

## Ethnic Identity Development of Anglo-Oriented Second-Generation Latinos

Kathy Fisher

*Latino students have become the largest minority group on college campuses and their numbers continue to grow (Fry, 2011). The largest generation of Latinos attending higher education institutions is the second generation of immigrants to the United States. This paper examines Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity formation, Torres' Hispanic identity model (2003) and Bicultural Orientation model (1999), and how high acculturation or Anglo-orientation affects the process of ethnic identity development for second-generation Latinos. It will also suggest ways that student affairs practitioners can assist students in moving toward a bicultural orientation by understanding their unique ethnic identity development process.*

Hispanic Americans make up the largest minority group in the United States, accounting for 16% of the population, and these numbers continue to grow (Fry, 2011). Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population grew from 35.3 million to 50.5 million (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011), 62% of which is native-born and 38% foreign-born (Hugo Lopez & Taylor, 2010). The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably throughout the literature and this paper to describe individuals of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

In 2010 the number of 18- to 24-year-old Latinos attending college grew to 12.2 million—a 24% increase from the prior year—making them the largest minority population on campuses for the first time (Fry, 2011). The largest portion (42%) attending college is second-generation Latinos (Fry, 2002). Second-generation Latinos are U.S.-born with at least one foreign-born parent (Fry & Passel, 2009). The continuing rise of the general U.S. Latino population along with the increase in second-generation college attendance makes this an important population for student affairs professionals to understand. Having been raised in the United States, second-

generation Latinos have levels of acculturation that make their ethnic identity development process, or how they make meaning of their ethnicity (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004), complex.

Among second-generation Latinos, one-third self-identify as “American,” are primarily English speaking (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009), and are more acculturated to U.S. culture than first-generation Latinos (Torres, 2003). This high acculturation level combined with low ethnic identification is called Anglo-orientation (Torres, 1997). Anglo-oriented students begin their ethnic development process with an “acceptance of the values and attitudes of the majority culture, including often internalized negative views of their own group that are held by the majority” (Phinney, 1989, p. 36). While there is research explaining ethnic identity development both among minorities in adolescence (Phinney, 1989) and within the broad category of Latinos (Torres, 2003), few studies have highlighted the process for the growing population of Anglo-oriented second-generation Latinos in college. Current research and literature provide a starting point for understanding how these students self-identify when they reach college and the unique experiences they may face in their ethnic identity journey.

This paper uses Phinney's model of ethnic identity formation (1989) and Torres' Hispanic identity (2003) and Bicultural Orientation (1999) models to explore how Anglo-orientation affects the ethnic identity development process for second-generation Latinos. In her work on the Bicultural Orientation Model, Torres (1997) posed the question of whether there is an advantage to assisting students in moving from a primary identification (Anglo orientation or Hispanic orientation) toward a balance of the two with a more *bicultural* orientation. This paper argues that Anglo-oriented Latino students' movement toward a bicultural orientation is a unique and important process necessary for the full development and understanding of their ethnic identity. Implications for Student Affairs practice and what can be done to assist these students in their ethnic identity journey are also identified.

### **Foundational Theories**

Minority ethnic identity theories (Cross, 1978; Kim, 1981; Phinney, 1989) are based on Erikson's (1968) psychosocial and identity development theory. They suggest that identity is "achieved through a process of crisis, or exploration, followed by a commitment that results in a confident sense of self" (Phinney & Alpuria, 1987, p. 3). Phinney (1989) offers a three-stage model of ethnic identity development that is widely used to describe this process among minority groups (see Table 1.1). The first stage, *unexamined ethnic identity* or *foreclosure*, is characterized by a lack of "exploration of issues" (Phinney, 1993, p. 68) with one's ethnicity, "accompanied by commitments based on attitudes and opinions adopted from others without question" (Phinney, 1993, p. 68). This stage continues until individuals are confronted with a situation

that triggers a turning point in their prior thoughts and opinions about their ethnicity. The second stage, *ethnic identity search*, is a time of "experimentation and inquiry" (Phinney, 1993, p.69) into their minority culture. This stage involves an active process of uncovering ethnic issues in a variety of ways such as reading about them, discussing with friends and family, and thinking about the "effects of ethnicity on their life in the present and the future" (Phinney, 1989, p. 38). In the final stage, *ethnic identity achievement*, individuals develop "acceptance and internalization of [their] ethnicity" (Phinney, 1989, p. 38). This is characterized by confident acknowledgement of themselves as a "member of a minority group" (Phinney, 1989, p. 38).

