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THE PROCESS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATINA 1.5 GENERATION
OF FOREIGN-BORN IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS

presented by

Sonia Jacqueline Garcia

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in Educational Administration

Kirsten A. Ren

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**THE PROCESS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATINA 1.5 GENERATION
OF FOREIGN-BORN IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS**

By

Sonia Jacqueline Garcia

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration

2005

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ABSTRACT

THE PROCESS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATINA 1.5 GENERATION OF FOREIGN-BORN IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

Sonia Jacqueline Garcia

The purpose of this research study was to examine the identity and acculturation experiences of the Latina 1.5 generation of foreign-born immigrant college students. This study explored the acculturation process of these college women and how their experiences influenced their identity development. This research study had two primary purposes. The first purpose was to understand the process by which Latina 1.5 generation immigrant college women cope, customize, and adapt their sense of self to acculturate to the U.S. culture, society, and academe. The second purpose was to explore how the women's adaptation and/or acculturation to the U.S. influenced their college experiences.

This study employed a qualitative research design which consisted of a series of individual, semi-structured, tape-recorded, face-to-face, one-on-one interviews of 20 1.5 Latina immigrant college students. This study examined these participant's identity development and acculturation experiences during different transitional periods of their life in the United States. From their stories emerged six themes: Meaning of Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity, Understanding and Embracing Ethnic Identity, Ethnic Identification, Practices and Behavioral Ties to Cultural Background, Adapting to a New Culture, and Ethnic Identity Effects on College Students.

Current literature on college student development frequently ignores race, class, gender, and other variables. The literature and scholarship on identity development has



presupposed that identity development is the same for all students regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, language, and social class background (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). College is a daunting process for all individuals. Students must adapt to their university environment and surroundings in order to succeed both personally and academically (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). While adjustment issues pertain to all students, the concerns and issues of Latina immigrant college students are intricate and complex. Latina immigrant college students not only confront the typical student adjustment concerns, they also grapple with issues pertaining to language, immigration status, acculturation, social acceptance, socioeconomic status, and ethnic identity.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Report (2000), approximately one in eight people in the United States are of Hispanic or Latin American origin. The Census reported that 32.4 million Latinos resided in the United States in the year 2000, representing 12 % of the total U.S. population. Additionally, the Census reported that the total U.S. foreign-born population reached 28.4 million, which represents 10% of the entire U.S. population. These statistics show the reality of the demographic changes currently taking place in the United States. By the year 2050, it is predicted that Latin Americans will constitute the largest minority group, as they will account for almost 25% of the entire population of the United States (Census 2000). This increase in the foreign-born population will have a tremendous impact on the American system of higher education, creating even more diverse campus communities.



This dissertation is dedicated to my very, very, patient husband

Dr. Leonardo Lombardini

With all my love and gratitude for everything you have done

and everything you are still doing

Not with us

Pablito Lombardini Garcia

Our new love and challenge

Sabrina Lombardini Garcia

And to all of the wonderful 1.5 college women who

helped me complete this project.

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Writing a dissertation requires much perseverance and endurance. With great deal of support, patience, guidance, and love, Leonardo, my patient husband, friend, and confidant, was there with me during the good and bad times. He provided computer technical support, housekeeping, grocery shopping, and coffee making for late night writing marathons, and taking care of our daughter Sabrina. Leonardo thank you for your encouraging words.

Sabrina gave up her play time so that I could have quite time to write. She sacrificed her “tia” time for this dissertation. I also want to thank my mother for believing in me. My mother never really understood why I was putting myself though all of this “torture”, but like a good Latina mother, she reminded me to eat!

My advisor and committed chair, Dr. Kristen Renn, was also an integral component in whatever success I had finishing this study. I was lucky to have had an advisor that truly cared about my well-being, especially when we lived thousand of miles apart; it is certainly an extra challenge. Thank you Kristen for your constant support and encouragement, your email messages, your prompt feedbacks, your positive attitude, for keeping me on target, for contacting all my dissertation committee members and arranging my defense, for booking the conference room and the computer for my defense, and for always making me feel smart, especially when I was at my lowest point. There are very few committed advisors and committee chair like you. I seriously do not know how I could have done without your support.

I also want to thank, Dr. Anna Ortiz, my preceding advisor and committee chair. Anna, you were truly an inspiration, I learned so much from you and from your lectures.

Your research on ethnic identity had a tremendous impact on me, you can obviously tell by the topic and title of my dissertation. I am also grateful to my committee members Drs. Amey, Villarruel, and Mobakela Obakeng for committing time, expertise, and encouragement.

I am very grateful and thankful of my friends, my cohort, JoLee Webb Blackbear, Catherine Flaga, Anne Hornak, and Arend Vander Pols. JoLee, you are a wonderful friend – I am fortunate to have met you that hot summer day in 1992 during our masters' introduction class at the University of Rhode Island. Your determination was a true motivation for me. Thank you for caring enough to fly from Michigan to Texas to plan a step by step time line for my dissertation. How can I repay you? Catherine, Anne, and Arend, thank you for empathizing, analyzing writing, studying for comps, and for your friendship.

Most of all and with sincere respect, I would like to thank the Latina 1.5 generation of foreign-born immigrant college students who inspired this study and with whom I had the honor and pleasure to work. Thank you for sharing your valuable stories and for letting me into your lives for a short while. I sincerely hope their stories will help their fellow Latina foreign-born immigrant students in the future.

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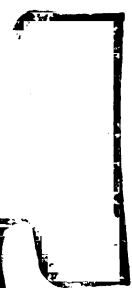
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Report (2000), approximately one in eight people in the United States are of Hispanic or Latin American origin. The Census reported that 32.4 million Latinos resided in the United States in the year 2000, representing 12 % of the total U.S. population. To be more specific: 66% were Mexicans, 4% were Cubans, 9% were Puerto Ricans, 6% were other Hispanics, and 14.5% were from Central and South America. Additionally, the Census reported that the total U.S. foreign-born population reached 28.4 million, which represents 10% of the entire U.S. population. This number is a remarkable increase from the 19.8 million U.S. foreign-born populations reported in the 1990 census. More impressive are the numbers of foreign-born immigrants from Latin America.

In the year 2000, 14.5 million immigrants, nearly one-half of the reported 28.4 million foreign-born immigrants, originated from Latin America. Since 1960, the foreign-born population from Latin America has increased from about 900,000, or 9%, to about 1.8 million in 1970, and by the 1990s, this population grew by 8.5 million, or 44% of the total U.S. population. Again, Mexico accounted for more than one-quarter of the foreign-born population and more than half of the foreign-born immigrants from Latin America. The remaining immigrants from Latin America are divided as follows: 2 million were born in Central America, 2.8 million in the Caribbean, and 2 million in South America.

These statistics show the reality of the demographic changes that are currently taking place in the United States. According to the Census Report (2000), by the year

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2050, it is predicted that Latin Americans will constitute the largest minority group, as they will account for almost 25% of the entire population of the United States. This increase in the foreign-born population will have a tremendous impact on the American system of higher education, creating even more diverse campus communities.

There are many factors that influence the identity development of college students. Various researchers have investigated identity and its correlation to cognitive development, academic achievement, career decisions, social interactions, and self-esteem (Davis, 1994; Hernandez, 1995; Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams, & Hanley, 1991; Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Tatum, 1992). Identity development is both a psychological process and a process that actively engages the environment (Ortiz, 1997). The development of one's identity establishes who one is as a person. Identity development is an intricate process for all individuals (Gergen, 1991), and is especially salient for college students (Phinney, 1990). Questions such as, "Who am I?" or "How do I fit in this environment?" or "Who am I going to be in the future?" are customary among college students who are searching for answers about their self-concept. The development of identity is especially difficult and particularly challenging when variables such as, race, ethnicity, social class, language, country of origin, cultural background, and gender intersect in the participant's lives.

Current literature on college student development frequently ignores race, class, gender, and other variables. The literature and scholarship on identity development has presupposed that identity development is the same for all students regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, language, and social class background (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). College is a daunting process for all individuals. Students must adapt to their

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Few identity development theorists have taken into account the ethnic identity development of students under the broad category of Latino/a and less researchers have investigated the influence of Latino ethnic identity development on the college experience (Torres, 2004). As the Latino population grows in the United States, a record 58% increase since 1990 according to the census report of the year 2000, research in the area of ethnic identity becomes pivotal. Torres (2004) indicated that there is a pressing need in both the academic world and higher education to understand the phenomenon of ethnic identity and the need for a theory of Latino student ethnic identity development specifically focusing on the Latina foreign-born immigrant population.

The importance of ethnic identity has always ignited debate among educators (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). As researchers, administrators, and student affairs professionals in higher education, we need to know more about Latinas/os' background and experiences in order to develop programs and provide adequate services to this population. It is the responsibility of educators to be equipped with the best possible knowledge about how to best serve and attend to the needs of this growing number of Latino/a students entering American colleges and universities.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Latin American immigrant college women in the U.S. culture, socialization, and women's adaptation. This study sought to

How did these women's experiences in America and U.S. culture, identity, and relationships?

How did the women's experiences in their college experience?

Many initial researchers did not include aspects of the experience that researchers have focused on (Ortiz, 1997; Phinney, 1996).

¹ Women whose origins are from the Dominican Republic or people identify in the Dominican Republic.
² Term first coined by Rumbaut (1995).
³ U.S. as children under age 18.
⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this research study was to examine the identity and acculturation experiences of Latina¹ 1.5² generation foreign-born³ immigrant college students. This study explored the acculturation process of these college women and how their experiences influenced their identity development. This study had two primary purposes. The first purpose was to understand the process by which Latina 1.5 generation immigrant college women cope, customize, and adapt their sense of self to acculturate to the U.S. culture, society, and academe. The second purpose was to explore how the women's adaptation and/or acculturation to the U.S. influenced their college experiences. This study sought to answer the following questions:

How did these women navigate both cultures (their native culture from Latin America and U.S. culture), and what was the impact of this process on their sense of self, identity, and relationship to academe?

How did the women experience U.S. culture and how did that affect and shape their college experiences in higher education?

Many initial research studies conducted on the development of college students did not include aspects such as ethnicity, gender, or race. More recently, several researchers have focused on the ethnic identity development of minority college students (Ortiz, 1997; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney, 1992; Phinney, 1993;

¹ Women whose origins are from Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic or people identifying themselves generally as Cuban, Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-American.

² Term first coined by Rumbaut and Ima (1988). The 1.5 generation describes those who immigrated to the U.S. as children under age 18, prior to their teenage years, specifically around 12 years of age.

³ U.S. Bureau of the Census 2002 defines "foreign-born" as individuals who are not U.S. citizens at birth.

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Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Smith, 1991) and on the stages of the acculturation process of diverse groups (Berry, 1980, 1986; Berry, Vichol, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Berry, 1992; Padilla, 1980). Despite the presence of these studies, there is a limited body of research available on the process of ethnic identity development for Latina immigrant college students, particularly, the foreign-born 1.5 generation.

Existing models of ethnic identity are limited in their ability to explain the developmental process of Latina college students' ethnic identities. Indeed, no studies have focused on the internal struggles that 1.5 immigrant college students endure to reconcile the dilemmas of living in their native culture versus U.S culture. There is no evidence of studies that have looked, qualitatively or quantitatively, at the psychological aspects involved in the process of acculturation. Additionally, there is a paucity of research that examines transitional adaptation issues that foreign-born immigrants experience when arriving in the United States. This is particularly true for Latin American 1.5 generation college students who arrive in the U.S. between the age of 10 and 12 years old. In effect, authors like Padilla (1980) state that "(r)arely ... is there mention of the psychological aspects involved in the individual who is in a state of transition between two cultural orientations or in the individual who has completely acculturated. We know very little about how the individual adapts and/or copes with the pressures to acculturate" (p. 47). One aim of this study is to contribute to and expand upon existing theories of ethnic identity development among college students and make them more applicable to the Latina 1.5 generation of immigrants.

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Significance of the Study

As the racial makeup of the United States is becoming more ethnically diverse, the population of students within the system of higher education is also dramatically changing at an increasing pace (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). Undoubtedly, during the 21st century, the United States will progressively become more heterogeneous in the ethnic composition of its population. Phinney and Alipuria (1996) confirm that the United States is “(n)o longer predominantly White, Black, and Native Americans, the U.S. population now includes greater number of Latinos, Asians, and other immigrants” (p. 139). In effect, according to Zusman (1999), almost one quarter of the entire college student population are ethnic minorities, with Latino and Asian populations doubling between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. Young (2002) affirms that the number of minority students attending and completing college has continued to rise over the last decade.

This study is important because of the predicted rapid growth of the Latin American population over the next century, and the expected increase in numbers of college students of Latin American heritage. This research study centers on acculturation because it is a vital element of one’s self-identity and self-identification (Phinney, 1990, 1992; Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993; Smith, 1991). Additionally, the significance of ethnicity for Latin American immigrant women cannot be overlooked. While few studies have explored college student identity development and additional researchers have looked at ethnic identity development, none have examined the acculturation and identity development of Latina 1.5 generation immigrant college women. An examination of Latin American immigrant womens’ acculturation is noteworthy because this population mirrors the changing demographics (gender) of the United States.

A glossary

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Definitions

A glossary of terms that are used throughout this study has been incorporated for the reader's benefit.

Latin Americans: Refers to persons whose origins are from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. Latin Americans belong to a variety of races and ethnic groups. Latin American encompasses a broad range of countries in the Central and Southern America Diasporas. These countries include Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Argentina or any other of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean, Central or South America.

Hispanic: Hispanic is an umbrella term/label created by the U.S. government in the 1980s to be used as part of the census data. Hispanic has become the term of choice for government and media usage. Often times this term is used synonymously with Latino. The term Hispanic is meant to encompass all of the Spanish speaking groups together, in an effort towards creating a Pan-Hispanic sense of identity.

Familism: Refers to the strong cultural values, social identification, and connection that individuals feel toward their nuclear and extended families. Familism involves strong feelings of loyalty and solidarity between members of the same family.

Involuntary Immigrant: Refers to individuals who are brought to the U.S. as immigrants without their consent, will, and/or approval. For this study, involuntary immigrant refers to Latin American women who were born and raised in a Latin/South American country and were brought as young adolescents (preteen between the ages of 10 and 13) involuntarily by their parents to the United States. Involuntary immigration is

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Ethnicity: Refers to characteristics such as cultural traits, customs, arts, common national origins, ancestry, religion, and language that connect a group of people.

Ethnicity is rooted in the idea of societal groups and/or the culture with which individuals identifies. Ethnicity focuses on the connection of a shared past and culture.

Ethnic Identity: Refers to a person's attitudes and self-concept in relation to their ethnic group membership. Ethnic identity develops primarily by the collection of conceptual and emotional inputs from parents, family members, school, cultural gathering and so forth.

Summary

The subsequent five chapters in this study explore the pertinent literature, methodology utilized and the participant's interviews, findings from the study, and implications of the data. Chapter two provides the framework and background for this study. Chapter two is an extensive overview of the literature reviewed that provided in-depth look at the relevant studies, empirical research, and theoretical models carried out on identity formation and ethnic identity development. Chapter three describes the methodology employed for this study and the underlying principle for using this research design. In addition, chapter 3 introduces the 20 college students who participated in this study. Chapter four presents the findings from the one-on-one interviews conducted late spring semester 2003. The final chapter of this study, chapter five, discusses the major implications, interpretations, and limitations of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature review will present four major areas that outline the process of ethnic identity development for Latina immigrant college students. This review includes definitions, empirical research and theoretical models pertinent to: 1) Identity Development/Formation; 2) Ethnic Identity Development; 3) Ethnic Identity Models and 4) Acculturation. Although the focus of this research concentrates on ethnic identity development, the material discussed in the first section of this review will deal with the broader subject of identity development /formation as conceptualized by various psychosocial developmental psychologists such as Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966). Additionally, a brief review of contemporary research on the educational experiences of immigrant students in the college environment and other settings will be presented.

It is vital to delve into identity development theories in order to comprehend how identity development impacts the materialization of ethnic identity in college students, and, in particular in Latina immigrant college students. The identity development of a person is both a psychological and social process, and, thus, ethnic identity is considered to be a combination of these two processes. Hence, ethnic identity symbolizes the intersection of identity development in an individual and how it is affected by that individual's membership in family affairs and in societal sub-groups (Ortiz, 1997).

There are many factors that trigger and impact the development of identity and ethnic identity for college students: cognitive development, academic achievement, career decisions, social interactions, and self-esteem (Davis, 1994; Hernandez, 1995;

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Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Alpuria, 1990; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Tatum, 1992). The pursuit of identity and establishing who you are as a person is an intricate process (Gergen, 1991). The literature and scholarship on identity development has wrongly presupposed that identity formation is the same for all students regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, and social class background (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Theories of human and student development offer a foundation toward understanding the role that identity plays in the growth, transformation, and maturation of adolescents (late adolescence) and (adulthood) young adults (Hoover, Marcia, & Parris, 1997; King, 1994; Miller & Winston, 1991). Moreover, student development theories serve as maps or guides that aid in the understanding of a myriad of ways in which an individual or group of individuals experience higher education, as well as the elements that interconnect with their overall satisfaction, achievement, and persistence (Stage, 1989). Arnold and King (1997) point out that developmental theories “provide systematic ways of making sense of individual differences among college students and their responses to educational environments” (p. viii). Additionally, psychosocial theories of human development and social identity theories are also helpful in comprehending late adolescent group associations and the development of social identities (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993).

Other researchers assert that psychosocial theories are theories that regard individual development as a vital process that entails the accomplishment of a succession of “developmental tasks” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In addition, Rodgers (1989) indicates that most psychosocial theories “assert that the individual’s success in resolving

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each task can significantly affect the resolution of succeeding tasks and, consequently, the rate and extent of psychosocial development” (p. 19).

Erikson (1959) is considered a great influence on most psychosocial theories of college student development. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) identify important and influential elements of Erikson’s work in psychosocial theories of development as having tremendous impact on the development and/or emergence of ethnic identity theories. They indicate that persons of traditional college age experience Erickson’s principles of developmental crisis, identity and identity confusion. Psychosocial theories of human development and social identity theories have had a tremendous impact on the development of ethnic identity theories. Unlike the step-by-step developmental stages of typical identity theories such as that of Erikson’s (1968), ethnic identity theories do not segregate or isolate adolescence where ethnic identity is developed. Various models of ethnic identity have been tested on college age student populations. Phinney (1992) is a leader in developing theories that are based on empirical research from ethnic identity models, and then using them on college students. In order to fully understand ethnic identity, it is imperative to first have a sense of what is meant by identity/ego identity and/or the general concepts of identity formation. Examining these areas will identify what is lacking in current ethnic identity models.

Identity Development

Three Influential Psychologists on Ego Identity Development/Formation

Identity development, as a general field of study, was the first area psychologists explored when dealing with the development of the self-concept. Sigmund Freud was one

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of the first and more famous psychologists to deal with ego identity and identity development. The theories he developed on identity development were influential on later psychologists, especially Erik Erikson and Heinz Hartmann. Erikson expanded on Freud's notions and teachings of ego identity, but expanded them a step further by taking into account the external social components of one's development (external factors).

Freud advanced many theories on human behavior and was also the first psychologist to introduce both the notion of identity and identity development. Freud labeled identity or "inner identity ... [as] an individual's link with the unique values, fostered by a unique history of his people" (Erikson, 1959, p. 102). Additionally, Freud is recognized as the first psychologist to introduce the social and historical dynamics of personality development (Erikson, 1959; Burt & Halpin 1998). Freud regarded identity as the "integration of an individual within the group and how he or she learns to interact within that group," as well as with other groups (Burt & Halpin 1998).

The pursuit of identity is a continuous theme in our society. The process of Identity development seeks to answer the questions: "Who am I? " "What am I all about?" "Who do you think I am?" (Bernal & Knight, 1993; Hood, Riahinejad, & White, 1986) "Where am I going?" "What am I going to do with my life?" (Clarke & Kleine, 1984; Shelley-Sireci & Leary, 1996). These questions are critical in an adolescent's life because they represent the origin of self-reflection and self-examination, which contributes to the ultimate examination of one's identity formation and development. It has been agreed among researchers that late adolescence is the period in an individual's life that is most commonly associated with identity development. When adolescents experience physical changes associated with puberty, in addition to the augmentation of

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their cognitive abilities, they ought to integrate these changes into a concept of the self. The following have been established as essential components of identity: cultural/ethnic identity, career choices, political convictions, religious identity, relationship commitments, intellectual achievement, sexual identity, body image (physical identity), recreational choices, and personality style (Clarke & Kleine, 1984).

Erickson's (1963, 1968) notion of identity formation is recognized worldwide as one of the central tasks of adolescence. Many authors agree that Erikson's notion of identity formation has been integral to the understanding of ethnic identity (Marcia, 1980; Waterman, 1984; Yeh & Hwang, 2000). Indeed, in his well-known life-stage (Stages of Man) theory of development, Erikson depicts identity as the major developmental task of adolescence. In Erikson's view, men have to attain a stable identity before intimacy, while women's identity is defined through their intimate roles as wives and mothers. For adolescents, having a clear sense of personal identity constitutes an aspect of optimal psychological functioning (Bernard, 1978). Clarke and Kleine (1984) concurred with Bernard (1978) and Erikson (1968) by stating "the achievement of a stable identity is arguably the most important psychological task faced by any young man or woman" (p. 1). Further, Clarke and Kleine (1984) affirm that in adolescence, "one's goal is to establish an identity ... a meaningful, unified self-concept" (p. 1).

Similarly, Chickering (1969), later Chickering and Reisser, (1993), contended that identity development is central during late adolescence and early adulthood. Those persons who ultimately acquire a comfortable level of an ego identity develop a better sense of self-esteem and more affirmative psychosocial competence skills than those who do not succeed in developing a consolidated sense of self (Petersen & Hamburg, 1986).

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Some authors contend that establishing identity does not “emerge automatically, as do secondary sexual characteristics. Instead the individual must work actively on his/her identity formation” (Clarke & Kleine, 1984, p. 1). The identity of the young adult and/or individual develops and crystallizes across her/his lifespan, starting with a young child’s consciousness of significant others and her/his initial sense of self, and extending to the older adults’ summation, integration, and evaluation of their life’s accomplishments (Erikson, 1963).

Definition of Ego Identity/Identity Formation/development

There are several definitions of both identity and ego identity⁴. Identity is a broad term that depicts the general aspects of the individual's entire personality – that is, for instance, the establishment, assimilation, or integration of societal norms, values, beliefs, and standards. Indeed, it has been proposed that identity is influenced by the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental characteristics, and the continuous interactions and/or relationships of significant components of a person’s unique world (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Some researchers maintain that individuals form their identity by selecting values, beliefs, and concepts that best delineate their sense of self (Adams, Gullotta, & Montemayor, 1992). Other authors such as Widick, Parker, and Knefelkamp (1978) define identity as “the organized set of images, the sense of self, which express who and what we really are and who really we want to become” (p. 2). As well, McCarthey and Moje (2002) say that identity “shapes or is an aspect of how humans

⁴ Psychologists use Identity/Ego identity synonymously; and there is not a marked differentiation between the two.

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make sense of the world and their experiences in it” (p. 228). Finally, Josselson (1980) refers to identity formation or ego identity as:

the work of the ego in integrating aspects of self into a coherent whole. Aspects of the self that have become individuated and autonomous must be incorporated into identity. Therefore, there is an interdependent sequence of: individuation/autonomy/identity formation. (p. 192)

Weathersby (1997) refers to ego (identity) development as a “sequence, cutting across chronological time, of interrelated patterns of cognitive, interpersonal, and ethical development that form unified, successive, and hierarchical world views” (p. 52). Finally, social interactionists such as Tajfel (1978) and Turner (1979, 1982) affirm that individual identity development always takes place in relationships with other individuals. The person develops identity either by involvement with specific social groups or by seeing himself/herself through others.

Nevertheless, one of the definitions widely known and used across all disciplines is that of Erikson (1950, 1959, 1963, 1968), considered the pioneer of psychosocial theory on human development, and one of the most influential writers and contributors to the identity literature. Although Marcia (1980) does not completely agree with all of the stages in Erikson’s epigenetic schema, he still recognizes Erikson’s contributions to the literature of identity. Erikson defines “ego identity,” in the context of his theory of human development, as:

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the aptitudes developed out of endowment, and with the opportunities offered in social roles. The sense of ego identity, then, is the accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others, as evidenced by the tangible promise of a "career." (1963, p. 261)

Ego identity means to be knowledgeable about who you are and how you fit into the rest of the world and society. It entails taking all one has learned about life, and oneself, and molding it into a cohesive self-image; one that a surrounding community finds meaningful. This self-image is sustained, more or less, over a period of time - or a lifetime. For Erikson (1968) identity is a universal self-awareness attained through crisis and sequential identifications composed through social relations.

In sum, to Erikson (1968) as asserted by other authors such as Hood, Riahinejad, and White, (1986), identity comprises an internal and external process - an internal process of relating to the inner self and to the world, as well as an external process of deciding on a social role(s) in the world. In his writings, Erickson also contends that the external world also has an impact on the development of identity.

Indeed, it has been stated by other writers and researchers that ethnic identity formation, similar to ego identity in Erikson's notion, is a "function of the interplay of internal and external variables as these operate within a given social environment" (Epstein, p. xiii). In other words, both ethnic identity and ego identity are generated in a psychosocial process – they are not given, or innate.

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Erikson's Eight Stages of Human Development "Ages of Man"

Erik Erikson is regarded the "architect of identity." To this date, Erikson's model of ego identity formation, deeply rooted in psychoanalytical theory, is considered one of the most encompassing because he extended the study of development past the childhood years, and is thus considered a paradigm shift. Erikson's stance was that an individual achieved identity after an intense period of exploration and experimentation. Achieved identity usually takes place during adolescence, a stage where the person or individual makes important commitments and decisions about his/her life, for instance, religious ideology, occupational identity, and political orientation (Erikson 1950, 1968, as cited in Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993).

Erikson brought to an end the notion that individuals develop in simple isolation while driven uniquely by biological forces excluding them from social interactions. Erikson's model maintains that identity development functions by means of the *epigenetic principle*. The epigenetic principle upholds that development is genetically programmed and is generated by the interaction of biological, psychological, and cultural influences.

Erikson argued that development is a lifelong process, from conception to death (1950). In other words, development takes place across the human lifespan. To comprehend how Erickson conceptualized the phenomenon of identity, one must place it in the context of his developmental theory, which often deals with the stages of human growth and maturation (Hoover, Marcia, & Parris, 1997). Even though identity is molded from the minute a child is born, identity is refined both in late adolescent years and during young adulthood (Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1959; Wilson, 1978).

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Erikson's (1950) model proposes that there are eight stages of identity development. Table 1 provides a visual explanation of Erikson's (1950) stages and/or his theory ("Stages of Man" or "Ages of Man") of Psychosocial Development from the stages of infancy to old (adult) age. Each stage graphically depicts the crises, life's resolutions, psychosocial virtues, and maladaptions and malignancies that are attached to each development stage from infancy to maturation.

Table 1. Erikson

Stages	
1 - Infant	
2 - Toddler	
3 - Pre-schooler	Ir
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Table 1. Erikson's stages and/or theory of psychosocial development

Stages	Crisis	Life's Important Relations	Individual's Resolutions	Psychosocial Virtues	Maladjusted & Malignancy
1 – Infant	Basic Trust vs. Mistrust	Mother	Child develops a belief in the environment to meet his/her social needs. Needs outmost comfort with very little uncertainty to trust himself/herself.	Hope Trust and Faith	Distortion and/or Withdrawal
2 – Toddler	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Both Parents Mother and Father	Child learns what he/she can control and develops free will. Tries to master physical environment while retaining self-esteem.	Will Determination Strength of Mind	Impulsivity, Impulse, Desire and/or Compulsion
3 – Pre-schooler	Initiative vs. Guilt	Family/ Relatives	Begin to learn to take action, to explore, to initiate, to imagine as well as feeling remorse for actions. Starts also to develop conscience and sexual identity.	Purpose and Courage	Ruthlessness, Shyness and/or Inhibition
4 – School-age child	Industry vs. Inferiority	Neighborhood and school	Learns to start to do things correctly as compare to standards or to others. Works on developing a sense of self-worth.	Competence Ability	Virtuosity and/or Inertia
5 – Adolescent (12-18)	<i>Identity vs. Role-Confusion</i>	<i>Peer groups and Role Models</i>	<i>Starts to develop a sense of self, testing limits, breaking dependent ties, and establishing new identity.</i>	<i>Fidelity and Loyalty</i>	<i>Fanaticism, Extremism Radicalism and/or Repudiation</i>
6 – Young adult (20's)	<i>Intimacy vs. Isolation</i>	<i>Partners and Friends</i>	<i>Gives and receives love. Starts to make long-term and personal commitment.</i>	<i>Love Affection</i>	<i>Promiscuity and/or Exclusivity</i>
7 – Middle age adult	Generativity vs. Self-Absorption and Stagnation	Household, Workmates and Family Circle	Guides the development of future generations. Search for satisfaction through career and family.	Care Attention	Overextension and/or Rejection
8 – Older adult	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Humanity Mankind	Reached acceptance of life. Gives importance to people and relationships developed over life span. Learn to accept loss and death.	Wisdom Good Judgments	Despair Misery

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Of Erikson's eight stages, the most relevant for this study are stage five, Integrity vs. Role Confusion and stage six, Intimacy vs. Isolation (see Table 1). These two stages are vital because they span the college years.

