

# **Part One: A Professor and Class Examine Ethnicity and Identity**

## **The Multiple Faces of Cuban Miami: How Parallel Social Networks Create Multiple Communities**

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Abstract:

When one thinks of the Cuban-American community one frequently thinks of the relatively successful immigrant enclaves of Miami and, to a lesser extent, New Jersey. However, many academics and observers are beginning to change perceptions of this seemingly cohesive ethnic group. Whether it is race, the individual degree of what I will call the exile mentality or an individual's identity within immigration waves, there are a variety of many times overlapping cross cutting divisions within the seemingly tight knit exile/immigrant community. Throughout this paper I hope to not only define Cuban-Americans through strict ethnic background, but also hope to clarify the lines that exist between different social networks within. Just as importantly, I wish to address the past, present and potential future power and prestige of the Cuban-American community as a whole, as any ethnic community will have a given amount of influence on the greater American polity.

### **Part 1**

#### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

Cuban-Americans are far too often spoken of and referred to in academic circles and literature as some kind of mythical group mind that swung the state of Florida in favor of George W. Bush during the 2000 election. However many academics are now uncovering relatively long-standing inequalities, stereotypes and attitudes that would suggest the existence of multiple communities within one. But before we venture into the analysis of these phenomena and their origins we must first define some of the concepts we will be working with. Unfortunately, due to both page and time constraints this study will concentrate specifically on the schisms and political activities of Cuban-Americans residing within the Cuban enclave of Miami-Dade County, Florida. Although interest groups and attitudes of relevance to this study may lobby and act within various Cuban communities, the basis of their mention is solely intended for the, hopefully, successful analysis of the Miami-Dade Cuban enclaves of Hialeah, Liberty City, Little Havana, etc. While there are certainly sizable populations of Cuban-Americans residing in New Jersey, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa and many other areas I will for the most part be disregarding them without ignoring their importance in much more far reaching analyses (Garcia-Larriau, 2006, p. 122). We must also carefully define the concept of social networks, as these first few pages will deal predominantly with the formation of what I will term social networks within the relatively ethnically homogenous Cuban enclaves of Miami. For my purposes I intend to define a social network fairly loosely as "a collection of relationships between individuals or aggregations of individuals" (Adams, 2009, p. 430). With this definition in mind it could be argued that ethnicity itself is a social network, an argument I would not necessarily disagree with, but for my relatively narrow purposes race (specifically skin color) and what I will call

exile mentality (explanation of this concept will come later) are the two dominant social networks within the Cuban-American ethnicity, although they are in no regards the only major ones.

With the drab and tedious mission of defining concepts out of the way we can finally begin analyzing a handful of the many social networks that have developed between Cuban-Americans of different social networks. First of all we will tackle the social alignment best paralleled by racial differences between the largest four waves of Cuban immigration. The mass immigration of Cubans to south Florida began in the late 1950s and into to early 1960s (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 121). This first massive wave of immigrants are frequently termed the “Golden Exiles”, a group who fled the Cuban island soon after Fidel Castro and his communist guerillas overthrew the US backed Battista government in 1959 (Woltman & Newbold, 2009, p. 73). This group received its nickname for its relatively high level of capital and socio-economic homogeneity, not surprising as the relatively wealthy were predictably the first to feel the grasp of the new Cuban communist regime under Castro. Being from the same relative socio-economic class and finding discrimination from an Anglo-dominated Miami forged, what Heike Alberts terms, a “reactive solidarity” within the earliest wave of wealthy and predominantly light skinned Cuban immigrants (Alberts, 2005, p. 235). The second major wave of Cuban immigrants are frequently referred to as Freedom Flighters. Since this group was voluntarily allowed to leave the island in 1965-66 this group still consisted of a relatively well off middle-class and were only slightly less racially homogenous (mix of white and non-white Cubans) than the Golden Exiles by most accounts (Albert, 2005, p. 235). Comparatively there was to be a drastic change in the immigrant class make up during the third massive wave of Cuban immigrants. This group, which would come to be known as the Marielitos, was drastically different in both racial make up and socio-economic class. In April 1980 Castro withdrew Cuban military guards from the Peruvian embassy in Havana after six Cubans drove a small bus through the gate and refused to hand themselves over (Alberts, 2005, p. 237). Furious over the negative image that this event created for his regime Castro declared that everyone wishing to leave Cuba should assemble within the confines of the Peruvian embassy, leading to over 10,000 Cubans taking refuge within the embassy walls in the next seventy-two hours (Alberts, 2005, p. 237). These immigrants were organized into a flotilla that would be deemed the Mariel boatlift, and they were eventually taken in by the US government after quite substantial Congressional and public debate. The fourth and most recent wave unfolded in the mid 1990s under the umbrella period known as the Balsero Crisis (Alberts, 2005, p. 244). Once again the Cuban enclaves of Miami found themselves flooded with individuals that were drastically different spiritually, economically, and most importantly racially from the Golden Exiles, Freedom Flighters and many of the Marielitos.