Although Phinney's model (1989) establishes an understanding of the process of ethnic development, its focus on adolescents neglects to explain how college students form their opinions of their ethnicity and how they self-identify. Until the development of the Bicultural Orientation Model (Torres, 1999), little research had explored what contributes to the ethnic orientation of students when they go to college. Torres (2003) followed with the Hispanic identity model that focuses on Latino students' ethnic identity development throughout their first

The Bicultural Orientation Model consists of four quadrants representing the relationships between acculturation and ethnic identity. This shows the diversity within the category "Hispanic" and allows practitioners to "understand the individual choices made by a student" (Torres, 1999, p. 4). Students with a low level of acculturation and high level of ethnic identity indicate a "preference to function within the Hispanic/Latino culture" and have a *Hispanic/Latino Orientation* (Torres, 1999, p.

5). Students with a high level of acculturation and low level of ethnic identity indicate a “preference to function within the Anglo culture” and are considered to have an *Anglo-Orientation* (Torres, 1999, p. 5). Students with a high level of both acculturation and ethnic identity indicate an ability to “function competently in the two cultures” and are considered to have a *Bicultural Orientation* (Torres, 1999, p. 5). Students with a low level of both acculturation and ethnic identity are considered *Marginal*, as they “are not able to adequately function within each culture” (Torres, 1999, p. 5). The Bicultural Orientation Model is a “snapshot of where an individual stands on these constructs” and “cannot measure movement within these constructs” (Torres, 1999, p. 5).

This model, in conjunction with Phinney’s (1989) model, formed the basis of Torres’ (2003) study of Hispanic identity development. The study revealed patterns in “the starting point of identity development in college” and “influences on change in identity development” (Torres, 2003, p. 536). Torres found that where students begin their identity development in college is determined by “the environment where they grew up, family influences and generation in the United States, and self-perception of status in society” (Torres, 2003, p. 537). These elements explain students’ ethnic orientation and allow practitioners to predict the next step that may spark change. Torres proposed two categories as a catalyst for this change: *cultural dissonance* and *change in relationship with the environment* (Torres, 2003). With cultural dissonance, the experience may be a “conflict between one’s own sense of culture and what others expect” (Torres, 2003, p. 540). Change in relationship with the environment is predominantly displayed in “the peer group that individuals seek out while in college” (Torres, 2003, p. 543), whether students choose to associate

with other Anglo or Latino students or become involved in ethnic student groups.

Torres’ study provides further information on the ethnic identity development process, “illustrates the intragroup differences among the Latino population” (Torres, 2003, p. 545), and highlights the unique experiences that Latino students may experience throughout their lives. Each of these elements positions students in different starting places when they get to college. The study also illustrates how Latino ethnic identity development aligns with Phinney’s stages of minority ethnic development as well as the necessity to understand the internal process that Latino students are going through, regardless of whether they outwardly acknowledge it or not (Torres, 2003). Phinney’s stages of ethnic identity development, in conjunction with Torres’ Bi-cultural Orientation Model and study of Hispanic identity development, provide a framework for understanding the unique process of high acculturation in Anglo-oriented second-generation Latino students.

#### **Ethnic Identity Development of Anglo-Oriented Second-Generation Latinos**

Looking at the circumstances leading to self-identification among Anglo-oriented second-generation Latino students entering college provides insight into the challenges they face and what inspires exploration of their ethnicity. Being American-born, these students have a “national identity as Americans” (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997, p.168). The steepest decline in cultural awareness and knowledge among Latinos is between the first and second generation, resulting in a low ethnic identity (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Although their family may provide exposure to their minority culture at home, they are exposed to the majority

(Anglo) culture within their community, at school, and through the media (Phinney & Alipuria, 1987). These students are externally defined by how the outside world recognizes their ethnicity or what they are told by their family. Either situation places them in Phinney's first stage of foreclosure. Some Anglo-oriented students may feel more comfortable with the Anglo culture in their daily interactions with society, but within their homes they exhibit pride for their Latino culture through food, music, and focus on family (Torres & Hernandez, 2007). For these students, going to college and being away from home quickly challenges them to "relinquish or retain characteristics from each culture" (Torres, 1997, p. 58).

Some Anglo-oriented students are influenced primarily by mainstream society and believe negative stereotypes of Latinos, but they do not believe these stereotypes apply to them (Torres, 2009). This is illustrated in a student's reflection about how others view Latinos:

Like there's a lot of people that crack jokes about (Mexicans), but it really doesn't pertain to me...Maybe that is bad. May(be) I don't identify with the people they are making jokes about because a lot of people you know, they are gardeners, and stuff like that. (Torres, 2009, p. 515)

Due to their English-dominant language acculturation and sometimes White physical appearance, second-generation Anglo-oriented students often are privileged with a "level of choice...about how others view them and they see themselves" (Torres, 2009, p. 515). While these students may appear to be acculturated and rarely experience the extreme "crisis" that less acculturated students do such as being subject to discrimination or racism (Phinney, 1989),

this does not prevent them from experiencing cultural awareness through other internal or less obvious avenues. Anglo-oriented students may experience an awakening merely by witnessing discriminatory acts toward a friend or family member in the same ethnic group; in fact, when not directed at them but at someone within their ethnic group, this may result in "greater loyalty toward his or her group" (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 39). This is typically a "highly emotional experience" (Phinney & Alipuria, 1987, p. 10).