Marcia (1993) denotes that most researchers conduct their studies in university settings because the age of most college students, the age of identity resolution, is between 18-22, and also because college is a "definable social institution within which identity formation may be expected to take place" (p. 34) as individuals are on their own and have to make important decisions. In all, in past and recent studies, researchers have agreed that the socio-cultural dynamics of the college environment are highly influential for individuals as they develop independence, physical and mental maturation.

It is during college that individuals start making social connections and making some real world decisions that will influence important growth and development. Although the first four stages are important pieces of development, individuals are still in school, living at home during the time and cannot explore their identities since their parents tend to make important decisions for them. The importance of observing the adolescence and young adult stages derives from the fact that this age is the entry point for Latina immigrant women into the college environment. Hood, Riahinejad, and White (1986) found in a four-year study of college students that the growth of ego identity takes place primarily after the (second and third) year but not during the freshmen year (the first year).

Moreover, Chickering and Reisser (1993) concur with Erickson (1950) and Marcia (1993) by stating that the college years have been recognized as the time when college students start to embark on the exploration of their identity. Undeniably,

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Chickering and Reisser (1993) consider this stage in college students' lives to be extremely important since the college environment and the experiences encountered within could affect, positively or negatively, identity development.

Erikson (1968) postulates that the beginning of the identity crisis stage occurs in the teenage/youth years (college years), and that only individuals who succeed in resolving the crisis will be prepared to face future challenges in life. However, the identity crisis may well be recurring stage for adolescents, as the changing world demands us to continuously redefine ourselves. Erikson suggested that people experience an identity crisis when they lose "a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity." He articulates "...in puberty and adolescence all samenesses and continuities relied upon earlier are more or less questioned again, because of a rapidity of body growth which equals that of early childhood, and because of the new addition of genital maturity" (1950, p. 261). In the same light, Erikson illustrates identity development when he states:

With the establishment of a good initial relationship to the world of skills and tools, and with the advent of puberty, childhood proper comes to an end. Youth begins ... The growing and developing youths, faced with this physiological revolution within them, and with tangible adult tasks ahead of them are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day. (Erikson, 1950, p. 261)

And so, identity development is associated with the ability to internally condense everything that has been learned, such as models, acquired ideals, and roles, and then

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integrate them with the values and attitudes of the self. Identity development is facilitated by a period of moratorium. While in the period of moratorium, the young adolescent man or woman will “play,” “test,” or “try out” a variety of roles and personalities before settling and committing to one “true” life-style. In sum, while in this period of moratorium the young adult must reconcile what has been learned in life to that point. Erikson defines the period of moratorium as “a psychological stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult” (1950, 1963, p. 263).

Thus, role confusion emerges as the result of not yet completely developing one’s identity. Role confusion can be experienced and/or manifested in a number of ways; for example, when an adolescent strongly connects to a particular peer group or faction, or when an adolescent sexually identifies with others in order to understand or elucidate his/her own identity. An overtly strong identification with others might induce an adolescent to isolate and to exclude other individuals who might be, in some aspects, different from them, or that might have different cultural backgrounds and/or origins, histories, nations, classes, subcultures, life-styles, genders, teams, careers, skin colors, languages, and/or religion affiliations. Moreover, Clarke and Kleine (1984) posited that the failure to establish a stable and positive identity (role confusion and diffusion) would result in damaging other facets of the adolescent’s life, such as working, loving, childbearing, goal-attainment, and social relationships. Therefore, it is imperative that an adolescent resolve his/her role confusion. If not, the adolescent would have ineffectively passed and/or accomplished the most critical stage of identity development. If there is no

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James Marcia's Identity Status Model

To James Marcia's (1993), ego identity and the formation of ego identity is just as significant and crucial as it is for Erikson (1950, 1960). Indeed, Marcia (1980, 1993) also considers the formation of ego identity as a central task in the development of the character and personality of adolescence. He further declares that the formation of ego identity takes place...

... during late adolescence, the consolidation of identity marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Identity formation involves a synthesis of childhood skills, beliefs, and identification into a more coherent, unique whole that provides the young adult with both a sense of continuity with the past and a direction for the future. (p. 3)

Marcia (1993) also divides identity into three major aspects and/or categories: structural, phenomenological, and behavioral. The structural aspect refers to "the consequences identity has for the overall balance of psychodynamic processes" (p. 3). Its fusion during late adolescence then, makes those aspects of one's personality that are associated with judgment, delay, and efficacy more apparent. The phenomenological aspect of identity refers to the person's experience of "having or not having a sense of identity, as well as to the experience of one's particular style of identity formation" (p. 5). The behavioral aspect of the social-interactional facet of identity refers to "those

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Marcia's (1980) four identity statuses are: *diffusion*, *foreclosure*, *moratorium*, and *achievement*. According to Marcia (1980) these four statuses denote whether a crisis, a decision-making period, or an active search process has occurred -- moratorium and achievement -- and whether an evident identity commitment exists (in two areas: occupation and ideology) -- foreclosure and achievement. While in *moratorium* (the most anxious of the statuses), adolescents struggle with issues concerning ideological and occupational values as they strive to form an identity. In other words, in this crisis, individuals engage in self-exploration and examination of alternatives in an attempt to arrive at a life choice. Of all the statuses, moratorium is undoubtedly the most significant as it is the only one needed to acquire a full formed identity. Once adolescents commence to resolve issues related to occupation and ideology they then enter into the status of *identity achievement*. Adolescents that move forward into identity achievement are those who, finally, after a period of active search (crisis) and exploration, emerge with solid identity commitments and who pursue self-chosen occupational and ideological goals.

Marcia (1980) describes the statuses of identity diffusion and foreclosure as "pathological forms" of identity development. For instance, *identity diffusion* indicates the lack of either exploration or identity commitment. Individuals in this status "may or may not have experienced a crisis, and are not pursuing any [occupational or ideological] goals [whether or not they may have experienced a decision-making period]. They live on a sort of ad hoc, or day to day, basis" (Clarke & Kleine, 1984, p. 2). Adolescents in identity diffusion become "loners" and isolated individuals as they start to move away or

retreat from family members, peers, and authorities. Further, adolescents in the identity diffusion status can remain there for years without obtaining a sense of direction, shifting back and forth from diffusion to moratorium, and vice versa.

Individuals in *foreclosure* (the least anxious of the statuses) might have committed to occupational and ideological goals but, instead, most likely they have adopted identities prescribed by parents or other authority figures rather than ones they arrive at by themselves – without ever exploring alternatives or experiencing an identity crisis. This status describes individuals who make an identity commitment rooted in external influences learned since childhood (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993).

Table 2 presents a visual explication of how Marcia (1980) conceptualized exploration/crisis and commitment under the four-identity status model.

Table 2. Marcia's identity status model

CRISIS and/or EXPLORATION (Consideration of Alternatives)	COMMITMENT (Strong Preference of a Particular Alternative)		
	YES		NO
	YES	Identity Achievement	Moratorium
	NO	Foreclose	Identity Diffusion

Marcia's theory in combination with the development of his four statuses has contributed enormously not only to the identity formation literature (for males and, to some extent, to females) but also to the ethnic identity development literature by delineating the processes of identity formation in college students. Marcia's statuses are also closely linked to several ethnic identity models that

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Arthur Chickering's Seven Vectors of College Student Development

Arthur Chickering (1969) is recognized as a leader and force in higher education. He has been an influential contributor to college student development theory, student activities, and identity development theory. Chickering applies identity development directly to the college years and college student experience. Rooted in Erikson's identity vs. identity confusion stage of development (stage 5), Chickering (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) created a seven vectors model, that demonstrates how traditionally aged college students develop. These vectors of development include general tasks for identity resolution. According to research, the college atmosphere offers a special and ideal environment for identity development processes to take place. Undeniably, colleges present students with the opportunity to explore an array of circumstances, such as academic growth, career advancement, and relationships, both with parents and peers, and with one's personal values (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

The seven vectors of student development have become the basis of more recent and contemporary student developmental theory. Chickering's model, which encompasses the ages of 18-25 years, much like Erikson's model, believes that each vector has a central task that ought to be accomplished and mastered in order to have a successful resolution of the vector. In addition, Chickering's theory is similar to that of

Erikson's epigenetic principle, in that Chickering also maintains that the development of the vectors is carried on, as issues of identity are constantly re-examined all the way through an individual's lifespan. This is especially true as different experiences are integrated into the already established individual's identity. Chickering's model is linear, as is Erikson's, however, the difference in Chickering's model lies in that he presupposes that a student is able to operate all of the vectors concurrently. In effect, identity development takes up a fundamental place in Chickering (1969) and Chickering & Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of student development theory. The vectors are: 1) developing competence, 2) managing emotions, 3) achieving autonomy, 4) developing mature interpersonal relationships, 5) establishing identity, 6) developing purpose, and 7) developing integrity. The first four vectors are developmental in nature while the three remaining vectors furnish the manifestation of one's identity.

The first three vectors of development are unquestionably the most important vectors since they outline the basis for identity development. There are three kinds of competence in the first vector: 1) intellectual, 2) physical, 3) manual and interpersonal (previously called social) competence. These three areas are essential for students because each gives them self-confidence, strength, and the capacity to deal with the everyday challenges that life presents. In the second vector, *managing emotions*, students discover how to deal with key sentiments of aggression and sex and to widen their scope of emotions. Aggression and sex symbolize two of the most noteworthy emotions, which ought to be harnessed during the college years. As maintained by Chickering, during the pre-college and college years students have to fight with an array of strong sentiments that have both biological and social origins. The increased ability to manage these

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emotions effectively are developmental skills crucial to social concerns and rich individual development.

In vector three, *moving through autonomy toward interdependence* – Chickering considers interdependence as the capstone of development – it is a vital developmental stage for students as they commence to make important decisions in their lives without looking for help or relying on parents and peers. In other words, students start to mature slowly and they begin to learn to be not only self-sufficient but also “to take responsibility for pursuing self-chosen goals and become less bound by other’s opinions” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 47). However, once the phase of intense autonomy and self-determination is over, students begin to acknowledge and accept some parental involvement in their lives as they come to understand the responsibility they owe to their families and to society. Chickering and Reisser (1993) argue that, “(d)eveloping autonomy culminates in the recognition that one cannot operate in a vacuum and that greater autonomy enables forms of interdependence. Relationships with parents are revised. New relationships [emerge] ...peers bond ... Interpersonal context broadens to include the community, the society, the world” (p. 47). The phenomenon of interdependence keeps on developing throughout the remaining college years.

In the fourth vector, *developing mature interpersonal relationships*, the tasks involve a heightened tolerance and appreciation for differences in others, such as in values, backgrounds, appearances, and habits, as well as in the capacity for intimacy and trusting that relationships will endure through “thick and thin.” Reisser (1995) recognizes “that relationships provide powerful learning experiences about feelings, communication, sexuality, self-esteem, values, and other aspects of identity, for both men and women” (p.

508). One of the most significant objectives of the college experience is to encourage the acceptance of individual differences and developing an understanding for cultural diversity, which, as a consequence can lead to a better aptitude for intimacy. Students must be able to trust in order to maintain mature interpersonal relationships. They also ought to sustain open and honest communication, and unconditional positive regard.

The fifth vector, *establishing identity*, is critical because it relies on growth alongside the first four vectors. Then, once the student attains a solid sense of identity, changes come about in the remaining vectors. Initially, the fifth vector was established to underscore a student's capacity to develop a sense of self. Reisser (1995) suggests: "Any experience that helps students define 'who I am', 'who I am not' can help solidify a sense of self.... Personal stability and integration are the result" (p. 509). Having a sense of self and developing an identity refers to:

- 1) Feeling comfortable with one's body image and appearance
- 2) Developing comfort with gender and sexual orientation
- 3) [A] Sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context
- 4) [The] Clarification of one's self-concept through roles and life-style
- 5) [A] Sense of self in response to feedback from valued others
- 6) Self-acceptance and self-esteem, and
- 7) Personal stability, and integration. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 49)

In addition, establishing one's identity also includes acknowledging, accepting, embracing, caring, loving, adopting values, and feeling proud of one's family of origin and ethnic heritage. Though both Chickering and Reisser concede that it is impossible to

acquire all of these at once, they nonetheless state that the stage has already been set up to move forward toward the remaining two vectors.

Developing purpose is the sixth vector and it focuses on establishing appropriate plans and priorities. Development in the sixth vector takes place as the student answers not only the question “Who am I?,” but also “Who am I going to be?”; not just “Where am I?” but “Where am I going?” Growth necessitates the development of tactics that incorporate prioritizing in recreational and vocational interests, career choices, aspirations, and lifestyle choices. The final vector, *developing integrity*, involves the clarification of a personal set of beliefs that are reasonably consistent internally and provide at least a tentative guide for one’s appropriate behavior. Developing one’s integrity entails three overlapping stages; (a) humanizing values, (b) personalizing values, and (c) development of congruence. In other words, the seventh and final vector permits students to bring together all of the vectors to clarify their personal beliefs, which will provide a guide for future behavior.

It was not until 1993 that Chickering, along with his colleague Reisser, revised and updated Chickering’s 1969 work (which was based on empirical data from a study called “Project on Student Development in Small Colleges”) to make it more inclusive of gender, race, class, persons and/or students of diverse, cultural backgrounds, students from large universities, and non-traditional-aged students.

The 1993 revisions attended to and highlighted the interactions that existed among people and the social systems in which they function, as opposed to mere epigenetic concepts of identity development based on cognitive processes of development. To reflect this inclusiveness, in the 1993 revisions Chickering and Reisser

added a section to a chapter on establishing identity, which they labeled “[the] sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context” (p. 180). In fact, other researchers, such as Josselson (1996), agreed that identity “is not just a private, individual matter ... [if not] a complex negotiation between the person and society” (p. 31). In addition, D’augelli (1994) considered identity as “the dynamic processes by which an individual emerges from many social exchanges experienced in different contexts over an extended historical period” (p. 324). Finally, to highlight the importance of gender, race, and culture in identity development, Davis (2002) added that the “construction of identity also depends ... on the cultural, social, and political context in which the processes occur” (p. 509). Chickering was more specific and added to his establishing identity vector that which he thought was lacking in Erikson’s stages fifth and sixth stages. Chickering thought Erikson’s stages to be incomplete and in need of more finessing and/or refinement.

The evolution of Erikson, Marcia, and Chickering’s work on the identity development of students has laid the groundwork for developing research on ethnic identity and thus expanding the literature in this area. Erikson provided the overall theoretical framework, Marcia operationalized Erikson’s theory and expanded it by adding some (few) elements through which women’s identity could also be understood (although not totally). Finally, Chickering provided the necessary and final tools with which to expand research on college students by developing the seven vectors of college student development. The development of these seven vectors was crucial as they also contained important elements that led to research into the ethnic development of college students.

Although Erikson, Marcia, and Chickering provided a valuable lens for theories on identity, ethnic identity and human development, they negated theories regarding women's development. There is a great deficiency in the literature when it comes to theories and studies of women's development, as most theories are geared toward traditional college age, white, middle class male students.

Past and present theories of human development are frequently generated in terms of male development, ignoring female development (Josselson, 1987; Kuk, 1990). Delworth (1989) writes: "(c)urrent theories and [the] construct[ion] of human development, including those that focus on students during the college years, do not attend adequately to ... [the] fundamental differences in male vs. female perceptions and 'ways of knowing'" (p. 163). Kerka (1992) expresses her dismay with prevailing theories and models that led to the outcasting of woman. Kerka says, "a major criticism of prevailing theories is that they are based on male experiences [only]" (p. 1). There is a need for studies that are more inclusive of women of color. The focal point for this research will be to explore in-depth perceptions of women's development, their voices, and their ways of knowing.

Theory of Women's Development

Understanding Female/College Women Development

The following groups of scholars have one thing in common - they all reject and dispute the traditional male-centered research paradigm that silence women voices. They reject the work of Perry, Piaget, Kohlberg, Freud, Weber, and Erikson. For instance, developmental psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982), Harvard University's first professor of

gender studies, the mastermind behind *In a Different Voice*, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) the architects of *Women's Ways of Knowing*, all dismayed and concerned that most important theories of human development had been originated by men, leaving women experiences and voices at the margin, created new theories and empirical studies related to female development. A brief discussion on each of these scholar's contributions will follow.

In a Different Voice

Gilligan's (1982) work is based on three studies she conducted: 1) the "college student study" (from 16 female students who dropped out of a course based on moral and political choices), 2) the "abortion decision study" (from 29 women ranging from 15-33 years old representing various social and ethnic backgrounds), and 3) the "rights and responsibilities study" (from a group of males and females ranging across life cycles between ages 6-60). Based on the results of these three studies, Gilligan was able to determine that women have the propensity to be more loving, less theoretical (abstract) and less competitive than men, as they speak "in a different voice."

Gilligan's (1982) theory has three major divisions and/or stages, as does Kohlberg's, however, Gilligan's stages include a transition between the main stages, which consists of changes in the sense of self, as opposed to changes in the cognitive capability. The stages are: 1) *preconventional*, 2) *conventional*, and 3) *post conventional*, and there is a transitional period between each stage. In the first stage, *preconventional*, the goal is individual survival while the transition period calls for a change from selfishness to responsibility toward others. The *conventional* stage is goodness as self-

sacrifice, while the transition period is from goodness to truth. The issue here is to recognize the morality of care and embrace care not only for the self but also for others. The third and final stage, *post conventional*, calls for nonviolence; to not hurt others, or the self. In essence, Gilligan's work criticizes 1) existing theories which are centered on males' experiences, and 2) the lack of women's perspectives in developmental models. As indicated by Gilligan, these models frequently delineate maturation as separation and individuation. Nonetheless, women's lives are closely linked by social interaction and personal relations. For that reason, attachment is most important in women's development, as their lives are much less linear than the theories regarding them.

Gilligan's (1982) theory was groundbreaking and it touched a sensitive chord in both men and women; especially in men as they started to understand the limitations of "using only male samples for studies and only male thinking as the basis for moral decisions" (Goldberg, 2000, p. 702). Gilligan's work has also tremendously influenced feminist theory. Gilligan believes that women develop through stages of moral growth, the same as men, yet that the stages are different. This belief led her to produce her own stage theory of moral development for women: "Gilligan's Stages of the Ethic of Care."

Women's Ways of Knowing

Belenky et al. (1986) also think along the same lines as Gilligan (1982) when referring to women's development. Like Gilligan, they also believe that physical connections and healthy relationships are fundamental to a woman's psychological development and to a woman's way of knowing. Belenky et al. claimed that women's thought patterns are more contextual and more embedded in relational concerns than

those of men. They find men to be more compartmentalized, while women are more web-related. In other words, men tend to worry about searching solutions while women search for nurturing and development.

Drawing on the work of Perry (1970) in cognitive (epistemological) development, Belenky et al. (1986) divided a woman's standpoint of knowing into five principal epistemological perspectives. The five epistemological perspectives developed by Belenky et al. are: 1) *Silence*, 2) *Received Knowledge*, 3) *Subjective Knowledge*, 4) *Procedural Knowledge*, and 5) *Constructed Knowledge*. The first perspective, *silence*, refers to the isolation, fearfulness, and overwhelming silence women experience. Women in this position were "mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 15). In the second perspective, *received knowledge*, women see themselves as capable of receiving and reproducing knowledge from outside "all-knowing external authorities"; however, they still were not capable of producing or generating that knowledge by themselves and on their own terms (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 15). In other words, receiving, retaining, and imitating information and knowledge from external authorities was deemed the principal task of learning.

The third perspective is *subjective knowledge*. In this perspective there was an important and dramatic shift where women started to view themselves as an authority - they started to recognize the self as an authority. Moreover, Belenky et al. (1986) stated that subjective knowledge is a "perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited" (p. 15).

The fourth perspective presented by Belenky et al. (1986) is *procedural knowledge*. In this perspective the focal point centers on the procedures, techniques, and

skills of dealing with external truth and authority. Belenky et al. described procedural knowledge to be a “position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge” (p. 15).

The final epistemological perspective, *constructed knowledge*, represents a combination of the knower (self), the known (mind), and the (voice) communication of the known. Belenky et al. (1986) wrote that, in this perspective, “women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjectivity and objectivity strategies of knowing” (p. 15). The constructed knower in their study was finally able to realize that knowledge (and/or truth) was changeable and continuously in a process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction.

The theory proposed by Belenky et al. (1986) acknowledges cognitive development as a culturally (ethnically and racially) influenced psychological procedure. Love and Guthrie (1999) agree that the work of Belenky et al. denoted “an important investigation into the processes of cognitive development because it focused on women, social classes, and differences that are significant in our society” (p. 9).

Overall, the work of Belenky et al. (1986) had several positive implications for both, formal and informal bodies of literature, as well as practical applications for Student Affairs professionals. By interviewing women from different backgrounds, settings, and situations, Belenky et al. were able to depict a process of development much less linear and more “varied” than that of Perry’s study at Harvard University. Their work with women, even though the majority of their subjects were Caucasian, opened the doors for furthering and improving in-depth studies concerning women’s development. In all, Belenky et al.’s work contributed significant and valuable data to the comprehension

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of the cognitive development of college students. And thus, it is easy to evaluate the importance of their work with regard to this study; their cognitive development theory can contribute and shed light on Latina immigrant cognitive development: the way they develop, their way of knowing, and then how all of this combines to shape their ethnic identity development while in college.

Ethnic Identity Development

Definition of Ethnic Identity and Other Related Social and Racial Terminologies

Before proceeding forward it is important to clarify and define the key terms that will be used throughout this review. This section will explore definitions for the following terms: ethnicity, racial/ethnic groups, and ethnic identity. In referring to works on ethnicity, ethnic groups, and ethnic identity, I have made an attempt to remain faithful to the original terminologies employed by the many authors whose works will be taken into account in this discussion.

Definition of Ethnicity

The term 'ethnicity' comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, which means "nation" "people" or "tribe" (Webster's New World Dictionary 3rd Ed., 1991; Helms, 1995). According to Hutchinson and Smith (1996) 'ethnicity' is a relatively new word in our vocabulary. They remark that "(e)thnicity as a term and a subject of study is very recent" (p. v). The term 'ethnicity' first emerged in the 1950s in the English language and it was documented for the first time in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1953 (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996, p. 4). Generally, though, Hutchinson and Smith claim that even if this term

is recent, the “sense of kinship, group solidarity, and common culture to which it refers is as old as the historical record” (p. 3).

The American Heritage Dictionary (1989) defines ‘ethnicity’ as “the condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group” (p. 242). Ethnicity, then, is a term, which helps to distinguish ethnic groups within specific populations. Various elements, such as cultural values and customs, beliefs, languages, shared nationalities, common ancestries, family patterns, cultural norms, cultural traditions, religions, music, histories, and social values have traditionally been the primary differentiators among ethnic groups (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). In other words, ethnicity refers to the cultural qualities and traits that socially define an ethnic group.

As indicated by several researchers, the central element of ethnicity centers on either having a common origin or portraying characteristics that set one group apart from another, or both. Garcia (as cited in Rivera-Santiago, 1996) asserts that ‘ethnicity’ consists of three unique elements: “ethnic consciousness (awareness and expression of specific cultural behavior); ethnic identification relates (cultural group membership or association with a given ethnic group); [and] identity (self-identifier or self-label)” (p. 15). Additionally, researchers such as DeVos and Romanucci-Ross (1982) define ethnicity as a specific characteristic of shared distinctive cultural traditions, and also as a heritage that spans generations. [Furthermore, Rose (as cited in Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993) conceptualizes ethnicity “as a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage (e.g., language, custom, and religion) passed on between generations” (p. 6). Lastly, Ponterotto and Pedersen make an important salient

point about ethnicity: they argue that ethnicity is not a genetically determined phenomenon, but rather a culturally learned experience.

Definition of Ethnic Groups

An ethnic group is a category, group, or subgroup of people whose members are deemed socially distinct. The distinction derives from a common ancestral descent and shared cultural heritage on the basis of language, custom, religion, and physical characteristics (Bernal & Knight, 1993). Yinger (as cited in Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993) expands on the definition of an ethnic group as:

A segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients. (p. 7)

Ponterotto and Pedersen (1993) state that an ethnic group “incorporates classifications of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage” (p. 9). Moreover, Schermerhorn (1996) defines an ethnic group as:

a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect form, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these. (p. 17)

Additionally, Smith (1991) observes that an ethnic group:

may be defined as a reference group called upon by people who share a common history and culture, who may be identifiable because they share similar physical features and values and who, through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with others, identify themselves as being a member of that group. Ethnic identity is the sum total of group member's feelings about those values, symbols, and common histories that identify them as a distinct group. (p. 181-182)

Finally, Isajiw (1990) observed that an ethnic group is “ a phenomenon that gives rise to [1] social organization, an objective phenomenon that provides structure for the ethnic community and [2] identity, a subjective phenomenon that gives to individuals a sense of belonging and to the community a sense of oneness and historical meaning” (p. 35). The Latina college immigrant group this study observes falls under the definition of an ethnic group due to the similar characteristics they display as members of their ethnic group.

Definitions for Ethnic Identity

Researchers claim that ethnic identity is an essential component of the self that provides all individuals with a sense of belonging, and, most importantly, also provides the individual with a sense of historical continuity (Phinney, 1991; Phinney, 1996; Smith, 1991). As asserted by Bernal and Knight (1993), ethnic identity “constitutes a basic part of the ethnic individual's personality, and is a powerful contributor to ethnic group formation, maintenance, and social ties” (p. 2). In this section we will see the many ways

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in which authors from within the social sciences (sociology, anthropology, and psychology) define the perimeters of ethnic identity. In their definitions, the authors do not try to take a specific standpoint, but rather compliment one another by presenting ethnic identity from social, individual, and group scales.

Traditionally, ethnic identity has been defined by its relationship to language, behaviors, beliefs, customs, culture, religion, social activities, and commitment to a group. Indeed, Smith (1991) affirms that members of an ethnic group share common characteristics, such as, cultural values, common histories, symbols, language, and ancestry. Echeverriarza (1991) defines ethnic identity as being made up of six dimensions, which include language, cultural heritage, ethnic interaction with fellow ethnics, ethnic pride and identity, ethnic distance and perceived discrimination, and proximity of generation to country of origin. Smith (1991) defines ethnic identity as a process of “coming to terms with one’s ethnic-racial membership group as a salient reference group. It is a learned aspect of an individual’s overall personality development. Through shared historical circumstances, ethnicity serves as a common referent for a sense of peoplehood” (p. 182). Further, Rotheran and Phinney (1987) define ethnic identity as “one sense of belonging to an ethnic group, and the part of one’s thinking, perceptions, feelings and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership” (p. 13). Rotheran and Phinney argue the point that ethnic identity is also associated with an individual’s capability to empower herself/himself and then embody their ethnicity(ies) in the most positive way. Similarly, Steinberg (1996) concurs with Rotheran and Phinney, stating that ethnic identity is a facet of one’s sense of identity regarding ancestry or racial group membership.

Bernal, Saenz, and Knight (1991) define ethnic identity as a “key cultural variable. ... [a] psychological construct that addresses the important question, ‘Who am I?’ It is a set of self-ideas about one’s own ethnic group membership, and thus is part of the self-concept” (p. 136). Helms (1995) defines ethnic identity as “a social identity based on the culture of one’s ancestors’ national or tribal group(s), as modified by the demands of the culture in which one’s group currently resides” (p. 16). Finally, Tajfel’s (1981) definition of ethnic identity from a social perspective is “...that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership...” (p. 255). And so, according to Tajfel’s social identity theory, one’s knowledge of group membership, and the value and emotional meaning connected to it, comprises one component of an individual’s self-concept.

Writers such as Garcia (1982), Giles Llado, Mckirnan, and Taylor (1979), Phinney (1990), Phinney and Alpuria (1996), and Bernal and Knight (1993) are all in agreement regarding ethnic identity as a multidimensional construct, which encompasses ethnic feelings, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. Moreover, they agree that this multidimensional construct is defined by the participation of an individual within the cultural practices and activities of their particular ethnic group, as well as by positive attitudes, feelings of pride, and feelings of belonging to their group. In their study, Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz (1996) state that “(e)thnic identity has been conceptualized as a complex construct including a commitment and sense of belonging to the group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in social activities of the group” (p. 168). In other words, Phinney et al.

consider the group as being an important component of the self that is an important part of ethnic identity. Helms (1995) appears to share this opinion which argues ethnic identity is multidimensional in nature. In other words, she also believes that ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct, which encompasses ethnic feelings, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. Finally, Bernal and Knight present three illustrations of the multidimensionality and/or different dimensions/components of ethnic identity. The first dimension is self-identification and the way individuals view their ethnic selves. They explicate that self-identification refers to the “ethnic labels or terms that people use in identifying themselves, and to the meaning of those labels” (p. 1). Bernal and Knight (1993) then go on to explain the other two dimensions:

Another dimension is people’s knowledge about their ethnic culture: its traditions, customs, values, and behaviors. In order to know who they are, ethnic people need to have some degree of information about their culture. A third dimension is preferences, feelings, and values that people have about their ethnic group membership and culture. (p. 1)

There is enough evidence in the literature that emphasizes the importance of ethnic identity development in young adults/college students. As clearly stated by various researchers, ethnic identity is the incorporation of an individual’s ethnicity into her/his intrinsic self-concept or image, as well as her/his commitment with her/his own ethnic group. In her article, Phinney (1991) states that “(a)mong the specific components that have been suggested as key elements of ethnic identity are self-identification as a group member; attitudes and evaluations relative to one’s group; attitudes about oneself as a group member; extent of ethnic knowledge and commitment; and ethnic behaviors and

practices” (p. 194). Aboud’s (1987) conceptualization of ethnic identity centers on ethnic self-identification. She says that ethnic self-identification refers to the “sense of oneself as a member of an ethnic group, possessing attributes common to that group” (p. 32).

