

**Latino\|a Ethnic Identity in the New Diaspora: Perspectives of a Select Group of Latino\|a
Undergraduates at a Predominantly White Land Grant University**

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Dissertation submitted to the faculty of
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Curriculum and Instruction

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June 17, 2005

Blacksburg, Virginia

Key Words: Ethnic Identity, Latinos in Higher Education, Latino\|a Diaspora, Acculturation and
Assimilation

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Abstract

The increasing presence of “Latinos” in higher education presents a challenge to the academy, particularly in understanding their adjustment to the college environment (Umana-Taylor, Diversi & Fine, 2002). This study investigates how ethnically diverse “Latino\’a” undergraduates construct and affirm ethnic identity. The findings suggest that a “Latino\’a” pan-ethnicity is problematic because of the diversity of national origins, family histories, linguistic preferences, and cultural traditions that exists among the different nationalities that comprise this ethnic group. Unlike previous generations of immigrants, new diaspora “Latinos” seek integration into American society as bilinguals with linguistic command for both Spanish and English and resist abandonment of national identities and culture. These are suggestive of transnational identities that are multiple and adaptive to a variety of contexts and situations; rather than being fixed and constant.

DEDICATION

For
Jose G. Larroy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Learning is a lifelong journey in which we encounter many allies and adversaries along the way. Our allies nurture and strengthen us along this daunting journey, while our adversaries construct barriers that obstruct and hamper our passage to enlightenment and success. As a first generation Puerto Rican, who for many years has journeyed along this path and encountered many allies and adversaries, this dissertation is a testament of my drive and determination to overcome many obstacles to achieve academic success. It is in acknowledgment of my allies that I now humbly address here, for my success could not have been achieved without their kindness and support.

First, I give praise to my Heavenly Father Jehovah, for he has been my refuge and stronghold (Psalm 91:2). It is in Him, whom I place my trust.

To Jan K. Nespor, my Advisor and Dissertation Chair, words cannot express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your support, guidance, and patience throughout this entire process. Jan you taught me the power of qualitative research, but most importantly, you helped liberate my silenced voice. *Muchisimas Gracias*, Dr. Nespor.

To my committee members, Drs. Jane Abraham, Benjamin Dixon, Lisa Driscoll, and Barbara Pendergrass, thank you all for your due diligence, feedback, and insightful thoughts that were instrumental in the development and completion of this dissertation.

I would also like to extend a very special warm embrace and heartfelt thanks to the many students who participated in this research. Without you, this story could not have been told. I wish you all the best y *les deseo mucho éxito*.

To my colleagues Lourdes Travieso-Parker, Kimberly Philpott, and Michael G. Shaver, I cannot express my love and appreciation for all of you. I thank you Lourdes for all of the advice and “comfort food” you have provided over the last four years. Kimberly, many thanks for allowing me to work along side you in our quest to create a welcoming and nurturing campus environment for all students at Virginia Tech. My tenure at the Cultural Centers brought many rich opportunities for professional and personal development. Michael, you have been a true friend and companion. Thank you for your kindness and patience. You are truly a rare individual whom I admire and respect. *Que Dios los Bendiga*.

A special thanks to the staff at Services for Students with Disabilities, in particular, Drs. Jane Warner, Susan Angle, and Hal Brackett and Bill Holbach from Assistive Technologies. You have all been a source of inspiration for me throughout the years. In addition, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Nell Doss and James Fleming from the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, without your assistance I could have never finished this dissertation.

Special thanks to Justin W., wherever you are. I will never forget your kindness and thoughtful perspectives. They really helped me to think outside the black box. You have my love and mutual respect.

Lastly, I wish to thank my friend Kai Zuehlke, for the many years of excellent work with Living Buddhism and the many diverse programs on peace and tolerance. Thanks Kai for your dedication and for being there when I needed you most. Best wishes to you in Graduate School.

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