American Latinos are

resignifying cultural traditions as signs of class mobility predicated on narratives of consumer entitlement. Future studies would benefit from a wider lens of practice, to see if the trend in cultural marketing affecting quinceañera practice permeates other genres of U.S.-Latino folklore. Such a classification expands the function of the celebration beyond localized interpretation of gender identification and family values, while also stressing new complications regarding affective alienation, as celebrations focus more on consumer value than cultural significance. However, I assert that the explicit narratives of personalization promoted through the MQ blog speak to a kind of Latina middle-class re-visioning process that foregrounds Latina entrepreneurs and Latina consumers at the center of a traditional discourse, a new model for extra-familial female social networking, formerly framed around hetero-patriarchal values. While this assertion is still in a state of flux, as new generations of both entrepreneurs and practitioners enter the scene, what is certain is that through growing connections digital economies of practice, U.S.-Latinos are making explicit their solidified place to the American cultural marketplace.

Notes

- 1 Here, "American" specifically refers to U.S. cultural contexts.
- 2 For further ways in which Latino folklore texts are used to access Latino markets in the U.S. see Domino R. Perez's *There Was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture* (2008, 60).
- 3 "Paty" is a pseudonym to protect the identity of this minor who participated in my work with the limited permission of her parents.
- 4 In an attempt to reinforce the event's symbolic structure, courts of honor are often composed of seven maids and seven escorts, creating fourteen couples and making the quinceañera and her escort the *fifteenth* couple. However, depending a family's wishes, courts can be larger or smaller. In contemporary contexts, young women are also choosing to exclude courts-of-honor, or populating them with solely female or male escorts. Changes in this aspect of the tradition can vary by family size, class contexts, or variable idiosyncratic rationale.
- 5 For a discussion of the legacy of commercial and technological intervention in American Folklore study see Buccitelli (2014).
- 6 "Millennials" is a term used to refer to marketing demographic of youth and adults born between the early 1980s and early 1990s. This group is considered the first generation of digital natives, having grown up with enhanced social networking technology.
- 7 *Damita* translates to "little maid" in Spanish. She is a young girl who stands as part of the quinceañera court, wearing a coordinating formal dress often matching that of the quinceañera. She serves as a reminder of the quinceañera's fleeting girlhood. She is often misinterpreted as the equivalent to the "flower girl" in an American wedding ceremony.
- 8 The "last doll" is a doll that is part of the ritual objects gifted to a quinceañera during her event. It is often dressed in the same color or style as the quinceañera girl, and has the dual job of representing the final vestiges of childhood, but also the potential responsibilities of adult womanhood and childbearing.
- 9 For detailed ethnographic examples of quinceañera event rituals, see Cantú (1999).
- 10 Less than a handful of MQ site titles include the ethnic moniker "Hispanic," "Latino," or other ethno-national distinction.

Works Cited

- Bendix, Regina. 1997. "From Fakelore to the Politics of Culture: The Changing Contours of American Folkloristics." In *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*, 188-218. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Benhamou, Laurence. "Everything you need to know about Generation Z." *Business Insider*. July 21, 2015. <http://www.businessinsider.com/afpgeneration-z-born-in-the-digital-age-2015-2#ixzz3gv1K9IPU>.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. "Introduction." In *The Location of Culture*, 1-27. New York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. "Neo-Liberalism, the Utopia (Becoming a Reality) of Unlimited Exploitation." In *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, 94-105. New York: New Press.
- Bronner, Simon J. 2012. "Practice Theory in Folklore and Folklife Studies". *Folklore* 123 (April 2012): 23-47.
- Buccitelli, Anthony Bak. 2014. "Paying to Play: Digital Media, Commercialization, and the Scholarship of Alan Dundes." *Western Folklore* 73 (2/3): 235-256.
- Collins, H.M. 2001. "What is Tacit Knowledge?" In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Shatzki and Karin Knorr Cetina, and Eike von Savigny. 107-19. London: Routledge.
- Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudi. 2002. "An Ethnography of Neoliberalism: Understanding Competition in Artisan Economies." *Current Anthropology*, 43(1), 113-137.
- Dávila, Arlene. 2001. *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dorson, Richard. 1976. "Folklore, Academe and the Marketplace." In *Folklore and Fakelore*, 1-29. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Dundes, Alan. 1969. "Thinking Ahead: A Folkloristic Reflection of the Future Orientation in American Worldview." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 42 (2), 53-72.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda and Angie Chabram. 2006. "Chicana/o Cultural Representations: Reframing Alternative Critical Discourses." In *Chicana/o Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, 26-32. New York: Routledge.
- Frykman, Maja Povrzanovic. 2008. "Beyond Culture and Identity: Places, Practices, Experiences." *Ethnologia Europaea* 38, 13-22.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1979. "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of the Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1), 1-20.
- Georges, Robert A., and Michael Owen Jones. 1995. *Folkloristics: An Introduction*. Bloomington: Indiana University, Press.
- González, Rachel V. 2014. "Dreaming in Taffeta: Imagining an American Quinceañera." Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University.
- Halter, Marylin. 2000. *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*. New York: Shocken Books.
- Hernández, Hilda-Gabriela. "17 Signs of a Throwback Quinceañera." June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/17-signs-of-a-throwback-quinceanera/>.