Erkut (1993) concurs with Phinney (1990, 1991) and Aboud (1987) and further expands by saying that there are three reasons to be concerned with ethnic self-identification:

- 1) First, when a person’s ... ethnic self-identification is acknowledged, the acknowledgment serves as validation. It gives a symbolic, “welcoming” signal of understanding and acceptance. This is because personal identification confers upon individuals both a sense of belonging and a sense of being special.
- 2) The second reason to be concerned with ... ethnic self-identification is that it is a dynamic process, it responds to changes in social consciousness and ideological swings.
- 3) The third reason is that, like all identity processes, ... ethnic identity has a developmental course. (p. 2-4)

Therefore, establishing a clear stance with regard to ethnicity and ethnic identity is vital for adolescents and young adults to be able to adjust and identify with their ethnic groups. In effect, Smith (1991) argues that identification with one’s ethnic group is critical for the positive mental well-being of an ethnic person. In fact, Smith states that, the “(a)ccptance of one’s ethnic group as a positive reference group leads to positive self-esteem, whereas rejection ... leads to self-estrangement and maladaptive

psychological behavior. A sense of ethnic belonging is psychologically important for people, because it serves to anchor the individual's relatedness to others in society" (p. 186).

Importance of Ethnic Identity

Research in the area of ethnic identity is fairly abundant among various minority ethnic groups. In spite of all the empirical research, few of these studies have dealt directly with the experiences of immigrant students in the college setting and the manner in which these students - specifically the Latina immigrant college students - construct and develop their ethnic identities. The research also generally avoids delineating how Latinas adjust to this country, navigate the system of higher education, and manage acculturation issues that impact their ethnic identity development, positively or negatively. Moreover, little is known in the literature about how immigrants – specifically, Latina foreign-born (1.5 generation) immigrants who arrive to the United States, their new host country, in the early pre-teens years of their lives - deal with cultural factors such as customs, language, and values; and how these factors might affect their ethnic identity development.

Identity development is an intricate undertaking for all adolescents and young adults. It is particularly complex for those adolescents that belong to ethnic and minority groups, especially the group this study is most concerned with - the Latina immigrant college student group. Research on identity and ethnic identity development of Latinos in the United States regards Latinos as a homogenous group, ignoring the many different

traits and characteristics that encompass the entire population. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (1995) corroborate that:

Latino identity is not a monolithic phenomenon. Mexican immigrants, Mexican-Americans, Cuban-Americans, mainland Puerto Rican, and immigrants and refugees from Central and South America are distinct populations although they have unifying characteristics. They share various degrees of familiarity with the Spanish language and such cultural traits as the importance of the extended family (familism), an emphasis on spiritual and interpersonal relationships, respect for authority, and an emphasis on the here-and-now rather than on the future-time orientation valued by the dominant American culture. Yet it is important to emphasize that Latinos in the United States are diverse demographic and sociocultural populations. (p. 322)

Waters (1999), a sociologist who studies racial and ethnic identity and immigrant assimilation, one of the few authors that focuses her research on immigrants from the West Indies, affirms that the study of identity issues among immigrants is a critical area of concern. She says that “(t)he question of identity has always been particularly salient for the immigrant. Arriving as a stranger in a new society, the immigrant must decide how he or she self-identifies, and the people in the host society must decide how they will categorize or identify [with] the immigrant” (p. 44). Similarly, Griggs and Dunn (1995) clearly state in their article that “(f)or immigrant Latino adolescents, identity formation and individuation can be especially challenging and problematic. This is because their cultural values include strong family loyalty and allegiance, values that are in conflict

with the behavioral styles of mainstream U.S. adolescents who strive for self-expression and individuality” (p.3).

Hence, young adults (and especially college students) who belong to other ethnic, minority, or immigrant groups, confront an additional dilemma surrounding their opposing identities due to the associations and memberships they make with their own ethnic groups (home) and with the mainstream culture. Ortiz and Garcia (2000) pointed out that “(s)tudents from diverse ethnic backgrounds often find themselves in the middle of a process that embodies their own psychological development as well as the demands of two more environments - home and college” (p. 2). Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz (1996) highlight a salient point in support of the above statement. Phinney et al. say that “(i)n addition to identity concerns regarding occupation, ideology, and gender roles, ethnic minority adolescents are confronted with issues related to being a member of a group that may differ culturally from mainstream society, that is typically of lower status and power in society, and that may be subject to discrimination” (p. 168). Consequently, the adolescent college student sees herself/himself trapped in a web between her/his parents’ ethnic principles, beliefs, and values, and those of the mainstream society. As a result, the dualism that occurs between the students’ two cultures becomes an additional pressure to the already existing struggles inherent within an adolescent college student’s self-identity. And thus, Champion (1993) explains that, for this reason, one might frequently find these adolescents with more than one ethnic identity: that of their parents and that of the mainstream culture.

An expanding body of literature affirms that the development of ethnic identity is crucial because it helps individuals to come to terms with their ethnic membership. This

development is a valuable point of reference for ethnic groups. It is also a vital component of a person's overall self-identity (Smith, 1991). Moreover, Smith (1991) highlights the importance of ethnic reference groups: they function as a person's psychological connectiveness to her/his groups since they share a similar cultural heritage, a sense of social relatedness, and symbolic cultural ties. She remarks that reference groups facilitate adolescents with the opportunity to reflect and regard situations from their ethnic groups' points of view. Smith indicated that an ethnic reference group is one in which members:

share a common history and culture, ... may be identifiable because they share similar physical features and values and, ... through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with others, identify themselves as being a member of that group. Ethnic identity is the sum of total of group member's feelings about those values, symbols and common histories that identify them as a distinct group. Moreover, ... a person does not belong to an ethnic group by choice; rather, he or she must be born into such group and becomes related to it through emotional and symbolic ties. (1991, p. 181-182)

Furthermore, researchers such as DeVos and Romanucci-Ross (1982) have indicated that the process of ethnic identification - similar to the role of ethnic reference groups - is also a pivotal element in the development one's ethnic identity. Both processes describe ethnic identification as the development of a true consciousness of the self within a particular group, followed by the development of great feelings of respect and pride, which eventually encompasses the foundation for the development of a healthy self-concept.

According to Rosenthal and Feldman (1992), in order for a culturally diverse adolescent to attain a stable self-identity, she/he ought to incorporate their ethnic and racial identities with that of personal identity. Indeed, Phinney and Alpuria (1996) say that ethnic identity is an important element of a more general formation process of identity. In a previous article, Phinney and Alpuria (1991) affirmed that ethnic identity is a highly significant component of identity development. To summarize, Phinney (1990) remarks that ethnic identity is especially significant for those persons who live in pluralistic societies and whose groups and cultures are discriminated against, underrepresented, and threatened by the mainstream culture.

Adolescence is an emotionally turbulent period of life, due in part to the physical and psychological changes taking place within the individual. In addition, adolescence is also a phase associated with substantial internal and cognitive transformations within the self. Erikson (1959) claims that before an individual reach the final stage of development, she/he ought to come to terms with her/his cultural identity. Blos (1962) and Eric Erikson (1968) acknowledge adolescence as a crucial life-stage for identity formation and individual development within a social context. Finally, Aries and Moorehead (1989) assert that for those individuals who belong to an ethnic group, ethnic identity is the most important component of identity because 1) it makes them feel part of a social support group, 2) it helps them develop a positive mental well being, and 3) it helps them develop a positive image of the self. Accordingly, striving for a unified and integrated sense of self may help to define an individual's personal goals and a sense of direction, as well as to promote a positive constructive integration into society.

Nevertheless, empirical research has shown that, for culturally diverse young adults, identity formation is much more complex and it may occur as a result of the following characteristics: language differences, behavioral patterns, skin color, cultural values and norms, social stereotypes, fears, and parent's misconceptions (Phinney, 1990; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992; Smith, 1991). Altogether, one's self-identity is multifaceted, especially so in adolescents with a different cultural background who have previously established ethnic and cultural attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and preferences.

Authors like Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990) stress the value of continuing research on ethnic identity. Both authors are of the opinion that conducting research on ethnic identity is important because it provides a sensitive awareness to help better understand those individuals seeking and striving for a sense of unity and connectiveness wherein the self provides meaning for one's direction in life and creates meaning for one's sense of ethnic identity. Bernal and Knight (1993) also address the significance in studying ethnic identity. They effectively rationalize that it is important to study ethnic identity, "in order to understand the psychology of ethnic minority people, it is essential to attend to critical information about their differences and distinctiveness. These differences and distinctiveness are related to culturally based behaviors, customs, languages, values, and cognitive styles" (p. 2). Spencer and Markstrom-Adams construct the formation of ethnic identity as a procedure in which the ethnic individual is continuously evaluating the "fit" between the self and the different social systems within her/his environment. In all, as Steinberg (1996) puts it, ethnic identity development is a fundamental human need because it gives individuals a sense of belonging and historical continuity.

Developing Ethnic Identity

The development of ethnic identity is vital for the psychological functioning and well-being of an individual (Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1990; Sadowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995). Indeed, Sadowsky et al. (1995) state that “(t)he ethnic identity process is a psychological phenomenon” (p. 134). Smith (1991) concurs by maintaining that “(a)n individual whose ethnic identity is anchored to his or her membership group stands a greater chance of being psychologically healthy than one whose identity is marginal in relationship to his/ [her] actual membership group” (p. 186). Hoare (1991) suggests that psychological adjustment is essential in relation to one’s ethnicity. He further claims that if an individual does not identify with her/his ethnicity of origin, the result will be maladaptive behavior. However, these authors have all recognized that the formation of ethnic identity is an extremely intricate process for young adults: it involves an interface between contextual and developmental factors (i.e. family, parents’ involvement in the ethnic community) (Erikson, 1968; Steinberg, 1996; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Phinney & Alpuria, 1996).

Additionally, Rosenthal and Feldman (1992) remark that the development of an individual’s ethnic identity is a difficult and constant process associated with several adaptation issues. For instance, environment plays a critical role in the shaping of a person’s sense of solidarity within her/his ethnicity. Negative feelings about oneself may predispose an individual’s rationale when attempting to cope with ethnic conflicts. Therefore, according to the findings in the literature, when conducting studies on identity and ethnic identity, it is necessary to connect the studies to other aspects of the subject’s

personality, such as, self-motivation, self-concept, cultural-self, self-esteem, and self-aspirations (Phinney & Chavira 1991; Phinney & Chavira, 1992).

Ethnic Identity of College Students

Ethnic identity development takes place in every college campus in this country where there are students of color. Developing a positive ethnic identity has proven to have numerous significant and positive outcomes for ethnically diverse college students. For instance, “[the] ability to achieve a successful college experience” is arguably one of the most important positive outcomes (Ortiz & Garcia, 2000, p. 2). There exists a strong correlation between: 1) students that make a clear commitment to their ethnic identities and 2) self-esteem (Phinney, 1989). There are a series of studies that have supported the notion that a strong ethnic identity is positively connected with self-esteem (Belgrave et al., 1994; Wright, 1985). Additionally, other studies have shown that students who have explored and made a strong commitment to their ethnic identities as well as to their ethnic group identification, obtain higher scores on self-esteem, self-evaluation, self-concept, and social and peer interactions as compared to those students who have not engaged in exploration and, as a result, have not reached a higher level of ethnic commitment (Phinney & Alpuria, 1990; Saylor & Aries, 1999). In Phinney’s (1991) study on ethnic identity and self-esteem, she asserts that:

When individuals [students] self-identify as group members, evaluate their group positively, prefer or are comfortable with their group membership, are interested in, knowledgeable about, and committed to the group, and are involved in ethnic practices, they may be said to have a high ethnic identity [and self-esteem].

Alternate terms might be a strong, secure, or an achieved ethnic identity.

Conversely, when there is little ethnic interest, knowledge, commitment, or involvement, and negative evaluation of the group and of one's membership in the group, then ethnic identity could be called low, weak, or diffuse [low self-esteem]. (p. 194)

Parham and Helms (1985) found that Black students with low levels of racial identity resulted in low self-esteem, demonstrating, therefore, that low levels of racial identity are directly associated with low self-esteem. In contrast, students with a high level of racial identification are connected to high levels of self-esteem. Hence, high levels of self-esteem can promote high identification and further encourage one's exploration of intrinsic ethnic issues. Phinney and Chavira (1992) emphasize that having a clear knowledge of one's background, belonging to a particular ethnic group, can be a positive factor in connection to one's feelings about herself/himself.

There are two basic types of models and scales that have been developed to explore the formation of ethnic identity. First, those that are to be used generically with any particular ethnic group (Phinney, 1990, 1992, 1993; Atkison, Morten, & Sue, 1983, 1989, 1993), and second, those that have been designed to examine exclusively specific ethnic groups (Arce, 1981; Cross, 1971, 1991, 2001; Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984, 1995; Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Kim, 1981). For the Latin American population, a few quantitative scales have been developed to assess acculturation processes and the accumulation of acculturative stress (Saldaña, 1994). Additional studies further examine the outcome of how acculturative stress affects the attitudes and behavioral patterns of Latin American immigrants (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987). Ultimately, there exist

few studies that have attempted to deal with qualitative aspects of Latina immigrants' emotional conflicts, self-reflections, predicaments, process of identity development, and experiences acculturating to the host culture, particularly to college campuses.

The guiding lens for this study will be Phinney's (1990, 1992, 1993) three-stage model of ethnic identity development. Her theory offers a helpful framework for the examination and understanding of ethnic identity development as part of one's overall identity formation. Phinney's theory proposes a three stage-model of ethnic identity development. Her model looks at individuals as they progress from a period of unexamined ethnic identity to a period of achieved and committed ethnic identity. Moreover, Phinney's three stage-models strategically illustrate the pursuit that individuals sustain in order to comprehend both their ethnic origins and their position as part of a minority group. In all, Phinney's theory will equip this study to better understand the process that foreign-born 1.5 generation Latina immigrant college students go through when exploring the meaning of their ethnicity within the mainstream U.S. culture. Finally, her theory also offers an understanding of the effects of acculturation on ethnic identity achievement, and on ethnic self-identification.

Another guiding lens for this study is Berry et al.'s (1992) model of acculturation. The model provides a frame in which to comprehend the process of acculturation. Berry et al.'s theory suggests that acculturation is an intricate, multidimensional phenomenon that entails the acquisition of new values, behaviors, and attitudes. In addition, this theory proposes a way to understand the process of acculturation and the aspects that influence its outcomes. According to Berry et al., there are four possible outcomes to the process of acculturation: 1) assimilation, 2) separation, 3) integration, and 4) marginalization. This

theory might be helpful for identifying which stages and acculturation outcomes the Latina 1.5 immigrant college students are experiencing when this study is conducted. By using these authors' theories and the scales derived from their theories, the intent is not to produce results or statistics but to obtain the stories, voices, and feelings of the students. This study is concerned with meaning and process more than outcomes or products.

Finally, although Phinney's models have contributed a great deal to the literature of ethnic identity, as the leader in much of the empirical research conducted on adolescents and college students across all ethnic groups, her models have been mostly applicable to US native-born ethnic groups (e.g., Mexican American, Asian Americans, African Americans), or to immigrant children who have arrived to the United States when they were small babies, but not to foreign-born ethnic groups that are arriving between the ages of 12-13, i.e., the 1.5 generation. Therefore, a concern for this study is the applicability and relevance these models have to the recent increase of young 1.5 generation immigrant groups with a myriad of nationalities arriving to the United States from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. A thorough discussion of Phinney's (1992) three-stage model theory and Berry et al.'s (1992) model of acculturation and four outcomes to acculturation will be follow shortly.

Stages of Ethnic Identity Development from Different Theoretical Perspectives

Overview of Theoretical Perspectives

There are a number of different theoretical perspectives from which ethnic identity formation has been investigated. However, this review will only focus on the three most relevant to the study of Latina immigrant college students. The first theoretical

perspective is one of the more salient perspectives and it comes from *Identity Formation Theory* as addressed by developmental and psychodynamic theorists, such as Cross (1971, 1991), Phinney (1990, 1992, 1996) and Smith (1991). Another heavily studied perspective derives from *Social Identity Theory*, as discussed by social psychologists, especially Tajfel (1978). Finally, a third perspective that has gained considerable attention in the last two decades is *Acculturation Theory*. This theory has developed from the research of anthropologists and sociologists such as Berry (1980, 1986), Berry, Vichol, Minde, and Mok (1987), Keefe and Padilla (1987), and Padilla (1980). It is important to highlight that while this review will discuss these three different theoretical perspectives, this is not an indication that these perspectives will entirely dictate the course of this study. Nor is this an indication that this study will focus on a particular single perspective or theorist. On the contrary, all of these theoretical perspectives will contribute greatly to this study on Latina immigrant population, as they will guide, inform and develop research and interview questions.

Theoretical Perspective on Ethnic Identity Formation

A recent body of literature suggests that ethnic identity development, similar to ego identity development and/or formation, is an active process that changes over time and is attained through a process of self-exploration (Alba, 1985; Phinney, 1990, 1992). While some prominent investigators such as Cross (1971, 1991, 2001), Helms (1990), Kim (1981), and Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983, 1989) have centered the bulk of their research on specific ethnic groups (African Americans, White Americans, and Asian Americans populations) when developing and applying their models, Phinney (1990,



1992, 1996) has been a pioneer in researching and developing models that can be applicable to multiple ethnic groups.

Most of Phinney's work has centered on minority youth while other models of ethnic identity have focused on an adult population. Phinney's model focuses on the elements that are shared among ethnic groups while, simultaneously, attempting to maintain and respect the traditions, histories, and cultural values of the different groups. Phinney and Alpuria (1990) used "continuous search and commitment" scores to ascertain the significance of ethnic identity as a social identity when compared to other variables, such as occupation, gender, political and religious identities. They found in their study that although occupation and gender were the most important identities for all groups, ethnic identity was the highest for immigrants and persons of minority status. Phinney affirms that ethnic identity is a phenomenon that takes place across groups. She states, "(m)y research over the last several years has been aimed at developing and testing a model of ethnic identity development that is (1) theoretically based on Erikson's ... writings, (2) congruent both with Marcia's ... ego identity statuses and with the models of ethnic identity in the literature, and (3) applicable across ethnic groups" (1993, p. 63).

Phinney (1990, 1992, 1993) developed her stage-model of ethnic identity that focuses on adolescents by basing it on existing models of ego identity and ethnic identity as well as on recent empirical studies of adolescents (an age group that has been previously ignored) from various minority groups. Phinney observes that in her early studies of Mexicans, Asians, and African ethnic groups demonstrated positive outcomes supporting her stage model. Her stage-model looks at individuals as they progressively shift from a period of unexamined ethnic identity to a period of achieved and committed

ethnic identity. Results from her study show that adolescents are able to effectively move from stage to stage. In her model, ethnic identity formation is viewed as a process rather than as a static phenomenon. In effect, Phinney believes ethnic identity varies with one's development and experiences, as well as with the changes of an individual in both her/his social and historical context. Therefore, in this stage-model of ethnic identity, as in previous models of identity development, individuals are able to reassess their ethnic identities throughout their lives. This may lead to moments where they will go through a process of re-experiencing prior developmental stages. Her work is distinctive in that she has employed empirical research to create and develop her model. Phinney's model also differs from other models in that it consists of only three stages. This reduction to three stages in Phinney's model suggests that the encounter and exploration stages should not be separate stages, but rather only one stage. Phinney's Three-Stage Model (1990, 1992, 1993, 1996) consists of: 1) *Unexamined Ethnic Identity* (Pre-encounter), 2) *Moratorium or Exploration* (encounter), and 3) *Achieved Ethnic Identity* (Internalization/commitment).

The first stage, *unexamined ethnic identity*, or the pre-encounter stage as Cross (1971, 1991, 2001) labels it, refers to a lack of examination and exploration of one's ethnicity. Individuals have yet to be exposed to issues regarding their ethnic identities. During this stage, ethnicity is intangible for students, adolescents, or young adults; instead they tend to adopt other people's opinions regarding the role or importance of ethnicity in their lives. Phinney (1993) declares that "(e)xisting models of ethnic identity development suggest that minority subjects initially accept [the] values and attitudes of the majority culture, including, often, internalized negative views of their own group that

are held by the majority” (p. 66). In other words, during this stage, individuals have never questioned their ethnicity because they have yet to be challenged about their background and beliefs. Therefore, they accept the mainstream cultural values without questioning them further.

Kim (1981) also concurs with Phinney and Cross’s findings. Kim’s findings during her in-depth qualitative interviews of Asian American women demonstrated that these women not only internalized white societal values and standards, but they envisioned themselves through the eyes and lens of the mainstream society. Kim calls this particular stage the *white-identified* stage. Saylor and Aries (1999) explain that, in the pre-encounter stage, “they [students, individuals] do not examine their ethnic identities and derive their attitudes without question from family and community” (p. 549). Lastly, Phinney’s first stage of unexamined minority identity development can also be compared to Marcia’s (1980) stage of identity foreclosure. Identity foreclosure is epitomized by a lack of exploration of different issues, coupled by opinions embraced from others without question (namely, society’s values).

During the second stage, *moratorium or exploration*, students slowly start to become involved in exploring, searching, and learning about their own ethnic group(s) in order to comprehend the significance of their own ethnicity. At this stage, ethnicity is extremely salient some form of negative confrontation or episode in which the minority status of a person surfaces in the mainstream culture most often triggers its discovery. Again, Saylor and Aries (1999) give evidence of this by saying that individuals begin their exploration “through an encounter with racism in society; to an immersion in ethnic identity culture and exploration of the meaning and implications of ethnic group

membership” (p. 549). In Cross’s (1971, 1991, 2001) encounter stage, individuals are described as generally experiencing a sudden personal or social shock that destroys their prior worldview and which allows them to become more open to the idea of exploring her/his identity. Similarly, Kim (1981) describes how a sudden shock caused by a social political occurrence can result in an Asian American woman’s awakening and desire to explore her ethnicity. At the end of this exploration phase, individuals arrive at a point, which Phinney (1990, 1992) refers to as “ethnic achievement or internalization.” Erikson (1968) would refer to this stage and/or phase of moratorium or exploration as an ego identity crisis, meaning the turning point of growth for an individual.

In the final stage, *achieved ethnic identity*, individuals/students begin to appreciate and feel more confident about their association with their ethnic identity status. They have acquired a clearer and securer sense of their own ethnic identity. During this final stage, individuals/students are capable of identifying and internalizing critical repressive and debilitating elements of the mainstream culture. Lastly, according to Phinney, individuals/students are finally able to appraise their own ethnic groups. Appraising one’s own group enables individuals not only to become stronger in regards to their ethnic beliefs but it also empowers them; they finally feel comfortable with who they are, and so they embrace their ethnic roots. Cross (1971, 1991, 2001) labels this stage internalization because an individual finally begins to feel confident about her/his ethnicity (blackness). Kim (1981) labels this stage incorporation. At this stage Kim describes Asian American women as feeling positive about themselves, as well as being proud to be Asian American and accepting both of their backgrounds - Asian and American.

Phinney (1990, 1992) also developed a series of different elements that she considers common to all ethnic groups separate from the earlier model she developed. Specifically, Phinney discusses four elements that form part of her “Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure” (MEIM) paper-and pencil assessment tool. The purpose of this twenty-three-item measure is to assess ethnic identity achievement, affirmation/belonging, ethnic behaviors, and other group orientations. This measure is the most important one for this study in that it permits the explanation and depiction of any developmental progression among high school and college students. In all, Phinney’s measure is of importance to this study because she proved statistically that it is generalizable to diverse ethnic groups and for those students that are unfamiliar with their ethnicity. In other words, Phinney’s scale proved to assess the ethnic identity of individuals regardless of their ethnic group membership. The four subscales of Phinney’s measure are: 1) *Ethnic Self-Identification and Ethnicity*, 2) *Ethnic Behaviors and Practices*, 3) *Affirmation and Belonging*, and 4) *Ethnic Identity Development*.

Phinney (1992) states that *ethnic self-identification* refers to the ethnic label that a person uses to identify herself/himself. She further says that ethnic self-identification should be distinguished from ethnicity, since the label that people use to name themselves may be radically different from that of their parents’ ethnic heritage. For Phinney this is a salient point, especially when studying people from mixed cultural backgrounds, such as, individuals from Latin American origins. People from Latin American descent may label themselves in a variety of ways depending upon where they come from in Latin America; for instance, Latin American, Dominican, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Salvadorian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican American, Argentinean, Venezuelan, Panamanian, Chilean,

Peruvian, Ecuadorian, etc. Each of these labels, however, can connote different meanings. As a result, because each ethnic group is mindful of how they address themselves, the researcher conducting this study will take this element of self-identification into account when composing questions for the qualitative interviews.

Phinney (1990, 1992) refers to *ethnic behaviors and practices* as the degree to which an individual becomes socially and culturally active in her/his community/ethnic group. Phinney points out two common ethnic practices prevalent among many groups: 1) involvement in social activities with persons of one's ethnic group (such as, religion, politics, establishing friendships, and speaking one's native language), and 2) participation in cultural traditions. Nonetheless, Phinney remarks that the two practices already mentioned above might not be of equal importance for all ethnic groups. For instance, Buriel (1987) demonstrated that among people of Latin American descent, speaking their native language and teaching their children to speak this language was one of the more important and critical elements for them. Hurtado and Gurin (1995), and Miller and Hoogstra (1992) concur with Buriel by asserting that language constitutes an important aspect and contributor to ethnic identity in the lives of many ethnic groups, especially for immigrant groups of Latin American descent. Phinney, Romero, Nava, and Huang (2001) in their most recent research study, the *Role of Language, Parents, and Peers in Ethnic Identity among Adolescents in Immigrant Families*, surveyed 81 Armenian families, 47 Vietnamese families, and 88 Mexican families (parents and adolescents), and the results showed that language is one of the most salient contributors to ethnic identity. Phinney et al. report that:



Across all groups, ethnic language proficiency and in-group peer interaction predicted ethnic identity, and parental cultural maintenance predicted adolescent ethnic language proficiency. However, because of differences among the groups, a separate model was required for each ethnic group. The results suggest both common processes and group differences in the factors that influence ethnic identity. (p. 135)

Phinney et al.'s study, the, shows some evidence that the usage and knowledge of one's ethnic language has a positive effect on developmental outcomes for adolescents in immigrant families.

The third set of elements identified by Phinney (1990, 1992, 1996), *affirmation and belonging*, refer precisely to one's sense of belonging, closeness, and attachment to an ethnic group as well as the attitudes regarding the group shared by the members of that group. The final element, *ethnic identity achievement* refers to the continuous growth and development of an individual. These eventual changes will manifest themselves depending upon the social and historical experiences of the individual. As Phinney argued earlier, the achievement of ethnic identity is not a static process - it is a never-ending, changing process. Finally, as Phinney (1992) has remarked in countless journal articles and books, the process of ethnic identity formation offers members of minority groups a sense of belonging or a "secure sense of oneself as a member of a minority group" (p. 160).

According to Smith (1991), ethnic identity development is ultimately determined by the status of members of majority or minority groups in a society. She believes that persons of minority groups are more susceptible to adopting negative ethnic identities

than individuals from the majority groups. Additionally, Smith argues that individuals from both groups are predisposed to experience ethnic identity conflicts in identification with each other.

The following are a series of elements that Smith (1991) proposes are the cause for ethnic identity conflict among majority and minority groups in pluralistic societies: 1) ethnic awareness vs. ethnic unawareness, 2) ethnic self-identification vs. non-ethnic identification, 3) self-hatred vs. self-acceptance, 4) self-acceptance vs. other group acceptance, 5) self-rejection versus other group acceptance, 6) other group rejection vs. self-acceptance, 7) other group rejection vs. self-rejection, 8) ethnic identity integration vs. ethnic identity fragmentation or diffusion, 9) ethnocentrism (refers to the preferential attitudes one may hold toward her/his own ethnic group while dismissing and/or disliking other ethnic groups) vs. allocentrism (refers to the accessibility, openness, and receptiveness to other ethnic groups) (p. 184). Lastly, in Smith's words, when ethnic groups have to contend with conflict, they will resort to various schemes/mechanisms to protect and/or defend their group. These mechanisms range from denial to projection, and to psychological distress.

Smith (1991) developed a model of ethnic identity that consists of four stages that members of minority and majority groups will contend with when experiencing significant identity conflicts. These phases are: 1) *The Preoccupation with Self, or the Preservation of Ethnic Self Identity*, 2) *The Preoccupation with the Ethnic Conflict and with the Salient Ethnic Outer Boundary Group*, 3) *The resolution of Conflict*, and 4) *Integration*. According to Smith, individuals from majority and minority groups will eventually encounter all of these phases (described below) whenever they confront

conflict. The first phase, *preoccupation with self, or the preservation of ethnic self-identity*, refers to the challenging experiences that individuals are exposed to and how, as a result of these experiences, they must confront their view of their ethnic self. Hence, individuals will most likely resort to the use of various defense mechanisms to help them preserve their ethnic self. One of the most reported mechanisms used by individuals is the act of decreasing their physical and emotional contact with individuals or groups that have instigated conflict among them.