Almost as soon as the Marielitos hit the shores of South Florida divides began to creep into being among the Miami based Cuban community. While the Freedom Flighters and latest arriving Golden Exiles were almost predominantly white upper class, the Marielitos, and Balseros especially, were of much lower socio-economic status than the founding fathers and mothers of Little Havana (Alberts, 2005, p. 237-239). Many Creoles and mixed blooded (meaning African slave or native Caribbean non-white in this particular context) were among the Marielitos and Balseros. The low economic status of the two later waves was arguably a by product of the discrimination and inequality that they had faced during colonial and nationalist rule over Cuba, and they were subsequently unable to cope as well in a new setting. This lack of capital, both social and economic, within the Balsero and much of the Marielito communities led

to widespread discrimination and stereotyping by predominantly white Cuban-American exiles in Miami (Woltman & Newbold, 2009, p. 80). It is no surprise to those even the least in tune with macro socio-economic trends that many of these non-white and poor third and fourth wave immigrants turned to less than legal ways of providing for their families and finding the elusive American Dream that many had risked their lives for, thus creating a huge incentive for the comparatively affluent and well adapted white Cuban-Americans to generalize with. The race related inequality that had flourished on the island of Cuba before Castro's victory has seemed to have been reborn in South Florida (Rampersad, 2006, p. 21). White Cuban-Americans in 1990, even before the Balsero wave which was by far the most racially and economically diverse, enjoyed predictably higher rates of socialization into American society and economic success; a story told most clearly through Table 3 from Woltman and Newbold's exceedingly helpful essay *Of Flights and Flotillas*, which I have added to my presentation (2009, p. 77; see final page).

The second dynamic that has helped to form multiple social networks and groups within the Cuban-American enclave is an individual's level of what I will call exile mentality. Roughly defined, one has an exile mentality if one has left due to perceived or real persecution (usually ideologically based). The initial first two waves, the Golden exiles and the Freedom Flighters are commonly viewed as the true exiles of the Cuban-American community within Miami, as they fled due to fears of losing their relatively high levels of capital and influence to a communist regime (Woltman & Newbold, 2009, p. 79). The Golden Exiles, as mentioned above, seemed to owe much of their initial success to Albert's idea of reactive solidarity and comparatively high capital, which more than likely insulated and protected them from the shocks that come with any entrance into a new residence. The Marielitos and definitely the Balseros lacked the capital and most importantly the strict, highly structured societal-wide support system that reactive solidarity gave their predecessors, for reasons stated above (Alberts, 2005, p. 238). These third and fourth wave Cubans were viewed as solely economic escapist; coming to America due to the failure of a system that they had come of age and lived through for decades. Pair that with the fact that many of the minority non-whites were supporters of Castro's promises of racial and ethnic equality and the Golden Exiles had little incentive to help them as they had helped the middle class (Castro would say bourgeois) Freedom Flighters (Alberts, 2005, p. 238). So as we can theorize, the third and fourth waves were at a disadvantage from the time they hit the South Florida sands on, as most of the Cuban-American economic and social capital was pitted against them from the start.