Cultural dissonance may occur when Anglo-oriented students encounter a diverse population and come into contact with other Latinos. Suddenly, they may become uncomfortable with their inability to relate to their minority culture or speak proficient Spanish and feel shame. This is similar to the experience of Hispanic-oriented students who feel ashamed of their Hispanic accent when speaking English among the majority population (Torres, 2003). This dissonance can cause conflict, confusion, and stress for students as they develop their identity (Phinney & Alipuria, 1987). In many cases, students will hide their emotions and experiences as "they sense others may not understand or they may be ridiculed" (Torres, 2004, p. 466).

Those who choose to explore their newfound views will begin Phinney's (1989) stage two, ethnic identity search. Many students learn more about their culture within the classroom when they are challenged to study their ethnicity. This may also occur through discussions about diversity when they realize their prior perceptions and racism. Anglo-oriented students may also turn to family as they seek to make meaning of their experiences and who they are as Latinos (Torres, 2004). As these students become "clear as to the

meaning of ethnicity in their life” (French, Allen, Aber, & Seidman, 2006, p. 2), they are able to reach Phinney’s final stage, ethnic identity achievement (1989). For those students who were earlier Anglo-oriented, the new ability to “function competently in two cultures” (Torres, 1999, p.4) while “maintaining a sense of pride and identification with their culture of origin” (Torres & Phelps, 1997, p. 59) indicates a developed bicultural orientation.

The ethnic identity development process is important for second-generation Anglo-oriented Latinos as “those who fail to achieve a secure identity are faced with identity confusion, a lack of clarity about who they are and what their role is in life” (Phinney, 1993, p. 62). Students have a choice about whether or not to take action when faced with crisis of identity. In many cases for Anglo-oriented students, this crisis will occur in a less dramatic fashion than for Hispanic-oriented students. Those who experience crisis and choose to avoid an ethnic identity search will stagnate in their interpersonal development leaving the question of “who am I?” unanswered (Torres & Hernandez, 2007). Student affairs practitioners can offer support and opportunities for these students to make meaning of their changed ethnic views and assist in moving them toward bicultural orientation.

### **Implications for Student Affairs Practice**

*Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (Keeling, 2004) is a foundational document for student affairs practice—published by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)—which calls for the collaboration of academic and student affairs divisions in developing the whole student. This document suggests

that in order to keep up with the needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, colleges and universities should consider “the diversification of students...especially in states with large Hispanic and Asian populations” (Keeling, 2004, p. 5). Increasing diversity and cultural understanding is a common theme in the student affairs literature, but much attention focuses on the changing racial demographics of college campuses. More attention must be given to understanding different ethnicities *across* racial groups and how students identify with them. Second-generation Latinos make up a large and growing number of the student population on college campuses today (Fry, 2002) and contribute to “raising the importance of understanding multiple cultures” (ACPA & NASPA, 2010, p. 6).

As a result of being raised in the United States, many second-generation Latinos relate best to the majority White culture (Torres, 1999) and experience a steep decline in cultural knowledge from what their parents’ know (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Second-generation students are the majority among Latinos on campus (Fry, 2002), and rapid growth of this population necessitates an understanding of how these students develop and identify with their ethnicity. The college experience “causes individuals to think differently about how they define themselves” (Feliciano, 2009) and it is the responsibility of student affairs professionals to create “intentional bridges” (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004, p. 335) to provide a catalyst for the exploration of students’ ethnic identity development. By looking at diversity through the lens of “ethnic orientation rather than country of origin or popular stereotypes” (Torres & Phelps, 1997, p.64), professionals can meet students where they are to help them not only understand other cultures but how they fit into their own ethnicity.

For Anglo-oriented second-generation Latinos, literature suggests that identity exploration be done in a cognitive way, challenging students to understand different aspects of their ethnicity and how it applies to their lives (Torres, 2004). Many students will choose to investigate their ethnicity through educational routes; therefore, a commitment must be made to inform faculty of this process, encouraging them to include diversity or cultural conversations and exercises in their classes. This information could also be useful to Hispanic/Latino Cultural Centers by helping them understand that Anglo-oriented students may feel uncomfortable when interacting with Hispanic-oriented students, feeling shame for their lack of cultural and ethnic knowledge. With this in mind, educational programs and workshops could be designed to confront issues of prejudice and racism within Latino culture as well as to cultivate ethnic pride for these students. These programs should address the external conditions in which students explore their identity and how to make meaning of shifting thoughts as they progress in their ethnic identity development. Such efforts will assist students

in having a better understanding of who they are.