In the *preoccupation with ethnic conflict and with the salient ethnic outer boundary group* phase, the individual is worried about the conflict within their ethnic group. This preoccupation may eventually result in hatred and rage. The third phase, *the resolution of conflict*, aims precisely at bringing about resolution and conclusion to the conflict. In order to bring closure to conflict, individuals generally: a) integrate, b) accommodate, c) segregate, d) acculturate, and/or e) marginalize themselves into the pluralistic society in which they live. The final phase is *integration*. During this phase, an individual will be able to integrate the ethnic contact experience she/he has with the contact experiences of others (p. 184-185). To conclude, Smith (1991) explains that the eventual resolution of ethnic identity conflict(s) will eventually result in the attainment of ethnic identity formation. However, if an individual is unable to bring closure to ethnic identity conflicts the individual will consequently be trapped in what Smith calls identity diffusion and confusion.

Social Identity Theoretical Perspective

Tajfel's (1978, 1981) social identity theory claims that having a strong sense of group identification can sustain an individual's healthy and positive self-concept. He argues that individuals who identify with a particular group will continue to do so if the group continually supports and provides them with a positive social identity. Yet, if the group does not provide this positive support for social identity, it is possible that individuals will attempt to alter or splinter the framework of the group. They may also try to search for new methods of comparison between their group and the majority group in order to augment their sense of positive social identity. Ultimately, they may decide to leave the group permanently.

Furthermore, Tajfel (1981) maintains that, for members of a minority group, self-esteem and self-concept are highly influenced by those negative outlooks embraced by mainstream society and which they hold against them. Tajfel also upholds that individuals from minority groups may have different coping mechanisms and/or ways of responding in case they feel their identity is being threatened. There are few examples, as outlined by Cross (as cited in Phinney, 1990), of the different ways in which members of minority groups respond to threats to their identity. On the affirmative side, members of the group will practice self-enhancing manners, or attitudes (e.g., developing pride in one's group, abstaining from displaying characteristics regarded as "substandard" by mainstream society and/or by drawing attention to the uniqueness of their group). Alternately, group members may be inclined to abandon their ethnic groups by attempting to pretend or pass as a member of the dominant group. This latter course of action, however, might prompt negative results in relation to one's self-concept.

Besides addressing the various methods that minority groups employ to enhance their self-concept and status, Tajfel (1978) also spent time explicating the potential problems and negative outcomes that minority groups confront when dealing with two cultures. According to Tajfel, when adopting or combining two differing cultures, especially when each culture upholds remarkably different values, behaviors, and attitudes, the results are detrimental to the process of a minority group's ethnic identity formation.

Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory is of great value when studying ethnic identity from a social identity and group-oriented point of view. However, Tajfel's theory is inadequate in relation to this study in two important ways: 1) he does not discuss the process of ethnic identity development, and 2) his theory is not centered on the individual, but rather on the group. Still, his theory is helpful for understanding ethnic identity from a social identity context, because it enables him to uncover all of the ethnic groups' social behaviors.

Acculturation Theoretical Perspective

The concept of acculturation dates back "as early as 1880" (Casas & Pytluk, 1995, p. 170). It was not until the early 1930s, however, that scientific studies of acculturation started to emerge. Acculturation has been approached from a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology, and yet their definitions do not differ greatly. This review will attempt to avoid taking a preferential side or a standpoint on any of these definitions. Instead, these definitions will serve as a strong

foundation for the understanding of the Latina immigrant college student's acculturative psychological process of adjustment with a new contact culture.

It is important to highlight the literature on acculturation because it can help in analyzing the role that acculturation plays in the lives of Latina immigrant students. Initial studies in acculturation typically deal with the issues surrounding the maintenance of cultural values upon an immigrant arrival into a new host society. It is the purpose of this research study to continue the development of the study of acculturation by specifically observing further developments that may occur in the college setting. It is vital for this study to examine the acculturative process of Latina immigrant college women because such a study can lead to salient information addressing how Latinas in college are able to uphold and/or balance the maintenance of their native values once exposed to the mainstream cultural values of a college campus. Most importantly, this study seeks to examine how acculturation impacts the ethnic identity of these Latina immigrant college students.

The first definition of acculturation originated in the year 1936 from the work of Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits. Redfield et al. developed a definition of acculturation which "comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (a cited in Berry, 1980, p. 9; Casas & Pytluk, 1995, p. 170). A more recent definition of acculturation by Casas and Pytluk (1995) describes that the process of acculturation as "the product of culture learning that occurs as a result of contact between the members of two or more culturally distinct groups. From this definition, it is also presented as a process of attitudinal and behavioral

change undergone, willingly or unwillingly, by individuals who reside in multicultural societies” (p. 158). Additionally, Knight, Bernal, Garza, and Cota (1993) define acculturation as the “process of adapting oneself to the broader social surroundings. When minority persons come into contact with the dominant group, acculturation occurs” (p. 222). Marin (1992) describes acculturation as “a process of attitudinal and behavioral change undergone by individuals who reside in multicultural societies... or who come in contact with a new culture due to colonization, invasion, or other important political changes” (p. 239). A final definition comes from Keefe and Padilla (1987): they define acculturation as “one type of culture change-specifically, change occurring as the result of continuous contact between cultural groups” (p. 15).

There are three critical elements outlined by Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen (1992) that need to take place in order for acculturation to occur. First of all, they stress the *need to maintain a continuous and first hand contact* between cultures or individuals of diverse cultures. Secondly, Berry et al. indicates that out of this contact or interaction, *change* will take place within either the cultural or psychological phenomena, which occurs between the individuals in contact. Finally, Berry et al. says that the process of acculturation will be *dynamic*; however, the end result may be rather stable.

The first development of acculturation scales and models started to emerge in the 1970s. Until recently, many of the acculturation models that have been proposed, as in the case of the “assimilation model,” were linear and bipolar in nature. The bipolar model assumed that “... individuals who came into contact with the majority ... White culture would eventually assume the values attitudes, and behaviors of this culture [strong mainstream ties/high acculturation] to the exclusion of their traditional [high ethnic

ties/low acculturation] culture” (Casas & Pytluk, 1995, p. 172). In other words, the assumption of the bipolar assimilation model is that when an individual is highly acculturated, her/his attachment to ethnic identity weakens. This signifies that the incorporation of a new cultural identity results in a loss of awareness and allegiance toward one’s own ethnic culture. Scales developed under the assumption of assimilation models may be problematic, as they may not allow for an adequate assessment of an entire population of bicultural individuals.

Research from Berry, Vichol, Minde, and Mok (1987) and Berry et al. (1992) stress that acculturation is two-dimensional, meaning that the two cultural relationships, between one’s own ethnic culture and the dominant culture, can co-exist and yet be independent from one another. In other words, Berry et al. (1987) and Berry et al. (1992) contend that an individual (or individuals) can retain a strong ethnic identification with their groups, yet simultaneously stay engaged with members of the dominant culture. Conversely, research from Felix-Ortiz, Newcomb, and Myers (1994) and Keefe and Padilla (1987) view acculturation as a multidimensional phenomenon, i.e., this model displays multiple dimensions in relation to acculturation, such as in values, attitudes, language, ethnic identity, multi-identity, bicultural identity, and customs.

Padilla’s (1980, 1987) acculturation model comprehends two critical components: 1) *Cultural Awareness* and 2) *Ethnic Loyalty*. According to Padilla, *cultural awareness* demonstrates an immigrant’s knowledge of specific materials from her/his own culture group, as well as of the host culture. In fact, Padilla states that cultural awareness “refers to an individual’s knowledge of the specific cultural materials (e.g., language, values, history-art, foods, etc.) of the cultural group of origin and/or the host culture” (p. 48). On

the other hand, Padilla says that *ethnic loyalty* deals with preferences, i.e., the “preference of one cultural orientation over the other” (p. 48). Although Padilla’s model was developed expressly with Mexican-Americans in mind, he states that the construct of a model, comprised of cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty, is fundamental for any analysis regarding acculturation.

Padilla (1980) remarks that his model is both multidimensional and quantitative. He first observes that “the process of acculturation is multidimensional in our model. Acculturative change has often been viewed as a unitary process dependent solely on generational level of the individual or group undergoing change” (p. 48). Padilla then explains that using a quantitative model allows for the opportunity to investigate the relationship between several acculturative types and other dimensions pertinent to acculturative changes, such as language familiarity and use, cultural heritage, ethnic pride and identity, inter-ethnic interaction, and inter-ethnic distance. In sum, Padilla’s model views the process of change and acculturation as replacing one’s native cultural group traits with those of the White American traits.

Years later, Keefe and Padilla (1987) teamed up and developed an evolved model of acculturation. Their multidimensional model introduces the concept of selective acculturation, in which an individual or individuals can adopt the particular values and customs of the dominant culture while simultaneously remaining faithful to their traditional values and customs. Keefe and Padilla’s model does not assume that bicultural individuals are competent regarding both their own culture and the dominant culture. Therefore, they make an effort to acknowledge the complexity intrinsic to the acculturation process.

Berry et al. (1992) concurs with Keefe and Padilla (1987) that the process of acculturation manifests a number of outcomes, contradicting theories that conceptualize acculturation as having a single outcome: assimilation into the host culture. Berry et al. outlines four elements in his model that he believes will influence an individual to make the changes that result from acculturation. These elements are: 1) the personal and psychological characteristics of the acculturating individual, 2) the attitude(s) that the acculturating individual has toward the dominant culture, 3) the degree to which the individual gets involved in the acculturation process, and 4) the specific characteristics of the dominant and non-dominant groups. Additionally, Berry contends that the process of acculturation is not an even one, as it does not influence all cultural and psychological phenomena in the same way.

Berry et al. (1992) allege that individuals who acculturate to a new society may suffer through changes into their ethnic identity. He also asserts that the process of acculturation takes place in a multiplicity of ways. The result of the acculturation process relies on two primary elements, which he groups under the term, “acculturation strategies.” He describes acculturation strategies as 1) the extent to which an individual desires to uphold her/his own identity, customs, language, and way of life, as opposed to renouncing all of her/his cultural values in order to partake in the dominant society, and 2) the degree to which an individual desires to connect with others who belong to separate groups, as opposed to primarily interacting with those in her/his own group. Hence, the outcome of the acculturation process will differ greatly depending on the individual’s understanding and acceptance of these two elements.

Therefore, Berry (1980) and Berry et al. (1992) proposed four modes of acculturation: 1) *Integration*, 2) *Assimilation*, 3) *Separation*, and 4) *Marginalization*. In *integration*, the individual chooses to uphold her/his cultural identity while, at the same time, establishing a relationship with individuals belonging to the host culture. In other words, individuals would show medium contact with both cultures: their own and the host. In *assimilation*, individuals reject their own cultural identity and ultimately decide to maintain contact solely with the dominant culture. This implies that, in assimilation, individuals would highly identify with the host culture while maintaining low contact with the culture of origin. In *separation*, the individual maintains her/his own cultural values to the exclusion of the values of the dominant culture. That is to say that, in separation, the individual would strongly identify with her/his country of origin, exhibiting low acculturative experience with the host culture. Finally, *marginalization* is the process in which individuals fail to maintain neither their own values nor the values of the dominant society.

In the past, Berry et al.'s (1992) model has been extremely helpful in measuring and conceptualizing acculturation. His model places acculturation on a continuum, that is, it offers several prospective outcomes, rather than a single choice of outcomes. Thus, in Berry's model there is not an absolute integration or assimilation, such as the single-continuum model of acculturation described in Keefe and Padilla (1987) which positions acculturation as "... the gradual replacement of traditional cultural traits with Anglo American traits" (p. 16). Instead, his model recognizes that a large portion of the assimilation process is predicated on need and appropriations, i.e., immigrants do not follow a specific pathway toward assimilation but tend to assimilate in areas where it is

necessary for them to do so, such as in educational and vocational environments, as well as to integrate in other areas such as speaking the dominant language.

Another heavily discussed area in the literature of acculturation deals with “acculturative stress” and its effects on the psychological functioning and physical well-being of different cultural groups upon arrival and adaptation to a new country (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992). Berry et al. (1987) refer to acculturative stress as a “reduction in health status (including psychological, somatic, and social aspects) of individuals who are undergoing acculturation, and for which there is evidence that these health phenomena are related systematically to acculturation phenomena” (p. 491). Consequently, physical and psychological health deterioration can be the cause of identity confusion, anxiety, depression, heightened psychosomatic symptoms level, alienation, estrangement, feelings of marginality, and hostility toward the host country (Berry et al., 1987; Berry et al., 1992). Nonetheless, other authors such as LaFromboise, Hardin, Coleman, and Gerton’s (1993) assert that the stress caused by the process of acculturation may eventually contribute to personal growth and psychological well-being.

There are a number of characteristics described by Berry et al. (1992) that affect an individual’s experiences of acculturative stress. These are: 1) *Phase of Acculturation*, 2) *Mode of Acculturation*, 3) *Nature of the Larger Society*, 4) *Characteristics of the Acculturating group*, and 5) *Characteristics of the Acculturating Individual*.

The *phase of acculturation* refers to the stages an individual goes through when facing a new culture, new contacts, conflicts, crises, and issues of adaptation. Empirical studies have shown little or no correlation between acculturative stress and any particular

phase of acculturation. This demonstrates that acculturative stress is caused by several additional factors not previously considered. An array of research uncovers that both individuals in the first contact phase and individuals that have acquired some level of adaptation do not experience as much stress as those individuals that are in the intermediate phases and who may or may not exhibit signs of stress (Berry et al., 1992).

In *mode of acculturation*, the issues dealt with are either integration or assimilation into the new culture, or separation/marginalization from the new culture. Research by Berry et al. (1987) has revealed that immigrants who make an attempt to integrate into the new culture experience the least amount of stress, while those immigrants who desire to completely assimilate experience a medium amount of acculturative stress. On the other hand, individuals who sustain separation or marginalization from the new society are the ones who undergo the highest form of acculturative stress.

The nature of the larger society provides another cause of acculturative stress. For instance, individuals with strong and positive feelings about their background, ethnicity, and ethnic groups, may experience a small amount of stress when trying to integrate and acculturate into a pluralistic society. However, individuals seeking to acculturate into a monolithic society, that is to say, a society that pushes for assimilation, will endure the highest level of acculturative stress (Berry et al., 1992). Finally, immigrants acculturating to multicultural societies will experience the least stress, as they have access to various cultural and social groups that can offer assistance during the acculturative process.

The attitudes of the host society toward *the acculturating group* also need to be taken into account as an important element of the acculturating process. The positive or

negative stance of the host society regarding the acculturative group plays an important role in the level of acceptance of that group, and determines the degree of prestige that the group occupies in the host society. Therefore, Berry et al. (1992) point out that, even in a pluralistic society, there will exist differing levels of social acceptability among various groups, hence affecting the level of acculturative stress the members of these distinguished groups may experience.

The final element to be described is the *characteristics of the acculturating individual*. This last phase proposes that a number of “individual factors” need to be considered in order to comprehend the existing connections between acculturation and stress experienced by immigrant individuals. These individual factors are: social groups, ethnic associations, one’s family and extended families. Berry et al. also (1992) describes other items such as employment, education, and status of the group as being equally important for the acculturation process. Therefore, losing one’s status, having a low level of educational attainment, and/or being unemployed will result in excess stress.

The final model this review will explore is the Alternation Model of Second Culture Acquisition. This model implies that individuals who are able to alternate, that is, mold or change their behavior depending on the social and cultural situations they might find themselves in, will display much higher levels of cognitive functioning and mental health status than individuals who have already completely assimilated or who are monocultural (LaFromboise et al., 1993). LaFromboise et al. point out that individuals can easily interact and identify with two cultures and still be faithful to their original ethnic group and cultural identity. They observe that this model presents an opportunity for individuals to be bicultural, meaning that individuals can comprehend and appreciate

two different cultures at the same time - LaFromboise et al. describe this phenomenon as “bicultural competence” (1993, p. 402).

A person or an individual(s) is biculturally competent when she/he is capable of functioning proficiently in both her/his culture of origin and her/his new host culture. Additionally, LaFromboise et al. (1993) contend that, in order to become fully biculturally competent, an entire new set of skills, facts, information, and structures must be mastered without risking losing one’s own culture of origin. There are six areas LaFromboise et al. delineate as important for immigrants to navigate in order to become biculturally competent: 1) *Knowledge of Cultural Beliefs and Values*, 2) *Positive Attitudes Toward both Majority and Minority Groups*, 3) *Bicultural Efficacy*, 4) *Communication Ability*, 5) *Role Repertoire*, and 6) *Groundedness*.

Acquiring *knowledge of cultural beliefs and values* allows an individual to comprehend, accept and act inside the boundaries of a culture’s precise worldview. It is assumed that individuals in this area will be able to fully comprehend dissimilar values from the host culture, such as, gender roles, history, rituals, politics, religion, and social rules. *Positive attitudes toward both majority and minority groups* refer to the point of view held by individuals regarding their own culture and the host culture. In other words, individuals who demonstrate bicultural competence will embrace each cultural group positively without taking sides, or supporting one group more than the other.

In *bicultural efficacy*, the belief centers on the capability of individuals to develop and sustain effective interpersonal rapport among their two cultures or “within two groups without compromising one’s sense of cultural identity” (LaFromboise et al., 1993, p. 404). *Communication ability* refers to the ways in which acculturating individuals

converse and convey feelings to individuals of the host culture, both orally and nonverbally. In *role repertoire*, the more roles (or “hats”) an individual can carry and/or handle in the host society, the higher the degree of her/his cultural competence. Lastly, alternation models view *groundedness* as another critical area that individuals must become proficient in so as to be biculturally competent. According to LaFromboise et al., a sense of being grounded is the best support system that an individual ought to create and uphold in order to cope with the countless number of stressful situations that would arise as a result of living within two cultures: their own culture and their new host culture.

Ethnic Identity Development Models

Many models regarding the development of ethnic identity have been proposed in the field of psychology, especially after William Cross (1971) published his first work on “The Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience,” in which he unveils the four stages (five stages in his 1991, 2001 revisions) of black identity formation. Although many of these models do not focus particularly on the college years, they offer an excellent framework for the study of various ethnic minority groups. Though Cross’s identity development model specifically addresses the experiences of Black individuals, some of the basic concepts of his theory can be applicable and even generalized to other minority groups as they share experiences of oppression.

Cross’s (1971) model of psychological Nigrescence (the process of “becoming black”) is conceptualized as being the precursor to several recent models of racial and ethnic identity; in other words, his model paved the way for the emergence of other

equally important models on racial and ethnic identity. This section will briefly describe some of the more salient models of racial and ethnic identity development.

Cross's Model of Nigrescence

Cross's model (1971, 1991, 2001) has become a great influence for research on the development of ethnic identity in college students. The three versions of his model propose five stages of Black identity development. These five stages have essentially remained static throughout his revisions. Cross's model is largely conceptualized as a linear model - meaning that individuals (Blacks) move in a linear fashion during the five stages: 1) *Pre-Encounter* depicts the identity to be changed; 2) *Encounter* isolates the point at which the person feels compelled to change; 3) *Immersion-Emersion* describes the vortex of identity change; 4) *Internalization* and *Internalization-Commitment* (stages 4 and 5) describe the habituation and internalization of the new identity (1991, p. 190; 2001, p. 262).

In the *pre-encounter* stage, nigrescence is a resocializing experience that changes an already existing (non-Afrocentric) identity into an Afrocentric identity. Attitudes in the pre-encounter stage fluctuate through a continuum ranging from low salience to anti-Black sentiments (feelings of self-hatred based on race). Individuals with low salience views do not "deny being Black, but this 'physical' fact is thought to play an insignificant role in their everyday lives. Being Black and having knowledge about the Black experience have little to do with their perceived sense of happiness and well-being, and Blackness contributes little to their life" (Cross, 1991, p. 190).

In the *encounter* stage, a metamorphosis takes place within an individual's identity: "identity is usually the person's first identity, that is, the identity shaped by his

or her early development” (Cross, 1991, p. 198). Thus, a person is reluctant to change her/his existing level of identity. Only an encounter that halts these pre-encounter identities can challenge “the person to rethink her or his attitudes, feelings, and behavior concerning race and Black culture” (Cross, 2001, p. 262). The encounter stage entails the individual experiencing an incident or condition, which triggers that person to question herself/himself, and then she/he will most likely respond to this incident by starting to reinterpret her/his worldview. Cross confirms that a person “usually has to experience some sort of encounter that has the effect of catching him or her ‘off guard.’ The encounter must work around, slip through, or even shatter the relevance of the person’s current identity and world view, and ... provide ... direction in which to point the person to be resocialized or transformed” (1991, p. 199).

Lastly, Cross notes that an *encounter experience* may not be an entirely negative one. For instance, an encounter stage can be a positive one in that an individual can become educated and exposed to historical and cultural information about Black experiences that she/he might not have been aware of in the past. Thus, this new information may bring about an identity change in the individual. In this stage, a person unavoidably “becomes enraged at the thought of having been previously miseducated by White racist institutions” (Cross, 1991, p. 200). The encounter stage is inundated with by a series of emotions, such as alarm, confusion, depression, and guilt. This guilt is incited by the individual’s acknowledgement of her/his own naiveté in regard to racial issues. As a result, a series of conflicts arise between an individual’s academic and social self-concepts. This developing anger and rage then propels individuals to start exploring their ethnic selves.

The third stage, *immersion-emersion*, is characterized by a state of flux and change, or the *vortex* of psychological Nigrescence. Cross (1991) states that:

The Immersion-Emersion stage of nigrescence addresses the most sensational aspect of Black identity development, for it represents the vortex of psychological nigrescence.... During this period of transition, the person begins to demolish the old perspective and simultaneously tries to construct what will become his or her new frame of reference. (p. 201-202)

Cross (1991, 2001) describes *immersion* as the stage in which an individual immerses herself/himself into an intense or “frantic” exploration of their “Afrocentric world,” i.e., their identity and cultural roots. Individuals engage in a number of activities that permit them to delve into their origins and ancestry; for instance, immersion into Black community social life, literature, dance, music, art, literature, and politics. As a result, anything Black is considered a positive association while any relation to Whites is viewed as a negative association. The immersion that individuals experience engenders a strong anti-White sentiment. Cross (1991) points out that “(t)his immersion is a strong, powerful, dominating sensation that is constantly energized by race (at White people and culture), guilt (at having once been tricked into thinking Negro ideas), and a developing sense of pride (in one’s Black self, in Black people, and in Black culture)” (p. 203). Finally, in *emersion*, individuals are more “in- tune,” “serious,” and “conscientious” of Black issues, ideologies, and social responsibilities. Cross states that emersion is an “emergence from the emotionally and dead-end, either-or, racist and oversimplified ideologies of the immersion experience. The person regains control of his or her emotions and intellect” (p. 207).

In *internalization*, individuals feel more relaxed, calm, and at ease with themselves. This stage is marked by an individual's internalization of her/his ethnic identity as she/he resolves the cognitive dissonance developed in prior stages. According to Cross (1991), the internalization of one's identity results in three main objectives in an individual's quotidian life: 1) to defend and protect oneself from psychological insults that stem from living in a racist society; 2) to provide a sense of belonging and social anchorage and; 3) to provide a foundation or point of departure for carrying out transactions with individuals, cultures, and situations outside the world of Blackness (p. 210). Cross also states that individuals at this stage have reached an inner peace as well as changed "from uncontrolled rage toward White people to controlled anger at oppressive systems and racist institutions; from symbolic, boisterous rhetoric to serious analysis and 'quiet' strength;...from anxious, insecure, rigid pseudo-Blackness based on the hatred Whites to proactive Black pride, self-love, and deep sense of connection to, and acceptance by, the Black community" (p. 210). In all, an individual will now reach the highest comfort with her/his racial identity.

The final stage of Cross's (1991, 2001) Model of Nigrescence, *internalization-commitment*, is marked by the development of a long lasting commitment to both one's ethnicity and toward Black issues. At this point, bicultural, pluralistic, and non-racial feelings commence to emerge. This stage is characterized by the high racial salience that individuals now possess. Individuals are more self-accepting, and are better able to maintain a positive self-regard. There is also a better cohesion between academic and social acceptance. Cross points out that not all of the internalized individuals maintain a continuing commitment or interest in Black issues; however, those individuals who can

sustain their commitment will be able to move to the final stage of internalization. Cross remarks that the distinctive factor between this stage and the others is the sustained commitment of individuals. Otherwise the psychology of Black individuals will remain similar in this final stage as it does in the previous ones. Specifically, Cross says that “...[individuals] devote an extended period, if not a lifetime, to finding ways to translate their personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment. Such people characterize the fifth and final stage of nigrescence. (1991, p. 220).

Atkinson, Morten, and Sue's Minority Identity Development (MID) Model

The Minority Identity Development (MID) model developed by Atkinson et al. (1989, 1993) incorporated numerous perspectives from prior models and recommended a newly refined and renamed five stage (Racial/Cultural Identity Development R/CID) model that can be used by a variety of ethnic groups (to all persons of color), such as Blacks, Latinos, Natives, and Asians. Atkinson et al.'s MID/R/CID model is constructed on the notion that all minority groups “experience the common force of oppression” (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993, p. 45) or develop their ethnic identity in similar manner. The MID/R/CID model stages are a virtual replication of Cross's stages. In effect, Atkinson et al.'s first three stages are almost analogous to Cross's stages. Yeh, and Hwang (2000) state that this “model [R/CID] differs from previous models of ethnic identity in that it considers cultural and racial identity to be joint processes. Thus, this theory encompasses the shared experiences of oppression among various minority groups by integrating the basic principal of previous work by Cross (1971), Jackson (1975), and Sue and Sue (1971)” (p. 422).

The following paragraph will provide a brief description of each of Atkinson et al.'s five stages, which are: 1) *Conformity* (self and group depreciating), 2) *Dissonance* (conflict between self and group depreciating and appreciating), 3) *Resistance and Immersion* (self and group appreciating), 4) *Introspection* (concern with the basis of self-appreciation, concern with the nature of unequivocal appreciation), and 5) *Synergetic Articulation and Awareness* (self and group appreciating).

The *conformity* stage is marked by a preference for the values and norms of the dominant culture and society over values and norms of one's own culture. Further, in this stage, an individual's attitude toward the dominant group is highly positive. Conversely, they uphold negative views of themselves as racial beings as well as regarding their racial group. Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1997) highlight that for minority groups "physical and/or cultural characteristics that single them out as minority persons are a source of pain and are either viewed with disdain or are repressed from consciousness... Minorities may perceive the ways of the dominant group as being much more positive, and there is a high desire to 'assimilate and [acculturate']" (p. 197).

The next stage, *dissonance*, is categorized as the stage where confusion, questioning, and soul-searching commence. At this point, individuals begin to reexamine beliefs and attitudes held by the dominant society. Ponterotto and Pedersen (1993) remark that, in dissonance, "individuals begin to question their Conformity and pro-White attitudes" (p. 46). This questioning and searching is most often incited by some type or race-related incident and/or experience. Similar to Cross's (1971, 1991, 2001) encounter stage, this questioning and searching is most often incited by some type of race related incident and/or experience. In the case of a Black person, a provocative event,

such as the assassination of Martin Luther King or the Rodney King beating in L.A., may push a Black person to the following stage. Alternately, in the case of a Latina/o, dissonance may occur when a Latina/o, embarrassed by her/his culture or upbringing, comes across another Latina/o who feels proud of her/his culture, background, and heritage.

In the third stage, *resistance and immersion*, individuals from minority groups reject the dominant culture and start to accept their own racial/ethnic group. In addition, individuals begin to admit to themselves that racism and oppression do exist within society. Thus, as a result, individuals from minority groups experience anger and rage as they “contemplate their role as an oppressed member of society” (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993, p.47). Rivera-Santiago (1996) concur by saying that, in this stage, “an individual may have intense feelings or anger resulting from the knowledge that he or she is a member of a group that has experienced oppression and discrimination, combined with a sense of pride in the person’s own cultural and racial group” (p. 16). Hence, in this stage, positive attitudes toward oneself and one’s own racial/ethnic group emerge while resistance and negative attitudes toward the dominant group govern.

In the *introspection* stage, minority individuals commence to reconcile formerly rigid ethnocentric views developed in the resistance and immersion stages. Moreover, in the introspection stage, minority individuals not only begin to acquire a deeper understanding and appreciation of the racial/ethnic group to which they belong, but also to other ethnic groups, in general. Additionally, there are also some conflicts and struggles to overcome in this stage as members of minority groups begin to establish an

allegiance with their ethnic group while also desiring to explore issues of independence and personal autonomy.

The final stage of the MID model, *synergetic articulation and awareness*, is viewed as the stage where individuals attain balance, self-fulfillment, and security with regard to cultural identity. However, all these feelings do not materialize until after an individual is able to acknowledge aspects of her/his culture, as well as those of the dominant culture. This new perspective engenders a genuine appreciation for cultural disparities and, ultimately, attempts to work toward eradicating oppression.