These two examples of the many social networks that have formed within the Cuban American ethnicity in South Florida fit quite snugly into Tajfel and Turner's Theory of "Social Identity". Tajfel and Turner define social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his/her knowledge of his/her membership in a social group or groups together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors & Preston, 2010, p. 48). By just referring to Table 3 we can see that it can be clearly assumed that these parallel social networks of non-white and white or exile and non-exile are realized among both parties involved in the ascription. The Golden Exiles and Freedom Flighters are the easiest to fit into Tajfel and Turner's model, as they have much of the wealth and power within their greater ethnic community and have a greater ability to take pride in their networks and affiliations. I believe it would be safe to assume the same feeling among non-white Marielitos and Balseros although research in this area is scarce do to a seemingly low level of study on black Cuban-American communities. An analysis of the geographical settling patterns of the different races and waves of immigrants is also telling in regards to Cuban-

American perceptions of social networks, in groups, and out-groups. Black and other non-white Cuban-Americans have typically settled in Liberty City where they can be isolated from the discrimination spoken of above and be with their in group, and vice versa for white Cubans in Hialeah (Woltman & Newbold, 2009, p. 83).

### Macro-Level Research

According to the 2000 U.S. Census there are just over 2.1 million individuals of Cuban origin living within the United States, making them the third largest Hispanic group in the nation (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 122). Nearly two-thirds of those 2.1 million were born in Cuba and the majority arrived since the 1960s (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 122). Miami and Ft. Lauderdale are home to just over fifty-six percent of Cuban-Americans, although St. Petersburg, Tampa, Clearwater, Los Angeles and northern New Jersey all boast substantial numbers of Cuban-American immigrants (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 122).

Compared to other Hispanic groups within the United States Cuban-Americans enjoy quite a bit of success in education, employment and finances. Second generation Cuban-Americans have acclimated themselves surprisingly well to life in the U.S. and enjoy higher levels of average education than the overall national average (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 122). As discussed above many Cuban-Americans brought substantial financial and social capital along with them during their flight from Cuba, allowing them to set up shop so to say far easier than Mexican or Guatemalan immigrants who are emigrating from stagnate or badly mismanaged economies. This abundance of capital among the most affluent half of the Cuban-American population has made it comparatively easy to gain loans and other forms of borrowed capital necessary to start businesses or invest in educational or financial enterprises. The Cuban-American population is also comparatively young to other Hispanic immigrant groups, giving the greater Cuban community a pool of heavy labor if the markets call for it (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 123). Just as important in acculturating to American culture is the bond between family members within the Cuban-American family, as Cuban-American families are typically concentrated around the children and are able to provide a stable learning and growing environment (Garcia-Larrieu, 2006, p. 124). However, as also stated above the story is quite different for the non-white or lower class Cuban-Americans who are generally newer arrivals and lack the capital and education that their predecessors enjoyed and benefited from.

Cuban-Americans have enjoyed and suffered the attention of the U.S. government multiple times throughout the multiple waves of Cuban immigration. Public opinion and hostility/openness to the influx of Cuban-Americans has ebbed and flowed along with the economic situation and international politics of the times. One of the policies that was most championed by the more hard-line (and usually the loudest cross-section of the Cuban-American polity), anti-Castro Cuban-Americans within the U.S. voting public was H.R. 611, otherwise known as the “Free and Independent Cuba Assistance Program”, passed in early 1995 during the height of the Balsero Crisis. This U.S. House bill, introduced by Cuban-American Representative Robert Menendez of New Jersey, codified what amounted to U.S. aid to any Cuban government that was seen as democratic and determined by the Cuban people (H. Res. 611, 1995, p. 4). It ultimately disallowed the U.S. government from directly aiding the Cuban government as long as it was seen as oppressive and disrespectful of codified human rights and privileges (H. Res. 611, 1995, p. 6). The bill was put forth to quote, “encourage the Cuban people to empower themselves with a government which reflects the self-determination of the Cuban people (H. Res. 611, 1995, p. 4). On the other side of the coin, one government policy that could have potentially hurt a large cross section of the Cuban-American population was H.R.

4330, which to my knowledge never passed the U.S. House. The bill centered around the debate over whether to send criminal Marielitos (many of which had purposely been sent over by Castro's own policies) back to Cuba (H. Res. 4330, 1988, p. 11). This was staunchly opposed by both the hard-liner and moderate cross-sections of the Cuban community and was quickly disregarded as a viable political action (Horowitz, 1998, p. 556).