### **Conclusion**

For many students, college is the first time they begin to critically examine their own ethnicity and how they identify with their ethnic group. Latinos have become the largest minority group on many college campuses and their numbers continue to grow. Many of these students are Anglo-oriented second-generation Latinos who, due to high acculturation, will experience cultural dissonance and their ethnic identity process in a unique way. This high acculturation may also make them less obvious to practitioners as a population in need of support. By better understanding this student population through the lenses of Phinney (1989) and Torres (1999 & 2003), student affairs practitioners can consider potential challenges and provide opportunities for intentional cultural dissonance to assist second-generation Anglo-oriented Latinos in their ethnic identity journey toward a bicultural orientation.

### **References**

- American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. (2010). *Envisioning the future of student affairs*. Retrieved from [http://www.naspa.org/consolidation/TF\\_final\\_narr.pdf](http://www.naspa.org/consolidation/TF_final_narr.pdf)
- Cross, W. (1978). The Thomas and Cross models of psychological nigrescence: A literature review. *Journal of Black Psychology, 4*, 13-31.
- Ennis, S., Rios-Vargas, M., & Albert, N. (2011). The Hispanic population: 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>
- Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Feliciano, C. (2009). Education and ethnic identity formation among children of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants. *Sociological Perspectives, 52*(2), 135-158
- French, S., Allen, L., Aber, J., & Seidman, E. (2006). The development of ethnic identity during adolescence. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(1), 1-10.

- Fry, R. (2011). Hispanic college enrollment spikes, narrowing gaps with other groups. Pew Hispanic Center: Washington, DC.
- Fry, R. (2002). Latinos in higher education: Many enroll, too few graduate. Pew Hispanic Center: Washington, DC.
- Fry, R., & Passel, J. (2009). Latino children: A majority are U.S.-born offspring of immigrants. Pew Hispanic Center: Washington, DC.
- Hugo Lopez, M., & Taylor, P. (2010). Latinos and the 2010 census: The foreign born are more positive. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2010/04/01/latinos-and-the-2010-census-the-foreign-born-are-more-positive/>
- Keeling, R. P. (Ed.) (2004). *Learning reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience*. Washington, DC: ACPA, NASPA.
- Kim, J. (1981). *The process of Asian-American identity development: A study of Japanese American women's perceptions of their struggle to achieve positive identities*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts.
- Padilla, A. M., & Perez, W. (2003). Acculturation, social identity, and social cognition: A new perspective. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 25*(1), 35-55.
- Pew Hispanic Center. (2009). Between two worlds: How young Latinos come of age in America. Washington, D.C.
- Phinney, J. S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 9*(1-2), 34-49.
- Phinney, J. S. (1993). A three-stage model of ethnic identity development in adolescence. In M. E. Bernal & G. P. Knight (Eds.), *Ethnic identity formation and transmission among Hispanics and other minorities* (p. 61-81). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Phinney, J. S., & Alipuria, L. L. (1987). Ethnic identity in older adolescents from four ethnic groups. California State University. Los Angeles, CA.
- Phinney, J. S., Cantu, L. C., & Kurtz, D. A. (1997). Ethnic and American identity as predictors of self-esteem among African American, Latino, and White adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26*(2), 165-185.
- Torres, V. (1997). *A bi-cultural orientation model for Hispanic American students: Exploring the relationship between acculturation and ethnic identity*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest.
- Torres, V. (1999). Validation of a bicultural orientation model for Hispanic college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*, 285-299.
- Torres, V. (2003). Influences on ethnic identity development of Latino college students in the first two years of college. *Journal of College Student Development, 44*(4), 532-547.
- Torres, V. (2004). Familial influences on the identity development of Latino first-year students. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(4), 457-469.
- Torres, V. (2009). The developmental dimensions of recognizing racist thoughts. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*(5) 504-520.
- Torres, V., & Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2004). Reconstructing Latino identity: The influence of cognitive development on the ethnic identity process of Latino students. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(3), 333-347.
- Torres, V., & Hernandez, E. (2007). The influence of ethnic identity on self-authorship: A longitudinal study of Latino/a college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(5), 558-573.

Torres, V., & Phelps, R. E. (1997). Hispanic American acculturation and ethnic identity: A bi-cultural model. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 17(1) 53-67.

*Kathy Fisher plans to graduate from the Indiana University HESA master's program in 2013. She received a B.S. in Mass Communications with a concentration in Advertising from Frostburg State University in 2004. At Indiana University, Bloomington, Kathy serves as a Graduate Assistant for the Office of Scholarships and also works with the Office of Student-Athlete Well Being and Development.*