Other Important Theories of Ethnic Identity

Arce's (1981) Model of Chicano Identity, Sue and Sue's (1971) Chinese American Personality Typologies, and Keefe and Padilla's (1987) Chicano Ethnicity all depict the ways in which ethnic identification occurs for these particular groups. Arce's research describes the transition that takes place when individuals stop thinking of themselves as Mexican American, and, instead, see themselves as Chicano. Arce explains that reaching the *Chicanismo* stage entails two forms of self-awareness: 1) political awareness: knowledge of Mexican individuals in the United States and an awareness of the discriminatory practices toward this group; and 2) cultural awareness: marked by pride in language and cultural values. Sue and Sue's three Chinese American Personality Typologies describe people of Chinese origins who either: 1) stay culturally Chinese, 2) assume American mainstream values, customs and culture, or 3) simply construct a *mélange* of the two cultures. Lastly, Keefe and Padilla's scale serves to measure *cultural awareness* and *ethnic loyalty*. The cultural awareness scale measures language, values,

history-art, foods, cultural identification, and parent's cultural heritage, while the ethnic loyalty scale measures ethnic pride, ethnic affiliations, social orientations, and perceived discrimination.

To conclude this discussion of ethnic identity development models, it is important to develop a perspective on the diversity of ways in which these models have enriched and helped to broaden our understanding of the dynamics involved in identity formation and ethnic identity development. Even though these models have increased our understanding of the dynamics involved in ethnic identity development, there are a number of limitations that they engender for this present research study. For instance, as in the case of Cross, Helms, and Kim, their models are group-specific to Blacks, Whites, or Asian populations. Thus, the numerous stages they delineated in their models are not generalizable across all ethnic groups. Moreover, there are also some limitations in the Atkinson et al. model that should be considered. A main cause of distress in the latter model is that they propose that ethnic identity development is a linear process and that it travels in one direction. Sue and Sue (as cited in Rivera-Santiago, 1996) affirm that Atkinson et al. have "contended that for the R/CID model in particular, some individuals may skip stages while others may actually move back to earlier stages of development" (p. 17).

A further issue of this model is whether or not they have any relevance for recent immigrants. Again, Sue and Sue (as cited in Rivera-Santiago, 1996) "speculated that many recent immigrant groups (Asians) have strong attitudes and beliefs about their culture on arrival in the United States. If the immigrant encounters a negative experience,

such as discrimination or racism, which forces the individual to reexamine [her/his] identity, it is not clear where that person would fit in the model” (p. 18).

Finally, although Phinney’s models have contributed a great deal to the literature of ethnic identity, as the leader in much of the empirical research conducted on adolescents and college students across all ethnic groups, her models have been mostly applicable to US native-born ethnic groups (e.g., Mexican American, Asian Americans, African Americans), or to immigrant children who have arrived to the United States when they were small babies, but not to foreign-born ethnic groups that are arriving between the ages of 12-13, i.e., the 1.5 generation. Therefore, a concern for this study is the applicability and relevance these models have to the recent increase of young 1.5 generation immigrant groups with a myriad of nationalities arriving to the United States from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

Finally, the last section of this review will briefly discuss the contributions from the field of sociology to the understanding of ethnic identity by examining the experiences of immigrant groups. The following section will briefly re-define what is meant by the 1.5 generation of immigrants - the immigrant student population this project seeks to study.

1.5 Generation of Foreign-born Immigrants in the United States of America

1.5 Generation of Immigrants

The term “1.5 generation” was first coined by researchers Rumbaut and Ima (1988) to describe those who immigrated to the United States as children under the age of 18 (specifically prior to their teenager years, usually around 12 years of age) or youth

who, to some extent, have lived in the United States more than half of their lives. The generation of 1.5ers encompasses both the immigrant generation born outside the United States (usually referred to as the first generation - the parents of the 1.5ers) and the second, third, and fourth generations those who are born in the United States. The 1.5 generation of immigrants is usually comprised of involuntary immigrants, meaning that they were brought to this country by their parents, who immigrated by choice or, as in the case of refugees, who immigrated by necessity due to some sort of political unrest in their countries (Pedraza & Rumbaut, 1996).

Sociological Viewpoint on Ethnic Identity

The field of sociology has greatly contributed to the general understanding of ethnic identity by delving into the experiences of numerous immigrant groups arriving to this country. For instance, the sociology literature has provided a deeper insight and understanding into the immigrant experiences from historical, societal, political, economical, and cultural contexts. Additionally, studies carried out in this field have examined the intersection of multiple social identities in immigrants. In other words, the sociological lens has been able to capture the many complex issues that immigrants (i.e., young children, adolescents) face when adapting to social identities differing from their culture of origin and the culture of the new country (Berry, 1997; Rumbaut, 1994).

In effect, Rumbaut (1994) emphasizes that issues regarding ethnic identity (resulting from the process of adaptation into the new culture) are of particular importance for adolescents whose parents are immigrants. Furthermore, studying ethnic identity development through the experiences of immigrants groups (particularly foreign-

born college-bound adolescents) can be of great significance, especially, since it can contribute to valuable information leading to the creation of new theories, likely in the field of human student development. In all, theories of ethnic identity development, combined with sociological standpoint theory, can enhance the study of current and future ethnic identity.

Sociologists such as Portes (1996), Portes and Rumbaut (1990, 1996, 2001), Pedraza and Rumbaut (1996), Rumbaut and Ima (1988), Rumbaut and Portes (2001), Waters (1999), among others, have been leading researchers in the study of new first and second generation immigrants from Central and South America, the Caribbean, and from the West Indies, such as from Cuba, Haiti, Martinique, Guadalupe, Barbados, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and also Southeast Asian immigrant refugees, such as Vietnam, Khmer, Hmong, Cambodia, and Laos. However, in spite of being leaders in the study of immigrants, the majority of their research work has been with first generation and then with second, and third generations of immigrants in the United States, not the 1.5 generation that this study seeks to examine.

One of the most important and highly regarded studies on immigration to this date is the Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) one-decade long *Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study* (CILS) which focuses on the adaptation process (social, cultural, and psychological) of the new immigrant second generation (U.S.-born children or children of immigrants with at least one foreign-born parent or child who was born abroad but brought at an early age to the U.S.). This study followed a sample of over 5200 second-generation children from more than 77 different nationalities, mostly from Asia and Latin America. The CILS study surveyed large samples of second-generation students who

were eighth and ninth graders (evenly divided by gender) in public and private schools. Additionally, students who participated in this study came from two of the most populated cities with an extraordinarily high concentration of immigrants and/or immigrant enclaves: cities such as San Diego, California and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale (communities that are made up primarily of one ethnic group and whose purpose is to reinforce a group's common cultural memories, traits, and identities).

The first survey for this study was conducted in 1992 with the purpose of obtaining general information on immigrant families, such as the demographic characteristics, language use, self-identities, and academic achievement of children. In 1995 and 1996, three years later, when the subjects were seniors graduating from high school, Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 2001) conducted a follow-up survey. The purpose of the follow-up survey was to investigate the progress of key adaptation outcomes, including language knowledge and preferences, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and academic attainment, over the adolescent years. In addition to the follow-up survey of the students, Portes and Rumbaut also conducted a parental survey with the purpose of establishing a link to the characteristics of immigrant parents and families and their attitudes regarding the future, as well as their aspirations and plans for their children.

Some interesting results developed out of this research project. For instance, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) and Rumbaut and Portes (2001) uncovered that the families of the teenagers under observation tended to be hard-working and stable people. Also, they found that in both San Diego and Miami, the ninth grade (and later the twelfth grade) children of recent-arrival immigrants worked harder than their native-born classmates. On average, recent arrival immigrant students spend two hours or more doing

their homework, while native-born students spend an average of 30 minutes. In addition, recent immigrants, when compared with native born or second-generation students, watch less television, and receive higher grades. In regard to language skills, the survey found that most immigrants learn English rapidly; more than 90% spoke English well or very well and fewer spoke or knew their parents' languages. The CILS study also showed that at least one third of the student respondents in Miami were able to speak their parent's language, but very poorly or not at all, while in San Diego more than half were in the same situation. In spite of all this, the majority of the respondents showed that they wanted to retain the identity of their country of origin, or that of their parents. For the most part, respondents do not call themselves Americans, but instead, they claim their parents' nationality (e.g., Cuban, Colombian, Mexican) or use a hyphenated variant (e.g., Cuban-American, Colombian-American, Mexican-American).

In conclusion, the work of Portes and Rumbaut (2001) and later Rumbaut and Portes (2001) offers a great insight into the immigrant population of the United States. Through their work, one can understand the communication networks among immigrants in their existing communities and the enormity of the nearly "intact" existing ethnic enclaves, especially in the Cuban and Haitian communities in Florida. In all, it is important to highlight once more that sociology offers well-developed perspective for the study of ethnic identity, since sociology takes into account the impact of community, as well as group interactions, on the identity development of the individual.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures employed for this study. This chapter presents specific details on the research paradigms, population sample, and presentation of the participants. In addition, this chapter will also discuss the methods employed to recruit prospective subjects, instruments used to gather the data, procedures used to analyze the data, and the consideration of human subjects. Copies of the consent forms that subjects were required to sign, as well as the interview protocol used for this study, are included in the appendix.

Research Questions

This study had two main purposes. The first purpose was to understand the processes by which Latina 1.5 generation immigrant college women cope, customize, and adapt their sense of self to acculturate to the U.S. culture, society, and academe. The second purpose was to explore how the women's adaptation and/or acculturation to the United States influenced their college experiences. This study sought to answer the following questions:

How did these women navigate both cultures (their native culture from Latin America and U.S. culture), and what was the impact of this process on their sense of identity, and relationship to academe?

How did the women experience U.S. culture and how did that affect and shape their college experiences in higher education?

Research Design, Procedures and Context

Qualitative research methods were used for data collection in this study. Creswell (1994) stated that a qualitative study is “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 1). Due to the exploratory nature of this inquiry and because little is known about the population researched, the qualitative approach is the most appropriate methodological framework for this study. It is also appropriate because this research is concerned primarily with process rather than outcomes or products. According to Brown, Stevens, Troiano, and Schneider (2002), qualitative methodology

[I]s useful in exploring and describing the experiences of college students, especially when little is known about the phenomenon under study. A qualitative approach yields results that cannot be gathered using quantitative methods. ... qualitative research ... leads to understanding people’s lives, stories, [and] behaviors” (p. 173).

Theoretical traditions in qualitative research helped develop conceptual grounding for this study and ascertain methods of data collection and analysis. Research consisted of data collected entirely through a series of individual, semi-structured, tape-recorded,

face-to-face (or telephone), one-on-one interviews of 20 1.5 Latina immigrant college students. The interviews provided an in-depth of understanding of these women's identity development and acculturation experiences during different transitional periods of their life in the United States. In addition, informal follow-up interviews were conducted for points of clarification and to ensure the accuracy of transcribed interviews; these occurred mainly over the phone and by email. In all of the data collection throughout this study, great importance was placed into having a high regard for the participant's environment, feelings, and social context. Participants were allowed to tell stories of their personal experiences that have influenced their identity development.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm of this study falls under a constructivist paradigm. According to Lincoln and Guba (1989, 1994), the constructivist paradigm is one in which knowledge is made up of multiple understandings and interpretations. They further posit that the constructivist paradigm consists of various and multiple ways of knowing. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba state that the constructivist paradigm comprises multiple realities that are complex and not easily quantifiable. To be specific, Lincoln and Guba state that:

[knowledge in constructivism] consists of those constructions about which there is relative consensus...to interpret the substance of the construction. Multiple 'knowledges' can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree, and/or depending on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and

gender factors that differentiate the interpreters. These constructions are subject to continuous revisions, with changes most likely to occur when relatively different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context. (1994, p. 113)

In the constructivist paradigm, knowledge and meaning belong to the individual and constructions can change or be revised continuously. Creswell (1994) states “the only reality is that constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation ... [by] those individuals being investigated” (pp. 4-6). This paradigm lends itself to the study because of its underlying philosophical belief that gives individuals the opportunity to create their own voices and knowledge.

Theoretical Perspectives

The framework for this study was eclectic; that is, it was drawn from a number of theoretical sources. These sources came from research on college students, their identity development processes, research on the impact of the social environment and the development of social identities. The following sources were instrumental: Erikson's (1950, 1959, 1963) stages of general identity development, Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser's (1993) work on identity development in the college years using “vectors,” and Marcia's (1980, 1993) four statuses of identity development. However, Phinney's (1992, 1993) three stage-model of ethnic identity development and Berry et al.'s (1992) acculturation model provided the instruments/scales, which enabled assessment of the student's ethnic identity development and level of acculturation. These latter two sources served as guides for the creation of a qualitative interview protocol for

this study. Additionally, both of these models were central because they have been tested empirically countless times.

This study was also rooted in a critical epistemological approach. A critical approach provided structural and historical insights into the lives of the Latina immigrant college students. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that the aim of critical inquiry is the “critique and transformation of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit human kind” (p. 113). Further, they maintain that “critical theory knowledge consists of a series of structural/historical insights that will be transformed as time passes” (p. 113). In the constructivist paradigm, the aim of critical theory is to give a voice to the oppressed, to share power, and to jointly construct knowledge.

Sample

Participants for this study consisted of 20 Latin American women who were born and raised in a Latin/South American country, and who immigrated involuntarily to the United States. Additionally, these women were recent college graduates or college seniors who were near the completion of their bachelor’s degree, or students who were in their second year of graduate studies. Participants were between the ages of 23 and 26 and attended various institutions of higher education in the United States. The logic behind recruiting a sample between 23 and 26 was centered on the ideal that this bracket encompasses the time frame when the college experiences have the largest impact on identity (Erikson, 1950) and ethnic identity development. Students in this study were foreign-born immigrants who immigrated to this country when they were 12 years of age, referred as to the 1.5 generation (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). The 1.5 generation is a preteen

generation that usually arrives to the United States between the ages of 10-12, but according to sociologists Rumbaut and Ima (1988), they are closer to 12 years of age. Thus, a person coming to the United States as an infant does not fall into the 1.5 generation. When Latina 1.5 generation of foreign-born immigrants were chosen as a sample for this study, the *Logic of Purposeful Sample* as described by Patton (1987) was employed. The logic of purposeful sampling is not the same in qualitative methods as sampling in statistics. Patton says:

The logic of purposeful sampling in qualitative methods is quite different from the logic of probabilistic sampling in statistics. The power of statistical sampling depends on selecting a truly random and representative sample to a larger population. The power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the evaluation. (1987, p. 52)

Initially, the ideal sampling for this study was an even distribution of Latinas, mirroring the demographic changes representing the different countries of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. However, I ended with the final sample of college students: seven women from Mexico, three women from Central America, four women from the Caribbean, and six women from South America.

When this study took place in the spring 2003 I was living in the state of Michigan. There was a general concern that obtaining a complete optimal sample of Latina 1.5 immigrant college students would represent a problem if restricted to the Midwest alone. Hence, recruitment of Latina immigrant students extended to the entire

country. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000) reported that most ethnic enclaves and recent immigrant arrivals reside primarily in large, urban cities on the East and West coast of the United States.

All participants who agreed to join this study were required to complete a registration form requesting personal contact information, such as complete name, phone number, home and school address, work number, and email address, which was be used for follow-up during the data-analyzing period (Appendix A). As well, participants were asked to fill out a consent form before proceeding with the interview (Appendix B).

As a final note, my decision to study women and particularly 1.5 immigrant women from Latin American and/or South America mirrors my own gender as well as strong personal and professional interests in womens' identity development and the phenomenon of acculturation. Although I am not by definition a 1.5, I am still an immigrant graduate student with origins from the Caribbean. These women were chosen, at least this particular generation, because of the lack of research in the increasing large number of recent Latin American immigrant women attending college in the United States.

Although I was contacted by over 100 women via email, only 20 of them fulfilled all of the criteria for this research study (Appendix F1 and F2). Many of the women were older than 26 or had arrived to the United States at age 14-15 or were not college students anymore but had been in the workforce for more than three years. As well, some of the women who emailed or called me were Brazilian. Although Brazil is a country in the southern hemisphere and they are considered Latin American, they possess special traits that make them different. For instance, Brazilian women are considered Portuguese as

their primary language and cultural background are embedded in Portugal. In sum, these characteristics ruled them out of this study as they were not true 1.5 immigrants. Puerto Rican women were a group who I was very surprised did not contact me.

Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection for this study was a qualitative open-ended interview protocol (Appendix C) based on Phinney's (1992, 1993) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) scale, Berry et al.'s (1992) acculturation model and his four outcomes to acculturation, and Ortiz's (1997) multicultural identity interview protocol. Phinney informed some of the following sample questions for this research study interview protocol: 1) How do you feel about your ethnic cultural background? 2) Do you have a clear sense of your ethnic background? 3) How do you feel about being a member of your particular ethnic group? 4) Do you feel any pride in your ethnic group and its accomplishment in this country? 5) How is your life affected by your group membership? On the other hand, Berry et al.'s interview protocol includes some of the following sample questions for the interview protocol: 1) What kind of inner struggles have you experienced adapting to this culture? 2) Do you think you are now adapted/acculturated to the North American culture? 3) What are some barriers to acculturation or to your adaptation process? 4) What do you think about the values, customs, and attitudes of the American culture? Finally, these were a few of the sample questions mirrored from Ortiz's interview protocol: 1) What does ethnic identity mean to you? 2) What is your ethnicity? 3) How do you feel about being a member of your

particular ethnic group? 4) Are there any cultural practices or behaviors that you engage in on a regular basis that allow you to express your ethnic identity?

Research Study Interviews

The method of data collection consisted of a series of individual qualitative interviews with twenty 1.5 immigrant college students. Interviews were semi-structured, open-ended, tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed. Some interviews were conducted by phone using state-of-the-art wireless systems such as webcam and wireless home theater speakers that allowed for a crisp and clear sound during the recording session. Field notes were also taken during the face-to-face interviews. Field notes consisted of personal reflections, notes, and observations. Taking notes proved to be very helpful to me in remembering details and conversations that were not necessarily recorded on the tapes. Even though using state of the art technology helped me greatly, I regretted not having the opportunity to have met face-to-face with some of the women. Compared to the students I interviewed on their respective campuses, I felt that there was a personal and intimate connection missing from my interviews with those women via webcam. And thus, for future research I greatly discourage such techniques to be used, unless the nature of the research is different or quantitative.

Interviews were approximately 1-2 hours in length and were conducted at each institutional site where the participant had been recruited. Generally, when interviews took place face-to-face at the participant's institution, the student would decide upon a comfortable and familiar place at which to conduct the interview such as her apartment, a

reserved section at her college library, or as it happened in a couple of occasions, an empty classroom.

Prior to each interview, the participant was asked which language she would prefer to use. I wanted the participant to be as comfortable as possible, to feel empowered, to feel that they had choices, to feel part of this inquiry, and to feel that they were contributing in significant ways to this investigation. Thus, the interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, and sometimes in a combination or mix of both, but for the most part English was the preferred “business” language of choice.

A professional transcriber was employed to transcribe the tapes. The professional transcriber transcribed all 20 interviews; however, the researcher transcribed all of the Spanish passages in all 20 interviews that the professional transcriber was not able to do. This also allowed for the researcher to check for accuracy and make corrections when necessary, always with the participant’s consent.

For recruitment and retention purposes, the participants were compensated for both their time and commitment with \$10 phone card to call anywhere in the United States or a \$10 gift certificate from a local bookstore. However, many of them refused to get “paid” and/or compensated for participating in this study. They indicated that participating in this investigation was the greatest experience that provided them a learning experience and allowed them to share their pride and joy in their culture. Nonetheless, I did follow up and sent via U.S. mail a check for \$10 dollars to those individuals who declined to accept any “incentive.”

Each interview followed a protocol. For instance, when a prospective participant contacted me, I would explain the significance of the investigation, the purpose of the

inquiry, the length of the interview, the importance of signing the consent form, filling the personal contact form, and a sample of the questions they would be answering. For the most part, before the interview, I would spend an average of 10-15 minutes getting to know the participants and also allowing her to get to know me and ask questions. These mini interviews were quite helpful as they made easier for us to develop a rapport. However, it was never difficult to develop camaraderie with these college students; indeed, the connection and admiration was felt from the onset of our conversations (generally in Spanish). The immediate connection was felt perhaps because of the commonality in our roots and backgrounds; and admiration because we realized through our talks how far we all have come. Many of these college students expressed their delight when they heard that another Latina college student was conducting a doctorate research study. In fact, several of them said that when they heard about the investigation they felt proud to be a Latina and to be able to participate. Indeed, many of the participants told me that they were inspired by my research to perhaps pursue a doctorate degree.

Methods to Recruit Prospective Participants

The following methods were used to recruit prospective college students for this study.

- Letters were sent to different underrepresented student organizations at various institutions of higher education (Appendix D). Letters were also sent to several ethnic student groups/organizations on the Michigan State University (MSU) campus (e.g., La Cultura de las Razas Unidas (CRU), the Puerto Rican Student

Association (PRSA), and others). Names of a number of student organizations were obtained through colleagues and friends who work in the area of student affairs and higher education at different institutions of higher learning.

- Letters were also sent to student affairs administrators who work with underrepresented groups at various institutions of higher education (Appendix E). The same letters were sent to student affairs administrators on the MSU campus.
- Recruitment flyers were posted around several college campuses including Michigan State University, University of Michigan, Texas A&M University, Penn State University, Cal State University, New York University, Arizona State University, and University of Florida in Miami (Appendix F).
- Flyers and/or announcements were also posted via email (Appendix G). An email announcement was sent to a number of colleagues at MSU and which was distributed on the on campus listserv for academic advisors. In addition, student organizations and friends assisted by forwarding my research study announcement via email to their students. Another email announcement was sent through numerous professional organizations' listserv such as the Health Professional and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Latino Network, both national listserves. These two resources proved to be very effective as more than 100 individuals contacted me to ask questions about the study, comment or compliment the purpose of the study, or simply to volunteer to be a participant. After the recruitment email was posted on the Health Professional, the message snowballed to incredible magnitude. The email message was received as far away as Europe. One of the participants was spending a semester abroad when

she contacted me. She asked me to wait until her return to the United States in May 2003 to conduct the interview.

Procedures for Analyzing Data

Several categories were used to index or code the data. Following the principles of qualitative analysis, an extensive analysis of each student's data was conducted. Data were continuously coded and reviewed in order to identify recurring themes and analyze common patterns that emerged during the interviews. After interviews were transcribed and coded, participants were asked to provide feedback and check for transcription accuracy. In other words, participants also had the chance to perform what Seidman (1991) calls a "member check," that is the opportunity to review the transcripts from the interview. An electronic copy of their transcribed interview was sent to each of the women who participated in the study and only ten of them had some sort of change, most were grammatical, and none of them reported drastic changes based on inaccuracies.

A coding scheme was developed after the initial reading of the data. Codes were constantly adjusted as new themes emerged; ten out of the twenty interviews were color coded by hand; the rest were thoroughly read in order to pull out the major points. As major themes were been identified, several interesting supporting categories emerged and complemented the major themes.

The constant comparative method for data checking took place through a peer-debriefing group (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) composed of three other colleagues in the field, such as graduate students in the Educational Administration program. As with the

interview process, all research was maintained amongst the participants under the strictest confidentiality.

Threats to Validity

In an attempt to avoid bias in the data, I stayed away from selecting participants with whom I might have had some type of affiliation and/or shared a common background (e.g., friends or my previous students) or identical immigrant experiences. My background was beneficial during the interview process and allowed the participants to feel comfortable expressing their feelings, as opposed to merely going through the motions. Another way that I guarded against bias was by employing a process of peer review. Finally, participants were actively involved in all phases of this research process in order to accurately represent their voices.

Other methods that I employed to protect the integrity of the data were the data and investigator triangulation. Data triangulation utilizes several data sources and methods in a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Investigator triangulation utilizes different researchers and evaluators (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) to check the analysis of the data. When analyzing and interpreting the data, I worked to triangulate the interview transcripts, notes from the observations, and comments and feedback from the participants in order to ensure the validity of interpretations. In addition, peer reviewers (individuals/researchers not involved in the data collection process) checked on the accuracy of the findings and themes that enhanced the credibility of the inferences made. Employing numerous steps for analysis aided identifying common themes among the various data.

Confidentiality

All interviewees were required to complete a consent form (Appendix B) and were assured of their confidentiality. A few additional steps were taken in order to protect the participants' confidentiality. First, the privacy and confidentiality of each participant was protected by having them create a "fictitious" name to be used when reporting data. And second, their last names or the name(s) of any family members mentioned in the interview data were omitted in order to avoid the risk of identification. Since the 20 participants lived in several different states and attended a range of higher education institutions, the threats to breach confidentiality were bare minimum.

Presentation of the Participants

This chapter introduces the 20 individuals who were interviewed for this study. As relatively new immigrants, all 20 college students arrived to the United States between the ages of 10-13 and are now between the ages of 23 and 26. I set the minimum age of the participants at 23-26 because this is the estimated closing stage of the young adulthood stage as described by Erickson (1950). Developmental theorists describe people in college in this age range and/or stage as having a somewhat well ascertained identity (Erickson, 1959). It is during college that individuals start making social connections, questioning their lives, and making some real world decisions that will influence important growth and development. All 20 participants came to this country involuntarily—meaning that as youths, they did not have a say or a choice as far as

leaving their country of origin. In this case, their elders, parents, or family members were the ones making the decision for them. The reasons given by the participants for their parents' immigration to the United States ranged from political, social, and economical.

Interviews for this study were conducted in the spring semester of 2003. All 20 Latina 1.5 college students consented to the 60-120 minutes interview. Interviewees also consented to be contacted for follow-up questioning during the data-analysis period in the summer of 2003 to authenticate on the accuracy of their already transcribed interviews. The name of each interviewee has been changed to protect the person's identity.

The 20 Latina 1.5 college students represented in this chapter are Camelia, Carolina, Damaris, Dolores, Elsa, Herminia, Jazmín, Karla, Laura, Luisa, Mercedes, Monica, Natalia, Penelope, Rosario, Tamara, Teresa, Tomasa, Virginia, and Yolanda.

Camelia was a 23 year old college student majoring in biological sciences at the University of Illinois in Chicago. She arrived in the United States in 1990 when she was 10. She lived in a large Mexican enclave in Chicago. Camelia describes her ethnicity as Mexican.

Carolina was 25 years old. She was a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in fine arts and creative writing at New York University (NYU). Her family left the Dominican Republic when she was 10 years of age. Carolina, as in the case of other participants in this study, lived most of her immigrant life in an ethnic enclave. She lived in a large Dominican neighborhood in New York City -- Washington Heights. However, because this neighborhood is mostly populated by Dominican immigrants, people refer to it as "Dominican Heights." Carolina considers her ethnicity to be Dominican.

Damaris was 26 years old when she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Public Policy from the University of Rhode Island. When contacted for this interview, she was working full-time at Brown University's Center for Public Services, but her intentions were to go back to school and pursue a master's and a doctorate degree. She was 12 when her family arrived for the first time in United States, specifically, to the state of Rhode Island. Providence, according to Damaris, has the second largest concentration of Dominicans in the United States. Damaris described herself as Dominican.

Dolores was 26 years of age. She graduated from Rutgers University and was working full-time at a company in the East coast. Dolores had lived in the United States for 16 years as she emigrated at age 10. Most of her family lives in the United States; in fact, when interviewed she was living at home in New Jersey with her mom, dad, and grandparents. She described her ethnicity as Peruvian.

Elsa was 26 years old and a first year master's student in the School of Education at City University of New York (CUNY). Like many of the other 1.5 immigrant college students, Elsa emigrated with her family when she was 10. Elsa was also living in Washington Heights in New York City. Elsa stated during her interview, "I consider myself Dominican. That's what my ethnicity is."

Herminia was a 23 year old master's student in engineering at Texas A&M University. Her family arrived in the United States when she was 12 years of age. Herminia was at the verge of finishing her degree when she agreed to meet for this interview. Herminia believes her ethnicity to be "Mexican hyphenated American." When her family first arrived to the United States, they lived in California for some time but

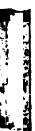
later moved to Kansas because her grandparents and two aunts were living there and had jobs. Herminia went to undergraduate school in Kansas.

Jazmín was 25 years old. She was a graduate student at Michigan State University (MSU). Jazmín moved with both parents to the United States three weeks before turning 11. Previous to moving to East Lansing, Michigan to pursue her master's degree, she lived for 14 years in Miami—one of the largest enclaves for immigrants who come from South, Central America, and the Caribbean. Her answer to the question what is your ethnicity was: "I was born in Colombia ... I think I am Hispanic and that's what my label is, but I don't think I am 100% Hispanic ... I consider myself multicultural."

Karla was a 23 year old college student who emigrated with her mother to the United States, due in part to the political instability in Guatemala, when she was 10 years of age. At the time of this interview in the spring of 2003, she was two months away from finishing her bachelor's degree at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). When asked about her ethnicity Karla promptly indicated, "I am Guatemalan."

In spring 2003, at 26 years of age, Laura was completing her doctoral degree at Alliance International University in San Diego California. She was 13 when she arrived in the United States. She was born and raised in Argentina. Laura's answer regarding her ethnicity was, "In the United States I think of myself as Hispanic or Latina ... otherwise until I moved to the United States I thought of myself as white."

Luisa was 24 years old, and she emigrated from Mexico with her parents when she was 12. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology in May 2003. At the time of the interview she was attending the University of Minnesota Morris. Luisa's immediate goal after completing her bachelor's degree was to pursue a master's degree



either in social work or counseling psychology. When asked about her ethnicity she responded, "I am Mexican."