- . “A Sweet Quinceañera with the National Honey Board and Me.” June 27, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/a-sweet-quinceanera-with-the-national-honey-board-and-me/>.
- . “About Miss Quinceañera.” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/miss-quinceanera-pageant/about-miss-quinceanera-pageant/>.
- . “April Black Diamonds Quinceañera Dresses-Spring 2015.” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/april-black-diamonds-quinceanera-dresses-spring-2015/>.
- . “Hilda Gabriela Hernández.” *Linked-In.com*. May 15, 2015. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/hildagabriela>.
- . “How Today’s Quinceañeras are Personalizing their Hispanic Heritage.” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/quinceaneras-personalizing-hispanic-heritage/>.
- . “List of Main Things You Need for a Quinceañera.” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/list-of-main-things-you-need-for-a-quinceanera/>.
- . “Main Quinceañera Traditions Explained.” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/quinceanera-traditions-explained/>.
- . “Quinceañera Piñata Horror Story.” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/quinceanera-pinata-horror-story/>.
- . “What Pinterest Breakfast Are you?” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/pinterest-breakfast/>.
- . “What’s the Best Type of Quinceañera Dress For You?” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/whats-the-best-type-of-quinceanera-dress-for-you/>.
- . “What’s Your Cat Personality?: Hello Kitty or Duchess from the Aristocats?” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/what-is-your-cat-personality/>.
- . “What’s Your Quinceañera Cake Style?” June 17, 2015. <http://modernquinceanera.com/whats-your-quinceanera-cake-style/>.
- King, Elizabeth. 1998. *Quinceañera, Celebrating Fifteen*. New York: Dutton.
- Lankford, Mary D. *Quinceañera: A Latina’s Journey to Womanhood*. Minneapolis: Millbrook Press.
- Lash, Scott and John Urry. 1994. *Economies of Signs and Space*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Lessig, Lawrence. 2008. *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*. New York: Penguin.
- McCracken, Grant D. 2005. *Culture and Consumption II: Markets, Meaning and Brand Management*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 2006. *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . 1996. *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston: Beacon.
- Parkin, Robert. 1997. “Practice Theory.” In *Dictionary of Anthropology*, edited by Thomas Barfield, 375–377. New York: Blackwell.

- Pew Research Center. "Closing the Digital Divide: Latinos and Technology Adoption." July 20, 2015. http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/03/Latinos_Social_Media_and_Mobile_Tech_03-2013_final.pdf.
- . "The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States." July 18, 2015. <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/the-shifting-religious-identity-of-latinos-in-the-united-states/>.
- Rodriguez, Gregory. 1996. "The Emerging Latino Middle Class." Pepperdine, CA: Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy.
- Salcedo, Michele. 1997. *Quinceañera!: The Essential Guide to Planning the Perfect Sweet 15 Celebration*. New York: Henry Hold and Co.
- Schneider, Joan.. "How to Market to the iGeneration." *Harvard Business Review*. July 21, 2015. <https://hbr.org/2015/05/how-to-market-to-the-igeneration>.
- Sims, Martha C. and Martine Stephens. 2005. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and their Traditions*. Logan: Utah State University Press.