Mercedes was also 24 years of age. Her family emigrated from Mexico to the United States when she was 10. Mercedes had completed her first year of graduate studies in educational psychology with an emphasis on bilingual education when she participated in this research study. Before she moved to Texas to pursue her master's degree at Texas A&M University, she had lived in California, where her family still lives. Mercedes said, "I consider myself to be Mexican ... I am of Mexican decent."

Monica was 23 and was working on a second bachelor's degree in nursing at the University of Chicago. She completed her first bachelor's degree in 2001. Monica was almost 14 when she and her family emigrated from Guatemala. Monica, like Karla, cited politically tumultuous and war-torn Nicaragua as the main reason for immigration. Monica has an interesting background as her grandparents are Mexican yet her parents are both Guatemalan. Monica refers to her ethnicity as Hispanic.

Natalia was 23 years old and arrived in the United States when she was 13. She graduated from Eastern Washington University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and started a two years master's program in counseling psychology at Indiana University in Birmingham. In her interview, Natalia stated that when asked where she is from, "I always say that I am from Mexico City." In regards to ethnicity, when asked she said, "I consider that I'm Latina."

Penelope was 23 years old and arrived at age 11 in the United States. Penelope was in her first year of graduate studies in engineering at the University of Pennsylvania. Penelope's family was from Chile. Her parents were on a business trip to Brazil when she

was born. She stated, "I happened to be born in Brazil because that's where my parents were at the time." Therefore, she considers her ethnicity to be Brazilian, although all her roots and connections are from Chile.

Rosario was 23 years old. She stated, "I arrived to the United States on June 9, 1989." She continued by saying, "When my family left Nicaragua I was only 10 years old." Rosario graduated from Loyola University in Chicago with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. She was a graduate student at Arizona State University pursuing a master's degree also in criminal justice. When asked about her ethnicity, she answered, "I'd have to say Latino."

Tamara was a 23 years old immigrant from Mexico. She was a master's student at the University of Urbana Champaign in Illinois. She first attended a community college in California before transferring to a four-year institution and finally moving to Illinois. She was 11 eleven years old when she arrived in the United States. Tamara considered her ethnicity to be Latina.

Teresa was 25 and immigrated to the United States in 1989 when she was 12 years old. She received her bachelor's degree from Colorado State University in human development and gerontology. When she interviewed for this study, she had just finished her master's degree in higher education and administration, which she attained from the University of Vermont. At the time of the interview she was already working as a full-time employee in Los Angeles, California. When asked about her ethnicity, Teresa replied, "I consider myself still Mexicana simply because I was born and raised there."

Tomasa was 25 and arrived to the United States when she was 12 years old. She had completed her bachelor's degree in biology and was working full-time as a

laboratory assistant. Tomasa was planning to start a master's program in either biology or genetics. Tomasa was born in Brazil, but, shortly thereafter her parents moved to Panamá, and then when she was 10 years old her family moved to Uruguay. Her father was Brazilian and her mother was Colombian. Tomasa pointed out that her ethnicity was Latina and/or a Latin hybrid because of her Spanish and Portuguese influences.

Virginia was a 26 year old immigrant from Argentina. Her family moved to California when she was 11 years of age. She was finishing her bachelor's degree in anthropology in June 2003 when she volunteered to participate in this study. Virginia considered her ethnicity to be Latina.

The last participant, Yolanda, was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. She was 10 years of age when her family arrived to the United States. At the time of the interview she was 24 years old. When Yolanda's family arrived to the United States they moved to the Bronx in New York City and her parents still live there. Yolanda described her ethnicity to be Dominican. In May 2000, Yolanda obtained her bachelor's degree in business administration and organizational management from Miami University at Ohio. In May 2003 she had successfully completed her first year in her master's degree in accounting, communications, and advertising at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Table 3. Profiles of one-on-one interviewees

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Ethnicity (as described by the student)	Age Arrival United States	Undergraduate/Graduate Institution
Camelia	23	Mexico	Mexican	10	Illinois Public Research
Carolina	25	Dominican Rep.	Dominican	10	New York Private Research I
Damaris	26	Dominican Rep.	Dominican	12	Rhode Island Public Research
Dolores	26	Peru	Peruvian	10	New Jersey Public Research
Elsa	26	Dominican Rep.	Dominican	10	New York Research Public
Herminia	23	Mexico	Mexican-American	12	Texas Public Research
Jazmín	25	Colombia	Hispanic	11	Michigan Public Research
Karla	23	Guatemala	Guatemalan	10	California Public Research
Laura	26	Argentina	Hispanic or Latina	13	California Public Liberal Arts
Luisa	24	Mexico	Mexican	12	Minnesota Public Liberal Arts
Mercedes	24	Mexico	Mexican	10	Texas Public Research
Monica	23	Guatemala	Hispanic	13	Illinois Public Research
Natalia	23	Mexico	Latina	13	Indiana Public Research
Penelope	23	Brazil/Chile	Latina	11	Pennsylvania Research Type I
Rosario	23	Nicaragua	Latina	10	Arizona Public Research
Tamara	23	Mexico	Latina	11	Illinois Public Research
Teresa	25	Mexico	Mexicana	12	Colorado Public Research
Tomasa	25	Brazil/Colombia	Latina	12	North Carolina Public Research
Virginia	26	Argentina	Latina	11	California Public Research
Yolanda	24	Dominican Rep.	Dominican	10	Virginia Public Liberal Arts

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate and summarize the author's major findings originating from the transcribed interviews of the 20 Latina 1.5 foreign-born college students. This study was not designed to furnish assertive generalizations but rather to offer an in-depth study of 20 individual cases. These cases provide insight into the experiences of the participants' navigation of acculturation. Analysis of the data revealed a number of themes. The data were analyzed in such a way as to denote the developmental salience of both of the students' identity development and acculturation and how these affected their college experiences. The six major themes that emerged were: 1) Meaning of Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity; 2) Understanding and Embracing Ethnic Identity; 3) Ethnic Identification; 4) Practices and Behavioral Ties to Cultural Background; 5) Adapting to the New Culture; and 6) Ethnic Identity Effects in College.

In framing the interviewees' responses to questions centering on the aforementioned six themes, this study sought to answer the following questions:

How did these women navigate both cultures (their native culture from Latin America and U.S. culture), and what was the impact of this process on their sense of self, identity, and relationship to academe?

How did the women experience U.S. culture and how did that affect and shape their college experiences in higher education?

Theme 1: Meaning of Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity

The findings revealed that for each of the participants in this study ethnicity and ethnic identity were very important. In addition, this study found that by the time a number of these women entered college, their ethnic identity was, in fact, well developed. A final finding was that a strong connection existed between the development of these students' ethnic identity and familism. In other words, this study found that one of the most influential aspects of their ethnic identity was family.

Under the rubric of ethnic identity and ethnicity, four important supporting categories and evidence materialized: 1) connection to country of origin and national origin; 2) understanding and appreciation of culture; 3) connection to family origins; and 4) pride of family, culture, ethnic group, and heritage. These supporting categories are very much embedded under the main theme – they did not emerge on their own, but rather, they surfaced simultaneously with the primary theme – they were all in a sequence. These supporting categories will not take a life of their own in this study but rather will serve as supporting evidence.

The majority of the women in this study (12 out of 20) saw their ethnicity directly related and connected to their national country of origin. In other words, most of the college women self-identified and self-labeled in direct correspondence with the country in which they were born and raised. Their ethnicity and identity were identified with the nationality of the country from which they had immigrated as young girls. The findings showed that for most of these 1.5 college students, living in the United States had not lessened or weakened their ethnic consciousness (awareness of culture) or their ethnic identification (association with their ethnic group). Latina 1.5 college students placed

great importance on being members of their ethnic immigrant groups. Their experiences with family and community members were most powerful in shaping their ethnic identity. Indeed, several of these women still lived either with their parents or grandparents, or in their ethnic enclaves. These women felt the need to contribute to the success of their ethnic groups and communities.

The participants revealed several accounts about experiences in their lives that had an impact on their ethnic identity. Yolanda describes having a clear sense of understanding of her ethnicity and ethnic identity prior to entering college. She talked about family, community, church, and youth groups having played a role and had an impact on her ethnic identity development. She said:

The first half of my life I didn't know any other identity than to be a Dominican and growing up in the Dominican Republic. Then moving to the United States, that's when I think my ethnicity strengthened and continued to develop. I am Dominican and I always will be. My parents always reminded me of our culture, morals, and values. I learned from them. I could have adapted to the American-all American culture and neglect part of my heritage and where I came from and I chose not to do that. And I chose to remain true to my roots. I am not ashamed of who I am or where I came from. And I mean when I went to college that's when my ethnic identity was really apparent because I was not in New York where my circle of friends were all Latinos. But when I was out of my comfort zone in a predominantly white school that's when I could have been whatever. I could have been Americanized and eat what they eat and danced where they danced and go where they go, but I chose to stick to my roots and background. Why do I have to

change? In turn whenever I have a chance I take upon the role of teaching others about my roots and my background. I chose not to forget the values that my family, my community of Dominicans and other Latinos, and my church had instilled in me.

Yolanda's statement is remarkable. Her connection to family and community is so firm that there is not room to doubt or to question her ethnic identity and allegiance to her ethnic group. In fact, of all the participants, Yolanda was the only one who stubbornly, some might say, rejected conformity to American standards. She stated, "I will never compromise who I am or where I come from." This kind of "staunch" behavior seems to resonate with participants who grew up mostly in enclaves.

Camelia is also one of the several students in this study who had a clear definition of ethnicity as well as ethnic identity and how her family background played an important role in the development of these. Camelia openly said:

I am Mexican and that's the group I identify with, that's that group I belong to. My parents, my grandparents, they are all from Mexico. I owe what I am today to my family, my community of Mexicans ... my ethnic identity is my background, where I come from in Mexico, my parents, and my family history, our traditions with food, music. I think you should be proud of who you are and not deny it. I think you should be proud of your background and your community and not be ashamed of it. Although I am at school and it's a different atmosphere because it's English and mostly [an] Anglo environment, I always remember my history ... at school, it's just completely different, but within the family unit is more comfortable. I associate with people here [at school], maybe in a way my family

and I are a bit Americanized, but we also hold onto our beginnings and background. My parents speak English but they speak Spanish at home. And my mom cooks Mexican food and so a lot of our roots are from Mexico. My parents have always been there for me making sure that I don't ever forget what it means to be Mexican and to be proud of my people ... my ethnic group.

Camelia's words remind us of the importance that family origin and background hold in one's ethnicity. It is obvious in her remarks that she felt very connected to her roots and country of origin. Therefore, her words suggest that the tie she maintained with her community strengthened her ethnic identity. Indeed, Camelia continued by saying that she:

[E]mbrace[s] all of the things about being Mexican. In this family, my mother has always said do always think the best things of all cultures. Like our own culture and the American culture. So I embrace the good aspects of being Mexican and that family unity is the core of our culture and heritage and then adapting to some of the American culture.

In this statement Camelia clearly shows that although she acknowledges adapting to the American culture (Americanization and/or acculturation), her family unity and background always comes first. In addition, this statement shows how clearly she defines herself as a Mexican.

Carolina is yet another great example of a college student who identifies a clear sense of ethnicity as well as her ethnic identity and how her ethnic heritage and

background played an important role in her identity development. Already a master's candidate at NYU, Carolina shared her views with me by saying:

[My] ethnicity and background relates to the place where I was born, the Dominican Republic. I think my ethnicity or ethnic identity developed being in this country, the United States. I think for the most part people in this country, just because of the way things have been for a very long time, people always think that there's really only like two identities that you can have, you're either black or white. I think that just being here, when I first came here to this country, we lived in an apartment in a black neighborhood. And then when I went away to school I was in a primarily white environment. So being in both of those environments, it kind of strengthened myself in being very much different from those two things. Definitely from where my family is, being Dominican. I think for me, my family played a very important role of my sense of identity, because coming here as a young child [ten years old] I think a lot of times you have a feeling of just being different and being an "other." And your family will always be that place where you belong, at least for me, where I felt like I belonged and where I was understood. So for me, my family played a very important role on my identity.

Carolina's account similar to Camelia's in that they both view their ethnicity and ethnic identity in relation to the country of their national and ethnic origin. Indeed, this connection of ethnicity and ethnic identity with country of origin was a common thread among most interviewees. Also important to them, as became evident during their interviews, was the pivotal role that family played in their lives and how those

connections strengthened and helped solidify their beliefs of self (identity), ethnicity, and cultural heritage. Teresa shared those same feelings when she stated that:

I consider myself Mexicana simply because I was born and raised there, still half of my life actually now. And so I consider myself Mexican but also Latina because I am very involved in Latino issues which means any South America, Central America, including Mexico. I think ethnicity for a lot of people is defined just simply by skin color and the way you are a lot of physical attributes I would say like the color of your hair, your eyes, definitely your skin, your nose. I think most people think of ethnicity in that way. And for me, ethnicity is my identity, a big portion of it but is not just the way I “look,” it’s my culture, it’s where I come from, where I grew up. So, to me it’s my Mexican heritage, because it involves food, music, philosophy, political beliefs, religious beliefs, cultural celebration and a lot of regional and cultural traditions that make up that ... I think for me because I was born in Mexico and like I said raised there for the first 12 years, that was where I learned you know just form the culture, just by living in Mexico. I learned you know not only the language but just the you know everything, our history, my taste for music, all of my taste-temperament, and everything that comes with that, my formation, my first formative years. That’s how I developed my sense of ethnic identity, who I am. And it’s now more interesting because I still hold onto that. You wouldn’t think so that after well - I’ve lived half of my life in Mexico and half of my life here, you would think that some of those things would start to maybe dissolve or dissipate or not be strong. But what has been interesting for me is that I hold onto them, I don’t want to let go of them, that’s

who I am and there's no – I can't shed that. Some of it has changed, but it's still who I am. It's not like okay I'm going to get rid of them. I just can't, that's who I am. I am also lucky to live in California, specifically in Los Angeles, where there is a big ethnic mix of everything, particularly Latinos such as Colombians, Nicaraguans, Venezuelan, and also Mexicans. This environment allows me to bring best outward expressions of my culture in terms of food, music. I am so grateful to my family that always reminded me where I came from. My family played a huge part, huge, huge part in the development of my ethnic identity. My family was nurturing and engaging and I am so proud of them.

Finally, Elsa talked eloquently about her ethnicity, country of origin, and family.

Elsa, similar to Carolina, is a Dominican attending NYU and living in a Dominican enclave in New York City. She said:

I consider myself Dominican and ethnic identity to me is quite important because it means my cultural background, my language, my customs, my traditions, and where you know, I was born. I am lucky to have the family that I have. I think that they played a very, very important role, the most important one - the development of both my identity and ethnic identity. My family is my role model and family for us [Dominicans] is very, very, important. It's very crucial what they think and you know most of the time the decisions that you make you don't make them on your own. So family, our values definitely plays a huge influence on the way that you view yourself as a person and you know it's very important.

The importance of the family in one's development is highlighted by Torres (2004) when she states that "[f]amily members are the primary conveyers of cultural heritage within any ethnic group" (p. 467). For these five college students, as well as several others who participated in this study, Torres' statement holds to be true. Some of the women observed that although it was challenging at times to grow up in a household in which parents and grandparents had strict rules that imposed constraints upon their freedom, they would not have traded those experiences. As Carolina said, for example, "they are part of my culture - it is my heritage." In essence, Carolina had a strong sense of pride and felt very happy about her experiences with her ethnicity. Elsa elaborated on what it meant to grow up in a Dominican family household: "My parents are very strict. They are very strong on reputation, especially if you are a girl you have to behave, live at home, follow a curfew, and definitely no sleep over. You literally live at home until you get married." Although Elsa lived in a home that was very restrictive, she said that at the end, she "appreciated her family cultural values because it made me a better person." Elsa sounded pleased with those experiences with her ethnicity. Without a doubt, based on their statements, family influenced their ethnicity and ethnic identity development and also instilled in these individuals a strong sense of ethnic pride. Regardless of their country of origin in Latin America, these women share a common traditional core value - familism. In sum, family and family members seemed to have played an important role in helping these students' formation of ethnic identity.

For eight of the participants in this study, ethnicity was not immediately associated with their nationality and/or country of origin, but rather, ethnicity was linked to a generic term used in the United States such as Latina or Hispanic. Throughout the

interviews, this group of students kept switching terminologies (labels) from Hispanic to Latina to Latin American to Argentinean, Guatemalan, or Mexican American. Issues concerning labeling were revealed in the interviews with the students. As each interview progressed, the participants explained that they preferred using the Hispanic/Latina ethnic label when they were among non-Latinos and/or in mainstream America. In fact, the most popular choice of label for six out of eight of these participants was Latina. The other two preferred the label Hispanic. They explained their reasons for preferring to use certain terms such as Hispanic or Latina as opposed to others. For instance, Karla said, "I use that [term] more [Hispanic/Latina] with non-Latina and when I'm with other Latinas, I can say I am from Guatemala." According to Karla, she is not conforming to U.S. standards by using the Hispanic/Latina terminology, but rather, she uses that term because "a lot of people don't know where Guatemala is." She thus tried to avoid long elaborated explanations about her background. Moreover, Jazmín explained that before making the move from Miami to Michigan, she did not think much about labels, but "since I've been here [Michigan] ... I noticed that people pay a little more attention to the label and who you are and what you are. And I feel that my roots are very important to me because obviously my parents brought me up in a certain way because they are Colombians." Depending on the geographical place or company, both Jazmín and Karla adapted the label they used to describe themselves accordingly. Jazmín wanted to clarify, "I know my roots, and I know we are from Colombia." It appears that for these eight participants, college was where they felt they had to make a choice about the label they used. It also seems that there was an element of peer pressure involved when they had to decide which label to use to describe themselves. Indeed, among these eight participants,

some were raised or schooled in an environment in which they had an opportunity to learn about their culture of origin, but others did not have the same opportunities. Therefore, for a number of them, college was their first opportunity to develop a sense of ethnic identity.

It is interesting that, before arriving to the United States, some of these women never questioned their background or ethnicity, as there was not need to do so. However, it was not until they moved to the U.S. that they began to examine their identity. In essence, most of the participants in this study did not at first have an awareness of their ethnic identity because ethnicity was not a relevant characteristic in their country of origin. This issue was a common thread for many of the participants in this study as well as with Karla who honestly confessed:

I guess since coming to the United States I didn't really even know that the term [ethnic identity] existed, so I've always just had to believe that I'm Guatemalan, you know no matter what. And it was not until I came here that I discovered that I'm part of the Latino community. You know when I'm able to say that I'm from Guatemala, I say so, but most of the time I end up saying that I'm Latina. My ethnic identity developed when I moved here actually. When you're in a country that everybody is Guatemalteco, you don't have to say what you are you know. But when you come to a place like the United States, where people are actually asking you, you know what are you? What do you mean what I am? Little by little you start identifying with a particular group – with your group, whether Mejicanos, Chicanos, or you know now for me is just like Latino. I don't know, I think because I came here during my teenage years, I feel that I was very, very

critical for me to understand, sort of where I come from and where I'm going. I'm fine with the language, the food, the values, and the culture you know all of that is like Guatemalteco, Latino.

This contextual element was evident in the words of another student. Damaris, who passionately commented:

For me personally I developed my ethnic identity mostly when I came to this country when I was 12 years old. Before then I never questioned who I was in terms of my nationality or in terms of my ethnic identity or any labels. But coming here, I think as many immigrants I felt that I needed to be a part of the group and that's when identifying myself as Dominican started for me. I think that's when I felt I developed my ethnic identity. My family has always been a catalyst behind my wanting to preserve a lot of things that I brought to this country. When I came to this country, in terms of the culture, in terms of the language, the food, the ideals and my family because I have a lot of family that also still live in the Dominican Republic [and] have been [an] intricate part of my ethnic identity. I think also the community and that I have been with since I came to this country. When I came to this country I came to Providence and I have been here ever since. And I think Providence because we have a major Dominican community here, also had a lot to do with that and also because I started with a lot of Dominicans students when I was in public schools here in Providence.

Tomasa also expressed the same feelings as Damaris. She explained that many times she felt dumfounded by people constantly questioning her background and

demanding an answer from her. Tomasa was very agitated when she spoke to me and pointed out:

I didn't think of ethnicity-I've moved around Latin America before coming to the United States and I didn't think much about ethnicity until I got here. I think you start questioning who you are much more when you are an adolescent and I was sort of a pre-adolescent when I came here. But that's an issue that is much more sort of in the spotlight here in the U.S. I hadn't thought of myself as anything but from a particular nationality before moving to the U.S. and then I had to start questioning well am I from Latin American, Latina, Hispanic, am I white? I feel that my culture defines me – Colombian and Brazilian.

In a similar vein, yet nonetheless somewhat different from the rest of the participants, Laura said, "I never thought of a label. In the United States I think of myself as Hispanic or Latina. Otherwise, until I moved to the United States I thought of myself as white." She went on to explain, "When I left there were few or non-white people in Argentina so there was never a need to say I was from Argentina or white Argentinean." It is evident by her statement that Laura's journey was somehow different from that of other participants in this study, whose reasons for immigration were related to political unrest, low social economic status, or simply very poor conditions. Laura, by contrast was the product of higher social status and different cultural conditions in Argentina. However, after much examination of her identity like the others, Laura came to the realization that her ethnicity was very much tied to her country of origin. Laura explained:

When I was in Argentina I was part of the white privileged group and I was very unaware of the privilege that I had and of the fact that I do have ethnic identity. I never thought about it. It never crossed my mind. Upon moving to the United States though, it became pretty clear that where I came from and my ethnicity mattered. And I think that's when I started becoming aware of the fact that I was from a different background, that I was from Argentina and that I had connections to that ethnic group. That was very important all of a sudden ... people questioned me about it and brought it to my attention ... my parents were key in my ethnic identity because they help me to understand my roots. I would ask my mom questions about her family from Spain and she would sit down with me and tell me oh yeah that's the way it happened in my family and ... where before they had never sat down with me and explained the differences to me. I was better able to understand them and then incorporate them into my understanding of who I was. I am so proud of my family. My ethnic group values family over being financially successful or being rich as it happens many times in this country. We devote more time to family and that's because of the value that we place on family living as a priority.

The search for her ethnic identity led her to become aware of the white privilege she enjoyed in her country of origin as well as how the different climate in the United States changed that "privilege." She struggled with her own identity as a white Argentinean in the United States. In other words, she became conscious that as an immigrant in the United States, she was neither Argentinean nor was she white. Also important in Laura's discourse is the role that family played in her life. Undeniably, and independently of each

participant's country of origin, as Latin American individuals, they all shared common traditional values such as nationality, country of origin, ethnic identity, and familism.

Theme 2: Understanding and Embracing Ethnic Identity

A second interesting finding that emerged during the interviews with participants in this study was the extraordinary respect and admiration these women exhibited toward their ethnic identity. As they grew older and developed social relationships within mainstream U.S. culture, these women started to realize that they were "different" from the rest of their peers. In addition, they became aware that their sojourn in this country was not temporary but permanent. Coming to this realization forced the participants to embark on serious searches for their ethnic identity. And as they searched, they asked questions to family members and friends and became familiar with their roots through oral stories, books, courses, and travels. They learned to understand, embrace, and preserve their ethnic identity.

There are four supporting categories to understanding and embracing ethnic identity: 1) involuntary immigration; 2) am I different?; 3) I am here to stay; and 4) I belong to an ethnic group. As involuntary immigrants, these students were not only fully cognizant of their status in this society but also fully cognizant of their differences. In her interview, Luisa talked about the sadness of leaving her country, the confusion she experienced arriving to the United States and the constant questioning she endured regarding her ethnicity. She commented:

I didn't know we were leaving. I was devastated when we left Mexico. I didn't understand why my parents were taking me away. I was confused, I thought that

we were coming to the United States for vacation but that was not the case. I missed my friends, my dolls, and my extended family. You know, I realized when we arrived to the United States that my ethnicity became something that identified me and separated me from the majority group. I was shocked because in Mexico and Latin America there are so many different ethnic and racial groups that lives together; racial mixtures are so common and issues of race seem to be less of a big deal than in the United States. It was then that I started asking: am I different? Yes, I realized that I was different – it felt pretty bad to be different. I had very negative problems due to immigration. You know, it's just that entire process of having to migrate here and being unaware of what was going to happen. I never made friends or had close social relationships because you know, not knowing if I was going to be here two years down the road; this situation created a lot of stress and depression at one point. As time passed and we seemed not to leave, I then started the process of revising my values, beliefs, and behaviors. You know, I was attempting to redefine who I was, how I saw myself, and how others saw me. Going back to Mexico to revisit places I was familiar as a little girl like the pyramids and visit my people was good. I was marveled by the pyramids in Mexico City and the history behind them. You know, I was like wow, this is part of my history, I was just so proud, I was like, yeah this is my ethnicity, this is where I belong, and this is my ethnic group. Hanging around with other Mexicans or Latinos and other ethnic groups in college, taking courses helped understand and reemphasize who I was. Being different was somehow not such a

big deal you know because I had my network of people within my ethnic group that supported me.

Luisas' immigrant experience in this country led her to search and explore her background by going back to the very beginning, to where everything started, to her roots in Mexico. Like so many other of the participants, Luisa embarked in the physical and intellectual journey to find answers to her questions. She remarked, "I am glad I went back. I am glad that in college I was able to learn and understand more about my ethnic group. I learned about identity because I was exposed to my culture. Those experiences helped me embrace who I am. "

Similarly, Dolores shared her views of how she came to understand and embrace her ethnic identity. She pointed out, "I think it's really what my upbringing and what my family has instilled in me in terms of cultural values and cultural activities that are Peruvian ... you know most importantly the Peruvian values and customs, traditions." She proudly declared, "Yeah, I actually live with my grandparents, which is probably a piece of the way we still kind of instill our background and culture, you know living here, I live at home with my mom and my dad and my grandparents. We're a big happy family ... I do speak Spanish to my grandparents [because] they don't understand English." For this particular student, her family's values, traditions, and beliefs, were the most important contributor to her development. In addition, Dolores explained that college had also an enormous impact in the development of her identity. She said, "I knew I was different, but in college was where I was able to regain my ethnicity and really understand where I came from and be able to understand it and appreciate it, as opposed to kind of like my younger years here in the United States." She went on to say that,

“participating in many of the student organizations such as CASA – Central and South America Student Alliance, where we did weekly activities and learned about all different cultures, specifically Central and South America countries, which included Peru, made me realize the beauty of having [or belonging] to an ethnic group and saying yeah you know I am Peruvian.” Finally, Dolores observed that:

It was mostly in college where I had most of the really appreciation for who I was and where I came from. I didn’t take very much pride on being Peruvian, but once I came to college it was really like an eye opener for me where I was able to really appreciate who I was and be proud of who I was, I think it was ultimately maturity. I saw the pride my Latina roommates placed in their culture and I was like wow. All of the sudden, I was, okay, well, you know I was not longer threatened by the idea of being different; as a matter of fact, I think that getting reconnected to my ethnic identity was what influenced my success in college.

Although Dolores grew up in Jersey City, “which is a very highly Hispanic populated city ... the bulk of the population was Caribbean, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, and some South Americans,” she attended a high school which was “99 percent Hispanics,” and lived in a very traditional family where culture was stressed, it seems that somewhere during her high school experience, she lost pride in her ethnicity. The college experiences and having Latina roommates were central in her ethnic identity development.

Dolores’s experiences show that there may be a developmental aspect to ethnic identity that takes place at some point in high school and that resembles the Moratorium stage in Phinney’s model (1992) or the Pre-Encounter stage in Cross’s model (1973).

During my interview with Dolores, it was apparent in her comments that prior to entering high school, she identified with her ethnic group and was proud of her ethnicity.

However, when she went to high school, she found herself moving away from her own ethnic identity and ethnic group, as it was also the case with three other participants in this study. An explanation for this phenomenon might be that being surrounded by peers from other ethnic groups and backgrounds in high school forced her to become part of the peer culture as she responded to the need she felt to fit in. Although Dolores struggled with her own identity as a young immigrant Peruvian girl, it is clear that it was mostly through her family (parents and grandparents) and her experiences in college that she was able to become knowledgeable about the impact of culture and ultimately to understand and embrace her community. It seems that Dolores “traveled” or “moved” from one stage to another from the time she arrived as an immigrant to the United States to the time she went to high school and finally to college, where she arrived at identity achievement, and when she finally experienced a renewal of her ethnic identity and ethnic group identification.

Tamara also had similar experiences while in middle school and high school that resembles the Moratorium stage in Phinney’s model (1992) or the Pre-Encounter stage in Cross’s model (1973).

I am very proud of being a Mexicana and I am not ashamed. I know that at some point in I was and I even said that I was Latina. When I was in middle school and even my first year of high school, there was very negative comments about Mexicans, you know lazy, they get into fights, girls get pregnant, they guys are just incarcerated or he’s dead because he was doing drugs or what have you, or

unemployed. So that was like shameful to me you know and even more so because my dad was a custodian and to me that was bad. Because like in Mexico, like my dad was never a custodian; realizing that my dad had to clean toilets in order for him to put food on the table. That to me was like a shame. And I never invited my friends over to my house because we used to live in like a single or a two-bedroom apartment. But after that you, now in college when I think back – oh my god we have such a rich culture we Mexicans and Latin Americans. You know, if it wasn't for us, you know Starbucks wouldn't be making so well with the coffee they get from the growers. Like hey, it comes from Colombia, Chile. All these things that I associate now with being positive like looking like a Mexicana. And like the different cultures you know the Aztecs, the Mayan, the Zapotecas, the Coltecs. I was able to go to the museum of Anthropology in Mexico and I was just like mystified by the history, it was breathtaking. Or like walking in the Zocalo in Mexico City was like dreaming the same things that I did when I was a little girl. And it felt like nothing had changed. I mean, how could I have been ashamed of my father and my cultural ethnic background? I must have been crazy! I am so proud of being a Mexicana. No shame at all. You know now people look at me and I'm a Mexicana. Yeah, regardless of where I go or the people that I interact with and that's something that I don't think anymore, even if I was to become a citizen of the U.S., in my heart, in my mind, in my spirit, I will always be a Mexicana.

Her statement clearly shows the inner struggles she faced during high school as she encountered a period where her ethnic cultural background became a burden. She was

ashamed of her ethnicity and her ethnic group. Thus, she started to move away from her ethnic identity as she wanted to fit in with the rest of her peers. Moratorium lasted until she went to college and started to reacquaint again with her ethnicity. A major point was when she went back to Mexico to revisit childhood sites.

Theme 3: Ethnic Identification

Ethnic identification was a vital component for these college students' development. The majority of these students were quickly able to identify with a specific group as they felt a strong connection to their culture in terms of language, values, and traditions. They had an enormous sense of pride in their ethnic groups, and they saw their own behavior and actions as instrumental in preserving group pride. These college women shared their stories of how their ethnic groups and individual families were the sources of their values, sources of honor and commitment, and driving forces for their success in college and in their life endeavors. Students talked about the stereotypes and discrimination they experienced; they also talked about how members of their ethnic groups were typecast and how they fought to correct negative images that perpetuated group and ethnic stereotypes.

In my analysis of ethnic identification among the group of Latina 1.5 foreign-born college students, six significant supporting categories became apparent: 1) connection with ethnic group; 2) connection with native language; 3) feelings about ethnic group; 4) impact of ethnic group on the self; 5) negative images of ethnic group; and 6) stereotypes and discrimination. For the majority of the study's participants, ethnic identification meant the close relationship and connection they had with members of their ethnic group.

Students spoke of the connections of culture to family values and to language, and they spoke about how these connections affected their ethnic identity and how they ultimately self-identified. Several of the students (14 of the sample), spoke of the benefits of living in communities that were populated mostly by immigrants (enclaves), in which they had high levels of contact with members of their own ethnic group as well as with members of other ethnic groups. Laura talked with ease about the characteristics within her ethnic group that made her feel part of that group. She also talked about feeling special and unique among people who had her same value system and who appreciated who she was. She commented:

I think values are important to us. The values we share I feel very much part of my ethnic group. I think that my ethnic group values family over being financially successful or being rich as I seen in mainstream U.S. I think that this country is very materialistic and superficial. I think we [Argentinean, Latin Americans] devote more time to family and that's because of the value we place on family living as a priority. Another [value] would be language and I think that is pretty simple, it's the fact that we can communicate without a problem even though we are [Latin Americans] from very many countries ... I feel special and I feel different ... in Argentina I didn't even think about it. I had no feelings about it and becoming aware of the group that I belong to I like it and it gives me that feeling of being special and different and doing something in common.

Laura's sentiments echo with some of the statements by other immigrant college students in this study regarding the value they placed in connection to ethnicity and ethnic pride.

Finally, Laura spoke in a more condemning tone about issues of discrimination and the stereotypes that her ethnic group faces in the United States:

We are feisty immigrant and I feel pride because I think we fight daily against oppression, which is part of human nature, which we have had to overcome. I think especially, looking at people from Mexico here in San Diego, have had to fight oppression and have had to fight to speak their language and fight to get into colleges and universities and to get good jobs. I am so proud that we are doing it in spite of the obstacles that we have encountered along the way. That makes me very proud every day when I see it happening because it helps to minimize all the negative images towards immigrant Mexican, immigrant Latin Americans. I want to use my education, my doctorate degree to help others in my ethnic group to be successful as well.

Laura's words demonstrate the pride she felt toward all ethnic groups, even in the face of discrimination. In fact, Laura intended to work as an advocate for immigrants in the San Diego area after completion of her doctoral degree, in order to eradicate negative images of immigrant groups in the United States. She felt that through her success she could help her ethnic group. Laura strongly believed that helping the group was important; this is the same in many ways as honoring the family through success. Discrimination and stereotypes seemed not to have had a negative effect or impact on Laura. Laura's last comments were "To me being a role in my community is very important because so many of our parents, our families came to this country to give us the best life and education in order for us to succeed." Laura's last comments mirror the sentiments of all 20 participants in this study. All of these women, no exceptions,

When asked what kind of effects negative stereotypes and discrimination toward her particular ethnic group had on the self, Jazmín, another of this study's participants, responded:

Here in Michigan I feel like I have to defend my ethnicity and my ethnic group a little more, you know, as opposed when I was in Miami. Here when I say I'm Colombian they don't necessary think about the coffee but they think about drugs. I think in a way I think people just see me as drugs and for that reason I hesitate to say that I am Colombian except when I am with my few Latino friends. There are so many great things about being a Colombian, I lived there and I know we have so much more to give than drugs. I am in a respected master program and all people can think about me is drugs. In Miami nobody thinks this way but here in Michigan people – I mean there are some people that have said just you know nasty things to me. They're just not as tolerant. I definitely don't feel welcome.

This kind of overt discrimination in college had a dreadfully negative impact on Jazmín. For Jazmín, the way in which her ethnic group was treated by the American society affected how she felt about being a member of that group. The way others behaved toward her had an impact on her degree of ethnic identification. For instance, during the interview she said that she was seriously thinking about leaving the master's program – leaving Michigan State University and, transferring to another institution. In addition, she confessed that this type of treatment was causing tremendous amount emotional stress to her personally and to her romantic relationship. Indeed, the day that she interviewed, she cried for a fairly long time. Because this was such a personal and painful issue, the tape recorder was stopped. Jazmín was really shocked by these

experiences. Growing up in Miami, one of the largest immigrant and ethnic enclaves, she had been sheltered from stereotypes and discrimination. One can argue that living in an ethnic enclave contributed to strengthening her ethnic identification. However, the other side of that argument is that living in an enclave prevented Jazmín's from living in "real" North America.

Damaris was another college student who felt that being a role model for her community was important. She was using her education to enlighten and teach others in her ethnic group. She said:

I am very involved with many organizations here in Providence. I am involved with organizations that are mostly cultural whose objective is to preserve the culture of the Dominican Republic. I also teach a class about the history and society of the Dominican Republic. I am also involved in political campaigns, some Dominican candidates and some non Dominican candidates, but people who have done a lot of work with the Dominican community. We were able to elect during the last election the first Dominican senator in the country representing Rhode Island. We also have a Dominican state representative and we also have a Dominican councilman. I also work with children in our public schools doing mostly translation for recent immigrant Dominican children.

It might sound like a cliché but Damaris was doing precisely what many of the participants expressed they wanted to do, not only succeed personally but also to give back to their community.

Theme 4: Practices and Behavioral Ties to Cultural Background

Without a trace of hesitation, students were able to talk about and name specifically all of the cultural practices in which they participate on a daily basis, as well as the cultural values they esteemed and held close to their hearts. These cultural practices and values fall into nine important supporting categories: 1) native language; 2) typical cuisine; 3) religion; 4) cultural events; 5) cultural values; 6) knowledge of their history; 7) ethnic clubs and organizations; 8) visits to their countries of origin; and 9) music and television. All of the 1.5 immigrant college students were able to identify a myriad of cultural practices from their countries of origin in which they still participated on a regular basis, even after they entered college.

One of the most common threads among all of the participants was the cultural practice of speaking the language of their native countries. These college women spoke Spanish fluently not only at home but also in their communities, at church, and at school, and several of them even had the opportunity to use Spanish at work. Other cultural practices that most of these women mentioned engaging in on a regular basis were, for instance, listening to ethnic music, going to Catholic Church, celebrating holidays from their countries of origins, and, most important for many of them, eating their ethnic food. Tomasa commented excitedly on one of the most common cultural practices among all of the interviewees - dancing to native/ethnic tunes. She said: "I dance salsa several times a week. It is one of the best things that I enjoy about my culture. I dance with my family and with my Latin American friends." Regarding speaking Spanish as a cultural practice, Tomasa said: "I speak Spanish at work. I speak Spanish with my family. I do volunteer work on Saturdays with the elderly and I'm a Latino advocate for them and I speak



Spanish with them and translate for them whenever necessary. My ethnic cultural practices are always present, it never goes away.” It seems that for this particular student, speaking Spanish, helping in her community, and dancing salsa all played an important role in how she viewed her ethnic identity. Indeed, for almost all of the participants, language was one of the most important cultural practices, as through language a person’s strength or loss of ethnic identity can be measured.

Elsa, another college student, highlighted three areas she considered to be important cultural practices in her life: visiting regularly family members in her country of origin, keeping informed about current events, and taking history courses that furthered her knowledge about her country’s history. She said:

Most of my family are in the Dominican Republic. There is a huge connection between me and my family over there. I don’t go every year. But now I am trying to go every year because my grandparents are really old and I want to see them. When I’m with my grandparents we have conversations about history and what’s going on and even like the baseball games, the leagues you know because it’s so exciting. Over there [in the Dominican Republic], the Aguilas de Santiago are like the Yankees here. On Saturdays, here in New York I try to watch a T.V. show called Santo Domingo Invita just to stay connected with stuff happening over there culturally, socially, and politically. I also try to stay connected by taking courses in college. As an undergrad I took Dominican identity and we read you know Dominican authors in Spanish.

Elsa considered that visiting her country of origin, learning about her country and keeping herself informed of televised current events were cultural practices and thus

among the strongest expressions of her ethnic identity. We see how these three cultural practices come together to bolster her ethnic identity. Yolanda, another Dominican college student, saw religion, language, mementoes, and the celebration of Dominican holidays as part of her cultural practices. These practices were representations of how she expressed her ethnic identity:

I still go to church to Spanish mass. I still read my bible in Spanish. I also help with youth groups at church. At my church with celebrate important Dominican holidays, like you know the Dominican independence, saint day, Dia de la Raza [Day of the Race], Dia e los Muertos [Day of the Death]. I like to show where I'm from so everywhere I go and even in my car there is a Dominican flag.

For Yolanda, the impact of living in areas heavily concentrated with people of the same ethnic background and religious beliefs (enclaves) contributed to the strength of her ethnic identity.

For most of the Mexican women who participated in this study food and the celebration of traditional holidays were identified as common cultural practices in which they engaged on a regular basis that constituted ties to their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They talked about celebrations related to Mexican holidays, such as the Mexican Independence Day, Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Reyes, and Las Mañanitas a la Virgen. For all of the participants, but especially for the Mexican college students, food was vital to their experiences with ethnicity. One woman, Luisa, talked about the traditional tortillas, "they are delicious and very important in our diet. Whether you are eating frijoles [beans] or huevos [eggs] rancheros, you always have to have a warm tortilla. Like here in the university, most times I'll invite friends and cook some tacos and

enchiladas.” Both of the Argentinean students talked about some of their traditional foods which both confessed are were still part of their regular diets. Virginia elaborated on the different types of foods, such as empanadas (turnovers) and asados (grill meats).

We always have traditional Argentinean foods but more so when we have birthday parties or you know gathering events with family members. We have this dish called empanadas, they have it in Mexico also but in Mexico they have a different filling inside, it’s a fruit filling. Ours are made of ground beef and onion and they are usually baked. And if you go to an Argentinean restaurant that would probably be the biggest more traditional thing that you can order from Argentina. Also, outdoors we have something called asado and it’s similar to barbecue. Our meat is different. Like I think for Mexicans they have carne asada, which they use a very thin meat. And ours are like really, really big thick steaks and takes longer to cook.

Food was definitely important in defining Virginia’s ethnic identity. Food constituted a link to celebrations and family gatherings that further reinforced core values and her ties to her cultural background.

Finally, all of the women talked about ethnic music and television as big contributor’s to expressing their identity in the American culture. All of them admitted that whether at home or away at college, they always listened to all kind of ethnic related music (Caribbean, Latin American, Spaniard, or Mexican) such as salsa, merengue, contemporary Spanish rock, traditional tango ballads, Mariachi, and so forth. They all also watched cultural programming on television as well as the infamous novelas (soap operas). They watched novelas produced in Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, and

Venezuela. These were especially important elements to the 1.5 immigrant women because they kept them connected, and they also enabled them to learn more about their culture.

Theme 5: Adapting to a New Culture

Change is always traumatic. It is especially traumatic for an adolescent whose entire life, as she has known it, has been transferred from a comfortable familiar environment to a totally new terrain. This study found that all 20 participants experienced transitional difficulty after they arrived to this country. These experiences of difficulty fell into six supportive categories: 1) learning a new language; 2) fighting stereotypes against ethnic group/discrimination; 3) incorporating new cultural values and customs from the American culture; 4) becoming “more” American; 5) becoming more American affecting ethnic identity; and 6) the effects of acculturation on ethnic identity.

Although all of these women have resided in the United States for a minimum of 13 years now, they still remembered with anguish and distress all of the events leading to immigration but particularly the events following their arrival. For all of the women the most difficult and shocking transition in adapting to the new culture was learning the English language. Ironically, learning the English language was by far one of the most mentioned factors among the 20 participants that they said fostered rapid adaptation and acculturation. In the interview, Karla talked not only about the challenges with the English language but also about other struggles she encountered in adapting to her new surroundings, such as discrimination and individual and group stereotypes:

The most difficult experience for me was the language. It was really huge. Not understanding what people were saying. That was a struggle. People looked at me as if I were stupid or something. And my skin color. It's funny in Guatemala, I didn't feel that mattered but coming here I definitely felt the difference. First you know I had an accent then my last name and even what I looked like, you know black hair and olive skin and I was different. That was a big thing. And then my beliefs I guess conflicted with I don't know, I don't want to say American thoughts, but just conflicted with individualistic idea of what America should be. You know here it's like if you work hard, you should get whatever you set your mind to have. And I come from a background where it's more of a collective effort, you know you help someone out because they're going to help you and in turn everybody is going to be helped. And that was big. I was--it was a shock to me to see how selfish people were here, not that Guatemalans aren't but it's a different sort of level of selfishness. That was really hard for me to get used to. And definitely, but honestly I think just the racism that I felt that was really hard. And even now, I still feel it. It's just been subtle you know? It's been more things like oh, you weren't born here? You know with that certain tone a certain attitude -- that I was like oh, okay well what's wrong with that? Or someone telling me well you're not going to go to college and me going well why not? And it was like what do you mean? I'm in the same classes that the other kids are you know I'm, working just as hard, what makes me different? I had this one counselor in high school, he's Anglo, I told him all of the schools I wanted to apply and he told me that I was not going to get in and I asked him what do you mean? But he just

said you are not going to get in. I said to him, well I still want to take the SAT. He said to me fine, but you're wasting your money. You know, I felt racialized. He probably thought, as is portrayed in mainstream American culture that I or when I think of it as a group, Latinos in general not only me as a Guatemalan, that they are lazy, and all that. That they are on welfare and they're good for nothing, all they're good is gardening or cleaning. They don't want to speak English and they're all undocumented and they're all in gangs, and they're all going to end up pregnant whey they're 15. I really think that that's the way mainstream sees me and the group. But now I feel that I definitely have the tools, I've empowered myself through education and through talking about it, learning more about it, how not to let it affect me that much.

Karla's extensive testimonial offers a description of the many issues that she and many of the participants dealt with upon their arrival in the United States and trying to adapt to the new culture. As Karla stated, language was one of the main transitional issues, followed in impact by the racism/discrimination she was subjected to by her peers, by her high school counselors, and by society at large because of her ethnic background or immigrant status in this country.

It is clear by her own account that Karla felt uncomfortable when people made assumptions about her or her ethnic group based on her Latin American origins. She felt frequently stereotyped by others. As a result of these experiences, transitioning or adapting was even more challenging for her. In effect, these experiences became critical factors that hindered her total acculturation. Karla talked further about other issues that were difficult during her transitional experiences to adapt:

Being a woman has been hard. You know both trying to survive, to get an education. I guess within the Latino community and also within you know the North American community. And add onto the fact that I'm a minority woman, it's really hard. You know when you know that you can do something just as well as the next person, but you know you just don't quite have that confidence in you. Even though you know unfortunately, you've had to prove yourself and that still not good enough. It's been a struggle to not--I don't think I have assimilated, you know I think I would definitely say that I'm more acculturated, but it's been hard to try to balance both worlds, you know my Latino world and then the other world.

In this statement, Karla mentions additional issues that hindered acculturation to mainstream America. First, being a woman was an issue with both cultures. Karla felt that she did not fit in with her ethnic Latin American group because of her gender and also because of her educational differences and degree of "Americanization" (she was much educated than other members of her ethnic group). She also felt that she did not fit with North Americans because of differences in moral and cultural values between her culture of origin and mainstream American culture. Karla's struggle with acculturation had a positive impact on her ethnic identity development. First, it increased her ethnic and racial self-awareness, second, it affirmed her roots and where she belonged, third, it confirmed her dislike of being categorized and stereotyped by others because of her ethnic background or ethnic-related features, such as her accent, and finally, it strengthened self-identification with her ethnic group. Karla's final account of adapting to the new North American culture centered on cultural conflicts and how becoming more

American or acculturating affected ethnic identity and her group self-identification and relations.

I guess becoming in a way more American affected me I guess with more recent immigrants for example, because they don't – maybe they don't see me as a true Guatemalan or a true Latina. They say oh, she is more American. You know for one thing, I don't have the Guatemalan accent in Spanish when I speak it. You know that's one thing already that you know puts me in a different group. Among other Guatemaltecos when they hear me speak they go, oh, are you really from Guatemala? You don't have an accent. In a lot of ways that's how I'm different. I think also, I went back to Guatemala in '97, going back there was also different because I felt like I didn't really belong there because I saw things differently. You know and the reason why I was things differently was because I was here in the United States. You know some of my political views are different, my belief about women having a career, or being more independent you know these are things that clashes with Guatemalan culture and that is why they might consider me more American or having more American values. Maybe that's true because I feel comfortable here [in the United States] I don't think I can go back to Guatemala even though I really love my country. You know although I may be upset about some policy or upset about something, or someone did something but I like it here.

In this statement we see how Karla starts to identify and to fit certain American values into her own native cultural values and somehow work them dually. In other words, it seems that Karla was capable of incorporating North American values while

maintaining her own cultural values. However and as a result of these, she experienced rising conflicts among her ethnic peers as they demanded and even questioned her true loyalty to her Guatemalan roots. For all of the women in this study, a common factor that fostered acculturation was learning English language skills and incorporating North American values into their lives while also continue to maintain their own native cultural values. The data shows that for these participants there were more factors that fostered acculturation than factors that hindered it.

Carolina experienced similar difficulties to Karla in transitioning and adapting to the new culture. As she described:

I think when I first came here the biggest problem that I had was the language. I had a real difficult time, because when we came to this country and I was ten years old, we moved to the Bronx and the school that I went to, we didn't have a bilingual program. I had to go to school and like only speak English. So, for the first two years of my life, you know I didn't have a lot of friends that spoke the language and definitely that was very, very difficult as a child to be going to school and not be able to communicate. I think that translates into an accent and it can be very frustrating because people always have comments on my accent and I get offended about that.

As we can see by her accounts, one of the key struggles for Carolina was the initial language difficulty she encountered as a new 1.5 immigrant. It is thus a factor that hindered her rapid acculturation.

Dolores though, was one of four participants whose adaptation to the new North American culture went fairly smoothly or as she put it, “Luckily, I was able to adapt rather quickly.” Dolores explained the reasons why her experiences were different:

I think because when I came here a bulk of my family was already here and I have a lot of cousins that are my age. So I mean I picked up the language in six months and was able to talk to people and communicate and you know within six months. And by the time that I was in my last 10 or 11 years old, it was English and I think the slow transition from a heavily Hispanic populated city to an all girl’s Catholic school kind of transitioned me out of that into college. Very smooth transition for me to be honest with you where I didn’t really have to deal with any of the precedents that a lot of Hispanics deal when they come to this country or areas where it was heavily Anglo or heavily black populated community. So I just had a very smooth transition where there was hardly any struggle.

Judging by Dolores’s statement, her transition and adaptation was relatively quick and smooth. She had less change to deal with: her transition was not as much of a “shock” as compared with many of her counterpart 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college peers.

Consequently, Dolores was able to acculturate faster than the rest of the women in this study. The following are some of the factors that fostered Dolores’s acculturation to the new culture. First, the ability to learn and command the English language in a relatively short amount of time; second, the emotional support from her family members such as cousins, and Latin American friends; and finally, her societal status/educational level of her family and/or socioeconomic status (S.E.S.). It is interesting to note that the other

four participants who had similarly smooth transitional experiences to Dolores's also shared similarly high-class backgrounds, which might suggest that the higher the level of S.E.S. among 1.5 foreign-born women fosters acculturation.

Theme 6: Ethnic Identity Effects on College Students

Findings revealed that for the majority of the participants (16 out of 20), ethnic identity development positively affected their overall college experiences. They said during their interviews that they were more satisfied with college because of both their ethnic identity awareness prior to entering college and their association with their ethnic groups while in college. For many of the participants, college was the setting that facilitated and increased their awareness of their ethnic groups, which contributed to their ethnic identity development. They joined ethnic student cultural organizations, they connected with people from other countries, they took courses related to ethnicity, and they also visited their countries of origin as a means by which to learn about their cultural history. Participants talked about positive and negative experiences in college as they related to their ethnicity and ethnic identity, such as being singled out by professors in the classroom or being stereotyped by their gender in relation to their immigrant background. Five supportive categories were identified in this last theme: 1) appreciation for own identity; 2) learning more about self; 3) learning more about other's cultures; 4) connection with people from other cultures; and 5) classroom experiences.

Laura felt that being Argentina/Latina contributed to and affected positively her overall college experience:

When I entered college that was the time when I started to or began to develop my ethnicity as Latina or Argentina and appreciated it, part of that was moving away from home and missing my home in the way that we did things, or customs, and language. So I think that college opened up a way for me to connect with different cultures and with people from different countries and I started appreciating my own identity and learning about other cultures. It also gave me the opportunity to connect with other Latinos and Latinas that were in college and with whom I could relate about the experience. A lot of times it was about the experience of being an immigrant, but most of the time it was about Latinos in college and sharing that experience because when I moved to the United States I was in a very small town with not many Latinos for me to connect with. So, that was a very positive thing, an opportunity to connect with more Latinos.

Through Laura's statement we can see that her experiences in college allowed her to explore and appreciate her ethnicity. For Laura, important factors that contributed to the enhancement of her ethnic identity and appreciation of her identity were the connection with different cultures and people from different countries, and most importantly, connecting with other Latinas/os who shared similar immigrant experiences.

Carolina also felt that being typecast or singled out in her class in college contributed to enhance her ethnic identity; although for many this was viewed as a negative, Carolina saw it as otherwise:

I took classes in school where like I was the only person of color in the entire place since my school was primarily a white institution. I mean it, I was the only person of color in the school, in the class, like in my major. And there were some

times where like my professor would be like well what do the Dominican people think about this? Or what do blacks think about this issue? And I think someone to speak for like a group of people is a very offensive and racist thing. Like they would never turn around and be like what does white America think about this issue. To me, like singling somebody out and making them feel different, by virtue of language or by virtue of the color of your skin color, to me that's racism. That happened to me like several times. I was always so angry but you know what? I rose to the occasion and I showed them what Dominicans are made of. I took these opportunities to shine and to teach the entire class about my culture and the value we have for education and how to respect others. So yes, these negatives and racist experiences made me appreciate my own identity and appreciate even more my family and my group. This kind of behavior usually made me feel stronger.

Carolina's statement speaks of true value and appreciation for her cultural background and for her ethnic group. It also speaks of pride and strength. She was singled out in her class and was asked to speak for her entire community, an unfair demand, yet she did it; she did so with courage and pride as she showed her peers that that being Dominican, that being different was okay. Carolina's experiences are remarkable – especially when knowing that she attended a primarily white institution and yet her ethnic identity did not waver. It probably helped that before entering college, Carolina had already developed a strong sense of ethnic identity as indicated much earlier in this study. It seems that these negatives encounters were motivators for her. It was as if being singled out was a source of pride for her to do good for her group.

These six themes materialized through the voices of the 20 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college students who participated in this study. Throughout the themes, participants talked about the importance of ethnicity and ethnic identity in their lives. In theme one, Meaning of Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity, the 20 participants talked about the importance of family, family origins, pride, culture, heritage, and country of origin. In the following theme, Understanding and Embracing Ethnic Identity, the students talked about arriving in the United States at an early age and how it felt to be an involuntary immigrant. It is important to clarify that although student discussed the feelings associated with being an involuntary immigrant when they arrived to the United States at a preteen age, in their interviews, as adult women, they never expressed feeling involuntary in this country. They felt they had a choice – to remain in this country, voluntarily.

In the third theme, Ethnic Identification, these college women shared their stories of how their ethnic groups and individual families were the sources of their values, honor and commitment. Students talked about the stereotypes and discrimination they experienced; they also talked about how members of their ethnic groups were typecast and how they fought to correct negative images that perpetuated group and ethnic stereotypes. Students spoke of the connections of culture to family values and to language, and they spoke about how these connections affected their ethnic identity and how they ultimately self-identified.

In theme four, Practices and Behavioral Ties to Cultural Background, participants talked about all of the cultural practices in which they participate on a daily basis. These practices included, speaking their native language, eating their typical cuisine, practicing

their religion, attending cultural events, adhering to their cultural values, learning about their history, getting involved in ethnic clubs and organizations, visiting their countries of origin and listening to their music and/or watching television. The fifth theme, Adapting to a New culture, participants shared their experiences about learning a new language, fighting stereotypes against ethnic group/discrimination, incorporating new cultural values and customs from the American culture, becoming “more” American and as a result how it affected ethnic identity and the effects of acculturation on ethnic identity. In the final theme, Ethnic Identity on College Students, student alleged that they were more satisfied with their experiences in college because of both their ethnic identity awareness prior to entering college and their association with their ethnic groups while in college.

Throughout all six themes, participants talked about the discrimination they experienced as immigrants. Indeed, discrimination connected across all themes – meaning that discrimination cut across all categories. It did not matter the institution they attended, or what state they lived in, East, Midwest, or West Coast, participants said they experienced the same phenomena. Discrimination towards them was manifested by virtue of their skin color, appearance, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, and their overall immigration status.

Many of the findings in this study are supported by the current literature. Phinney’s and Alpuria’s (1990) findings indicates that of all identities manifested in an individual, ethnic identity ranks the highest for immigrants and persons of minority status. In the final chapter, the themes will be interpreted and implications discussed. Finally, future studies involving 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college students and ways in which higher education could profit from these studies will be addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Several researchers and theorists in human development and various field identified the college years of 18-22 as the time when college students embark on the exploration of their identity (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The college environment and the experiences individuals encounter affect their identity development and for many individuals it is the first time they are on their own and have to make important decisions. Researchers agree that the socio-cultural dynamics of the college environment are highly influential for individuals as they develop independence, physical and mental maturation. Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968) laid the groundwork for postulating that the identity crisis stage occurs in the teenage/youth years (college years), and that only individuals who succeed in resolving the crisis will be prepared to face future challenges in life. However, the identity crisis may well be a recurring stage for adolescents, as the changing world demands us to continuously redefine ourselves.

For the 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college students who participated in this study, ethnic identity and ethnicity were salient aspects of their overall identity development. The participants in this study indicated their encounter with ethnic identity affected the way they interacted with others and how they perceived the world around them. They indicated experiences affected their attitudes toward themselves and their ethnic identity. Participants were cognizant that changes occurred in their ethnic identity as a result of their relationships and affiliations they had with family members, community members, church, school and other social and personal interactions. Foreign-

born immigrant participants discussed the social, emotional, educational, personal and cognitive changes they experienced. Some of their experiences authenticated aspects of the theoretical and empirical ethnic identity development models illustrated in the literature review. However, some of their transitions were not accounted for in the literature as the 1.5 generation of foreign-born immigrant women faced experiences that the literature has not yet addressed. This study identified these gaps in the literature and addressed the disparity by allowing immigrant women to name and reveals their own voice in relation to their identity development.

This study had two primary purposes. The first purpose was to understand the process by which Latina 1.5 generation immigrant college women cope, customize, and adapt their sense of self to acculturate to the U.S. culture, society, and academe. The second purpose was to explore how the women's adaptation and/or acculturation to the U.S. influenced their college experiences. Using a qualitative research design, this study identified 20 Latina 1.5 generation foreign-born immigrant college students and examined their identity and acculturation experiences. This investigation included interviewing women who were recent college graduates or seniors who were near the completion of their bachelor's degree or were in their second year of graduate studies. The research questions generated at the beginning of this investigation provided the framework for organizing a meaningful discourse of a number of findings, which emerged from the data collection. The following questions directed this analysis:

How did these women navigate both cultures (their native culture from Latin America and U.S. culture), and what was the impact of this process on their sense of self, identity and relationship to academe?

How did the women experience U.S. culture and how did that affect and shape their college experiences in higher education?

The participants of this study clearly emphasized ethnic identity development issues as having an impact on their lives. Perhaps two of the strongest findings in this study were, first, how these women saw their ethnicity directly related and connected to their national country of origin and second, the importance of family or familism. The interviewees indicated that ethnic identity influenced their overall behavior in cultural practices and values. The Latina 1.5 immigrant college students named cultural traditions and practices that they engaged on a regular basis. They discussed the importance of family, the connection to their country of origin, and the pride they placed in being members of their ethnic immigrant groups. The participants identified that the role of their family was crucial to their identity development. These women identified that their values, culture, and heritage were transmitted to them by their family. Through participation in the family, they learned about traditions, celebrations, language, and cultural values. The participants indicated their initial immigrant experiences in their newfound “homeland” forced them to become familiar with their roots and as a result they were then able to understand and embrace their ethnic identity in the United States. In addition, they described the salience of language, values, and traditions within their ethnic groups. They identified having a sense of pride in their ethnic groups and revealed that own behavior and actions were instrumental in preserving pride within the group. Successes in college and life endeavors were strengthened by the support of ethnic groups, and individual families. Participants explored their religion for aspects of their culture and indicated interest in visiting their native homeland.

All of the women identified that they encountered distress in adapting to the United States when they arrived to this country. All of the participants agreed that one of the most difficult and shocking transitional issues they faced was learning the English language. However, learning the English language fostered rapid adaptation and acculturation into the North American culture. The majority of the interviewees indicated other traumatic transitional issues they encountered upon arrival to the United States such as discrimination, racism, and stereotypes. They described details of the factors that hindered and fostered acculturation and the challenges they managed in balancing their cultural values with those of the United States. These women spoke of the adversity they and other members of their ethnic group had endured and how the struggles of the past served as motivators for success, both academically and as well as their own efforts to improve the status of their ethnic groups in this country.

Most of the women in this study developed their ethnicity and ethnic identity once they immigrated to the United States. Each of the women in this study experienced ethnic identity development differently. Since most of the participants came from a homogenous society prior to arriving to the United States, they gave little thought to issues of ethnic identity. Arriving in the United States placed the women in a “minority” status and forced them to identify with a group. For the first time they need to consider identifications like Hispanic, Latina, minority, and woman of color. Even though they shared experiences and similar values, each immigrant woman had a unique manner in which those experiences and values contributed to their ethnic identity.

The ethnic make up of their high schools, neighborhoods, and enclaves served to strengthen Latinas 1.5’s ethnic identity. Some of the participants, who had been highly

identified with their cultures early on shortly after their arrival as immigrants, experienced a decline in their ethnic identity in high school as they felt the peer pressure to fit in with the rest of their North American peers or American born Latinas/os. However, these same participants also described that while in college they started to re-explore their ethnic identity by joining ethnic student organizations, taking ethnic studies courses, and making friends with their own ethnic groups.

Findings from the foreign-born immigrant students' experiences in college showed that they were also positively affected by their interactions with members of other ethnic groups. These relationships and friendships led these women not only to explore other people's cultures but also to delve into their own cultural backgrounds. Interactions with individuals from other ethnic groups helped students to have a more holistic worldview and as well appreciate other people's cultures, beliefs, and perspectives. Many of the women indicated that joining ethnic cultural student organizations in college also helped increase their awareness of their own ethnic groups, which contributed to their ethnic identity development. They also took courses related to ethnicity that helped them to further explore their cultures and to learn more about the history of their group, which consequently, strengthened their ethnic identity. Taking these courses gave them the opportunity to learn and re-learn history of their ethnic groups and their countries of origin. Most of the women pointed out that pride in their ethnicity had an effect on their motivation to achieve academic success to reflect positively on their ethnic group. They indicated that their social support network from ethnic student organizations were as important as academic systems.

Some of the interviewees indicated a number of challenges in navigating academics due to negative classroom experiences involving stereotyping. Several participants in this study described feeling a burden to provide the teaching in the classroom. Many of these women were frustrated in being singled out by their professors in their classroom and faced with being expected to know and talk about their history. While diverse social environments served as educational tools for the participants, continuing to be asked questions and serve as educators often led to negative feelings about the expected responsibility to educate others. Moreover, many of the participants pointed out that they were often in classes in which professors or classmates would make negative or stereotypical comments regarding non-mainstream ethnic groups such as Latinas/os and African Americans. One student in this study indicated that negative stereotypical comments disturbed her emotionally and it hurt her romantic relationship. This participant also pointed out that due to emotional stress she even considered dropping out of school and abandoning her master's degree program.

Regarding the effects of acculturation on ethnic identity, most of the participants stated that the acculturation process had enhanced their awareness of racial and ethnic issues and as a result had increased their interest and appreciation for their cultural heritage. According to the findings, learning the English language, having an emotional or social support system, and adapting to U.S. values were among some of the factors that fostered acculturation among these groups of immigrant college students.

Most of the women reported acculturating to many aspect of the North American culture in order to “survive” and “navigate” in this society. One particular woman called herself a “Zebra” in order to describe her sentiments about acculturation. This participant

described the stripes of a zebra as the American beliefs and/or American core values she had incorporated in order to navigate this society. Participants revealed that the differences in values and behavior between their own native culture and the culture of the U.S. hindered their ability to acculturate to mainstream U.S. culture. In addition, there were challenges within the U.S. Latin American immigrant communities due to educational differences, socioeconomic status, and degree of “Americanization,” This suggests that women were pulled in several directions to fit into American culture, to fit into their ethnic culture and often the demands of both were at odds. In all, those immigrant women who had higher ethnic identities were capable to uphold a solid sense of themselves as members of their ethnic group while becoming more acculturated to mainstream U.S. culture.

Limitations of the Study

There were a number of limitations that were inherent in the design of the study, as with any qualitative study when using interviews as a form of data collection. Interviewer bias and skill of the interviewer was one of the limitations. Other limitations include the context of the interview, and meaning of place and time. For instance, the geographical location and the time bound the study. The interviews (face-to-face and phone) were approximately 85 minutes long and they took place in different sites of the country. At the end of each interview, contact with the students was minimal. Following and/or shadowing the students subsequent to the interviews for a longer period of time would have permitted for a greater in-depth analysis of their ethnic identity development and acculturation experiences.

Ethnic identity development, acculturation experiences are ever changing construct in an individual, thus this study is not widely generalizable. As usual, when using a relatively small number of participants in a study, although randomly self selected, the generalizability of the findings becomes limited. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of Latin American women or the 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college students in the United States. The data showed many similarities among Latin American groups yet also many unique traits per group as they represented many different countries. Further, because this study focused on only the experiences of the Latina 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college students, the results of this research cannot be generalizable to other populations such as that of the Latino (men) 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college students, or to the Latino/a American-born college student as their experiences might not reflect or be the same as with the population used in this study. As well, it might be difficult to generalize findings to the experiences of immigrant men or immigrants of any gender who were not raised in communities where there were not high numbers of members of their own ethnic group or who were not living on ethnic enclaves.

Finally, an additional potential limitation of the study is my cultural background. As an immigrant woman – not a 1.5 preteen involuntary immigrant but a voluntary full generation as I came to the United States at age 18 – my interpretations of the data may reflect my biases or ignorance about other immigrant women. I have strong feelings regarding ethnic identity development and the significance of having such an identity, therefore my interpretations and my experiences have most likely influenced my bias.

Throughout the research I utilized a number of checks by members as well as by professionals to ensure checked with both, my interviewees and professional.

Implications of the Study

The themes that emerged from this study have several implications that lay the foundation for higher education institutions to improve practices that concurrently promote and support the 1.5 generation of immigrant populations. As participants revealed their own stories, some gained insight about their socio-historical understanding of their changing roles in society. Students who had stronger mechanisms of support which included their ethnic identity, social support systems, home community and family, college peers and organizations appeared to be better prepared to succeed in higher education. This study suggests that issues of acculturation are not unproblematic and uncovers a complex picture of what may maximize their learning opportunities.

Through the voices of diverse Latina immigrant 1.5 generation college women across multiple university contexts and various countries of origin we begin to understand how important the acculturation process is and how taxing it is for these students to become educated and maintain their sense of culture. Students in this study also identified that they struggled with navigating between U.S. cultural and other worlds. In the transition to college life, participants often felt estranged from their home community and peers. Participants indicated there were stressors between those people in their community who were not educated and those who attended college. These distinct views reveal challenges for students as they sought to negotiate the expectations of home, culture, and academics. Several participants indicated that their ethnic identity was

enhanced by the interactions they had with other members of their own ethnic groups or other ethnic groups on college campuses.

Findings for this study also have implications for other areas in higher education such as admissions, counseling centers, curricula, and student affairs programs. The main factor determining a diverse student body is the campus' admissions practices. Diversity is frequently used as a symbol at institutions of higher education but it is less often realized in terms of authentic initiatives or results. The classroom may be one of the most important locations to provide students with opportunities to interact across difference. Programs in intergroup relations, for example, offer students structured opportunities to interact with diverse groups of students while equipping them with the skills necessary to effectively communicate across difference. An example of intergroup relations could take place in the form of learning communities or residential learning communities on college campuses.

Ethnic and women's studies provide students with important knowledge about different cultural groups while increasing their awareness of their own cultural backgrounds. Colleges need to focus on how to include foreign and immigrant students as well as to assist students, faculty, and staff in understanding the challenges these students face in higher education. College campuses ought to continue teaching ethnic studies courses and perhaps even increase the number of courses offered in the curriculum. In fact, all college campuses across the United States should consider implementing ethnic studies as a requirement in the general curricula.

University and college counseling centers should be equipped with well-trained and diverse professionals able to work with students who have identity development

issues. It is vital that counseling centers understand how ethnic identity develops for different ethnic groups – it is important that they learn of the differences so that they become more effective in their interventions when dealing with different ethnic groups. Often times counselors and other administrative personnel in college campuses treat all ethnic groups as one. And thus they fail to be effective because of their inability to deal with different ethnic experiences. Counselors can assist students to balance their integration and/or acculturation of cultures by helping those students who desire adopt aspects of mainstream culture without losing their own ethnic identity.

Theoretical Implications of the Study

Findings from this investigation validate aspects of previous developed models of ethnic identity development and insinuate new variables that must be considered when studying ethnic identity on this particular segment of college students – foreign-born immigrants. Several of the findings in this study falls under Phinney's (1992, 1993) three stage model -- achieved and committed ethnic identity – a point at which a person feels good about herself and is proud of and fully embraces her ethnicity. There is, however, one element about how the group of women of this study differed from Phinney's model. They differed, specifically, in the manner in which they arrived at stage three, full identity achievement. This difference was highlighted by their comments during the interviews. These immigrant college students did not achieve a committed ethnic identity, as is often portrayed by existing models of ethnic identity and to certain extend by Phinney, by engaging in an internal identity conflict (a sudden personal or social shock that destroys their worldview and that would have allowed them to become more open to

the idea of exploring her identity); nor did an external conflict with another person or group, specifically with members of the majority groups (triggered by some form of negative confrontation or episode in which the minority status of a person surfaces in the mainstream culture) play a role. Rather it was a natural phenomenon that occurred as a byproduct of family upbringing (knowledge of country of origin, cultural value and strong identification, loyalty, solidarity with persons within their nuclear and extended families), the environment in which they grew up (living in diverse atmosphere where contact with a variety of ethnic groups was prevalent such as college, their community), and the role of their native culture (cultural practices within the family such as religion, music, food). Combined, these elements provided the women with a strong sense of ethnicity and thus made them able to be open to other people.

As well, some of the findings in this study regarding acculturation were fairly consistent with Berry's (1992). Berry (1992) addressed the importance of social supports, self-concept, coping skills, attitude towards the host culture, educational background, socioeconomic status, and entry into the United States as immediate outcomes for acculturation. Some of the women who lived in enclaves experienced some difficulties acculturating but other participants, especially those with a higher social status, had a more conducive and supporting environment for acculturation.

Future research on ethnic identity should pay attention to some of the variables in this study. Researchers should look at the types of communities student come from prior to entering college. Researchers should also pay attention to the student country of origin, language, and transitional issues.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is apparent that students from different groups have distinct experiences at college entry and tend to experience college in different ways. Additional research is needed on the experiences of recent immigrants such as the 1.5 foreign-born. The literature review in chapter two clearly identifies the dearth of studies regarding the identity and ethnic identity development among this particular segment of college students. There are many theories and studies that focus on identity and ethnic identity development, yet very few that concentrate on the understanding of foreign-born immigrant Latin American students' development – specifically the 1.5 generation. Future studies and development should be placed on the 1.5 generation as their experiences are not equivalent to the American-born Latinos/students. More studies in this area will help to validate some of the findings of this study and generate discourse about ethnic identity development and acculturation among these students. Moreover, additional studies should also include male 1.5 foreign-born immigrant students in order to understand their experiences and compare with those of female students. In addition, I suggest studies doing comparisons between immigrants who grew up in the U.S. without the support of their ethnic environment (enclaves) to ascertain their cognitive development.

Conclusions

This analysis provides insight into the experiences of immigrant 1.5 generation of Latina women. This study encapsulates basic knowledge about the patterns of the 1.5 generation of immigrant women as builds on how these women acculturate and adapt to

U.S. society. This study demonstrates the importance of understanding identity and ethnic identity in the lives of these women – of this particular set of students. This study informs us of how these women define their ethnic identity and how the development of this affects their values, beliefs, interactions, customs, and traditions. The findings of this study can help us design curricular and co-curricular programs to assist this generation in their ethnic identity development and in the development of healthy transition and acculturation to the United States culture.

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

I am sincerely grateful for your time and willingness to be interviewed for this research study, which is designed to gain better understanding of the process and salience of the development of your ethnic identity. All participants, like yourself, who have agreed to join this study, are required to complete a personal contact information form. I will be using this information as a means to contact you in the future during the data-analyzing period, in order for you to have (if you agree) the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the transcript of your interview. You are very important to me and your contribution is immeasurable to this study! In advance, I want to thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this research!

Full Name: _____

Age: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Parents place of Birth: _____

Home Address: _____

School Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

School Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Cellular Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Finally, I would also like to assure you that the personal contact information you have provided will be kept confidential - meaning that no person or persons will have access to your personal contact information or the content of our interview. I will keep all your information protected and locked in a file cabinet. Please, do not forget to bring this form to our interview meeting time.

Thank You! Muchas Gracias!

Sincerely,

Sonia J. Garcia
Doctoral Candidate, College of Education
Educational Administration Department

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT FORM

The Process of Ethnic Identity Development of the Latina 1.5 Generation of Foreign-born Immigrant College Students

You have been informed by Sonia J. Garcia, doctoral student and the principal investigator of this project that your participation in this research study seeks to examine and explore the process and salience of ethnic identity development among Latina 1.5 generation of foreign-born immigrant college students. You will be asked a series of questions relating to ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic groups, acculturation, and college educational experiences related to being an immigrant living in the United States. This study will give you the opportunity to tell and share your story as well as reflect in your experiences as a 1.5 Latina immigrant college student. Sonia J. Garcia guides this study as part of her doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Kristen Renn, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Educational Administration Department at Michigan State University.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can refuse during the interview to answer certain questions or decide not to partake at all in this investigation. Your time commitment will be approximately one to two hours. Your answers will be tape-recorded, and your responses will be kept strictly and completely confidential. You can have the tape turned off at any time. Again, you can withdraw/discontinue from the interview at any time if you wish. Tapes and transcripts will be kept in a lock office only accessible to the researcher.

We do not foresee any personal, spiritual, or psychological risk to you. However, there is the possibility that some of the questions that will be asked to you might generate some additional reflections and perhaps some uneasiness that might result in that you seek support services either on-campus or off-campus. If the possibility of seeking support might arrive we will provide you with assistance by referring you to your campus support services such as the Counseling Center, the Women Center, and/or your Latina/o organization.

Sonia J. Garcia, the principal researcher, may not reveal at any point in time your name or anything that may breach your confidentiality. At no time will your name and data be connected. Your real name will not be used when reporting data. **Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.**

Results from the study will be presented in a summary, transcribed form to check for accuracy. A summary/results of the study will be made available to you once the research study is finalized and completed. You can also get a copy of the summary at any time by contacting me. If you agree to participate in this study, you will also be asked to fill out a personal contact information form so that I am able to contact you in during the spring semester after the interview takes place for data checking. In other words, after I

transcribe your interview, I will ask you to check your answers in order to have complete accuracy.

You will receive for your participation and for compensation for your time a **\$10 dollars gift certificate** to your local bookstore or a **\$10 pre-paid phone card** to call anywhere in the United States.

If you have any questions, if you want to discuss your participation in this study, or if you want more information about this research, you can contact Sonia J. Garcia by phone at work (517) 432-3070, home (517) 355-5798, garcias5@msu.edu or Dr. Kristen Renn by phone at (517) 353-5979 or by email renn@msu.edu.

Sonia J. Garcia
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(517) 432-3070
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Michigan State University

Dr. Kristen Renn
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Educational Administration
(517) 353-5979
renn@msu.edu
Michigan State University

If you wish more information about participants' rights as human subjects of research, you may contact: Ashir Kumar, MD, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (517) 355-2180.

You confirm to have read the material stated above. Your signature below shows your willingness to participate in this study. You verify that the purpose of the study have been explained to you. You also grant permission to have you quoted in any report written about this study.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX C

LATINA 1.5 GENERATION OF FOREIGN-BORN IMMIGRANT COLLEGE

STUDENTS RESEARCH PROJECT

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name _____

Place _____

Time _____

Date _____

Ethnicity _____

The purpose of this research project is to gain better understanding of the process and salience of the development of your ethnic identity. Further, this project seeks to gain better insight into your acculturation process to the United States and how this process has impacted and/or influenced your identity and your ethnic identity as a person, as a college student, and as a woman. There is not a right or wrong answers for each question, just say honestly what you want and what you feel. Respond as best as you can. Also, for your comfort, we can conduct this interview in the language of your choice, whichever you prefer, either English or Spanish. Finally, to ensure accuracy of your responses, I would like to ask for your approval to audiotape this interview.

A. Tell me about your ethnic background.

1. What does ethnic identity mean to you?
2. How do you think it developed?
3. What role does your family play in the development of your ethnic identity development?
4. What does it mean to be... (ethnicity, ethnic group)?

5. How would you describe to others?
6. How do you feel about your ethnic cultural background?
7. How do you feel about being a member of your particular ethnic group?
8. Are there any cultural practices or behaviors that you engage in on a regular basis that allow you to express your ethnic identity?
9. What characteristics of your ethnic group make you feel like a part of this group? Examples of these characteristics are values, history, language, customs, belief, and traditions.
10. Do you feel any pride in your ethnic group and its accomplishment in this country? What (transition) issues did you (or are you) experiencing when you came to this country?
11. What kind of inner struggles have you experienced adapting to this culture?
12. Do you feel you have become more American?
13. What values and customs have you incorporated from the American culture?
14. In what ways do you think your becoming more American has affected your ethnic identity and your ethnic group self-identification?

B. Tell me about how other people view you and your ethnic group.

1. How do you think American society regards your ethnic group? Does that affect your college life, personal life?
2. How do you think others view you in regards to ethnic identity?
3. Do you think North Americans view you as being different? In what way(s)?
4. Have you experienced personal, psychological struggles rooted on feeling different from mainstream America?
5. Have you been discriminated based on your ethnic characteristics such as language (accent), color of skin (light, medium light, dark)? Have you been/felt racialized?

C. Tell me about your college experience

1. Do you think being (ethnicity, ethnic group) has affected your overall college experience?
2. Do you think your experiences as (ethnicity, ethnic group) make you more or less satisfied with college?
3. What are your friends like in college?
4. What were you involved with in college?
5. Did you do as well as you would have liked in college?
6. What was it like to be in the classroom?
7. How do you think you have changed as a result of college?
8. How did you family feel about these changes?

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Date

Dear student leaders!

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Sonia J. Garcia, a doctoral student in the Higher Adult Lifelong Education program (HALE), department of Educational Administration at Michigan State University. At this point in time I am in the process of writing my doctoral dissertation. I have been approved by Michigan State University's University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) to start my research and the collection of data. The title proposal for my dissertation is the *Process of Ethnic Identity Development of the Latina 1.5 Generation of Foreign-born Immigrant College Students*.

The primary purpose of this study will be to examine and explore the process and salience of ethnic identity development among Latina* 1.5** generation of foreign-born*** immigrant college students. Further, it is also the purpose of this study to explore the acculturation process of these 1.5 foreign-born immigrant college women into American mainstream society and determine how this process impacts and/or influences both their identity and their ethnic identity development. Specifically, this study seeks to understand the process by which Latina 1.5 generation of immigrant college students cope, customize, and/or adapt their original ethnic beliefs and social identities to acclimate themselves to American culture, society, and, most importantly, to the mainstream culture of college campuses.

A major component for my dissertation collection of data is to meet with prospective Latina participants. Your collaboration to my study will be instrumental, as you will be able to serve as a mediator between the Latina immigrant college student community and me. I am aware that as the leader(s) of your student organization, you have strong ties and affiliations with other student leaders and organizations. Thus, I have identified you as a strong asset for my dissertation.

Face-to-face, one-on-one, one to two hours in length interviews will be conducted with Latina immigrant college students who are between the ages of 23-26 years old and are recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree or who are presently graduate students in their first/second year. I am hoping that you can collaborate with me by targeting at least 5-10 Latina students to participate in this research study. Participants will have a choice to conduct the interview in Spanish or English - questions will be translated into Spanish then transcribed into English. I am offering participants \$10 **GIFT CERTIFICATE** to their local bookstore or a **\$10 PRE-PAID PHONE CARD** to call anywhere in the United States for participation incentive. I have developed a flyer for promotion, which I am enclosing with this letter to you.

Dear student leader(s), thanks in advance for your help, support and your willingness to collaborate to this study. If any questions may arise, if you want to further discuss this study, or if you want more information about this research, please do not hesitate to call me at home (517) 355-5798, work (517) 432-3070, email garcias5@msu.edu or you can also contact Dr. Kristen Renn, my advisor, dissertation chairperson, and the primary responsible project investigator by phone at (517) 353-5979 or by email renn@msu.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Sonia J. Garcia
Doctoral Candidate, College of Education
Educational Administration Department

Asterisk Denotes:

* Persons whose origins are from Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic or people identifying themselves generally as Cuban, Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-American.

** Term first coined by Rumbaut and Ima (1988). The 1.5 generation describes those who immigrated to the U.S. as children under age 18, prior to their teenage years, specifically around 12 years of age.

*** U.S. Bureau of the Census 2002 defines "foreign-born" as individuals who are not U.S. citizens at birth.

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

Date

Dear

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A major component for my dissertation collection of data is to meet with prospective Latina participants. Your collaboration to my study will be instrumental, as you will be able to serve as a mediator between the Latina immigrant college student community and me. I am aware that as student affairs professionals working with students and student organization, you have strong ties and affiliations with the student community. Thus, I have identified you as a strong asset for my dissertation.

Face-to-face, one-on-one, one to two hours in length interviews will be conducted with Latina immigrant college students who are between the ages of 23-26 years old and

are recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree or who are presently graduate students in their first/second year. I am hoping that you can collaborate with me by distributing my email announcement with the intent to target Latina students to participate in this research study. Participants will have a choice to conduct the interview in Spanish or English - questions will be translated into Spanish then transcribed into English. I am offering participants \$10 **GIFT CERTIFICATE** to their local bookstore or a **\$10 PRE-PAID PHONE CARD** to call anywhere in the United States for participation incentive. I have developed a flyer for promotion, which I am enclosing with this letter to you.

Dear colleague, thanks in advance for your help, support, and your willingness to collaborate to this study. If any questions may arise, if you want to further discuss this study, or if you want more information about this research, please do not hesitate to call me at home (517) 355-5798, work (517) 432-3070, email garcias5@msu.edu or you can also contact Dr. Kristen Renn, my advisor, dissertation chairperson, and the primary responsible project investigator by phone at (517) 353-5979 or by email renn@msu.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Sonia J. Garcia
Doctoral Candidate, College of Education
Educational Administration Department

Asterisk Denotes:

* Persons whose origins are from Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic or people identifying themselves generally as Cuban, Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-American.

** Term first coined by Rumbaut and Ima (1988). The 1.5 generation describes those who immigrated to the U.S. as children under age 18, prior to their teenage years, specifically around 12 years of age.

*** U.S. Bureau of the Census 2002 defines "foreign-born" as individuals who are not U.S. citizens at birth.

APPENDIX F1

CAMPUS RECRUITMENT FLYER

PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ON LATINA IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS

DEAR LATINA STUDENT!

I am a Dominican doctoral student in the College of Education at Michigan State University seeking for Latinas like **YOU** to participate in a research study that would involve a brief face-to-face interview. I have a broad interest in Latinos and higher education, but I am focusing on Latinas immigrant college students because: 1) they have a substantial presence in this country, and 2) they have been arriving from South, Central America, and the Caribbean to the United States in greater numbers in recent years.

As a Latina immigrant college student, you have a set of unique experiences. Therefore, in order to understand these experiences, I am interested in having a conversation with you, specifically, in regards to your ethnicity, your ethnic identity, and your ethnic group experiences in college.

Specifically, I am interested in talking to immigrant women who:

- Are foreign-born (NOT born in the United States) who arrived to the United States between the ages of 10-12
- Are currently recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree or are presently graduate students in her first/second year at an institution of higher education
- Are between the ages of 23-26 years of age
- Are a Latina woman descendent from either the Caribbean, Central America, South America, or Mexico

This research study hopes to gain better insight into your experiences as an immigrant Latina in this country attending an institution of higher education. This study will give you the chance to tell your story and reflect in your experiences as an immigrant and as a woman. Participants will be interviewed one time only during the spring semester 2003 for one to one and half hours at any time and place or your convenience. As a small token of appreciation for your participation and your valuable time, you will **receive a \$10**

dollars gift certificate to your local bookstore **or a \$10 pre-paid phone card** to call anywhere in the United States.

If you think you might be interested in participating in this research study, please respond to this ad and contact me ASAP! Once you contact me we can arrange your availability to be interviewed. For questions about the study, please feel free to contact Sonia J. Garcia at work (517) 432-3070, home (517) 355-5798 or by email garcias5@msu.edu.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Sincerely,

Sonia J. Garcia
Doctoral Candidate, College of Education
Educational Administration Department

APPENDIX F2

CAMPUS RECRUITMENT FLYER



Earn \$10

GIFT CERTIFICATE to your local bookstore or a **\$10 PRE-PAID PHONE CARD** to call anywhere in the United States

FOR PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH STUDY ON LATINA IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS

Dominican female doctoral student at Michigan State University is seeking for Latina immigrants to participate in a study related to Latinas College Experience. **Participating involves a face-to-face, one-on-one interview**, which takes approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and confidential! I am interested in LATINA IMMIGRANT college students who have the following characteristics:

1. **Foreign-born (NOT born in the United States) and arrived to the U.S. between the ages of 10-12**
2. **Descendent from either the Caribbean, Central America, South America, or Mexico**
3. **Between the ages of 23-26 years of age**
4. **Are currently recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree or are presently graduate students in her first/second year at an institution of higher education**

For More Information About This Study Please Contact:

Sonia J. Garcia

Office (517) 432-3070, Home (517) 355-5798, email garcias5@msu.edu

APPENDIX G

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ON LATINA IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS

Dear Latina Student! You are **WANTED!**

I am a Dominican doctoral student in the College of Education at Michigan State University seeking for Latinas like **YOU** to participate in a research study that would involve a brief face-to-face interview. I have a broad interest in Latinos and higher education, but I am focusing on Latinas immigrant college students because: 1) they have a substantial presence in this country, and 2) they have been arriving from South, Central America, and the Caribbean to the United States in greater numbers in recent years.

As a Latina immigrant college student, you have a set of unique experiences. Therefore, in order to understand these experiences, I am interested in having a conversation with you, specifically, in regards to your ethnicity, your ethnic identity, and your ethnic group experiences in college.

Distinctively, I am interested in talking to people who:

- Are foreign-born (NOT born in the United States) who arrived to the United States between the ages of 10-12
- Are currently recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree or are presently graduate students in her first/second year at an institution of higher education
- Are between the ages of 23-26 years of age
- Are a Latina woman descendent from either the Caribbean, Central America, South America, or Mexico

This research study hopes to gain better insight into your experiences as an immigrant Latina in this country attending an institution of higher education. This study will give you the chance to tell your story and reflect in your experiences as an immigrant and as a woman. Participants will be interviewed one time only during the spring semester 2003 for one to one and half hours at any time and place or your convenience. As a small token of appreciation for your participation and your valuable time, you will **receive a \$10**

dollars gift certificate to your local campus bookstore **or a \$10 pre-paid phone card** to call anywhere in the United States.

If you think you might be interested in participating in this research study, PLEASE respond to this EMAIL indicating your willingness to participate. Also, please indicate your availability to be interviewed such as date, time, and place. I can meet you at any place of your choice or we can meet at your campus library.

If you have any questions about the study and think you might be interested in participating, please feel free to contact Sonia J. Garcia at work (517) 432-3070, home (517) 355-5798, or email at garcias5@msu.edu or Dr. Kristen Renn by email renn@msu.edu. Your cooperation is immensely appreciated!

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR HELP!

Sincerely,

Sonia J. Garcia
Doctoral Student
Dept. of Educational Administration
(517) 432-3070
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Dr. Kristen Renn
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