#### Mezzo-Level Research

Non-profits traditionally have played a huge role within Cuban-American society, acculturating new immigrants to American life, business, politics and activism. However, in the last twenty years interest groups such as the Cuban-American National Foundation, the Cuban Liberty Council and the Center for a Free Cuba have taken on an increasing role in lobbying the U.S. government in foreign policy issues towards Cuba (Horowitz, 1998, p. 554). There are three dominating wings within the Cuban-American lobby that have taken on a myriad of roles within and outside of the Cuban-American communities in South Florida and New Jersey.

The intellectual wing of the Cuban-American lobby consists of five main non-profits, think tanks and national foundations, the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American association of University Professors, the American Association for World Health, the American Physical Society and the Committee of Concerned Scientists (Horowitz, 1998, p. 553). This fairly tight knit group of science exporters and human rights watch dogs frequently work with each other to further their overall goals of opening Cuba to scientific peer sharing programs and university interconnectedness. Specifically they have concerned themselves with travel policies that have, for a very long time, barred the scientific communities in both Cuba and the US from exchanging ideas and dialogue in an efficient and free-form way (Horowitz, 1998, p. 553). In order to achieve this goal, these foundation have frequently defined the right to travel as a human rights issue, framing their argument within the context of family relations and Cuban-American remittances to pressure the government to act on the travel issues that the intellectual wing has turned into a morality issue (Vanderbush, 2009, p. 289).

The business wing makes up a considerable cross-section of the Cuban-American lobby, as it does in many ethnic and foreign policy geared interest groups in the US. Their main concern is the expansion of trade and economic aid between the Castro regime and the US markets, specifically in the areas of livestock manufacturing, transportation infrastructure and telecom services (Horowitz, 1998, 554). The business class frames their argument for increased Castro-US dialogue not only through the spectrum of fiscal bottom lines and profits, but also through the possible national electoral and organizational benefits that increased trade could bring South Florida businesses and politicians (Horowitz, 1998, p. 554). The vanguard of this wing is comprised of such organizations and think tanks as the Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba and Alamar Associates (who provide consulting services for companies and entrepreneurs interested in the potential Cuban markets) and the American Business Council on Cuba and USA Engage; the more lobbyist oriented groups who push for the lifting of the Cuban economic embargo) (Horowitz, 1998, p. 554).

The most active and wealthy, but debatably most ineffective and inefficient, wing of the Cuban-American lobby is what Horowitz refers to as the political/activist wing (1998, p. 555). This wing can be broken up into three different sectors, pro-Castro, anti-Castro, and humanitarian political activist groups. The anti-Castro activists hope that the lifting of the embargo will be the primary step in the eventual reform and disintegration of the Castro regime in Cuba, viewing the embargo as a scapegoat that can be used by Castro's regime for the

stagnated economy and rising food prices. This particular section of the political lobby is commanded by the Cuban Committee for Democracy (Horowitz, 1998, p. 555). The pro-Castro cross section consists of the Center for Cuban Studies and the Center for International Policy, both think tanks that are loosely supportive of the Castro regime in Cuba. These groups sight the un-debatable rise in education funding and healthcare services since Castro's victory as signs that the US has nothing to fear from Cuba, now that the Cold War has ended (Horowitz, 1998, p. 556). These groups have received an immense amount of threatening and worrying attention from the greater Cuban community due to its policies as much as the massive Marielito support these more moderate, and "apologetic" in the words of one of my girlfriend's grandfather", interest groups and lobbies receive (Horowitz, 1998, p. 559). Lastly are the humanitarian activist groups that are represented by the Council of Hemispheric Affairs, the Cuba Program of the Georgetown University Caribbean Project, the General Services Foundation, and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. These groups concerns themselves predominantly with the "promotion of peace through reconciliation", seeing the Cuban embargo as an impediment to meaningful discussion of differences between the two hostile governments (Horowitz, 1998, p. 555). Organizations such as the Cuban-American National foundation, or CANF, play a dominant role in the acculturation and assimilation of new immigrant arrivals, no matter their socio-economic status or race, but they have recently turned to more DC centered activities using their connections to the multiple social networks in Cuban Miami to quite successfully lobby the US Congress and executive for regional and local incentives (Paul, 2008, p. 9). As seen above, the political activist wing of the Cuban lobby provides an umbrella conglomeration that opens its arms to the most extreme of both political poles and is arguably the most demographically accurate wing of the entire Cuban lobby.

It is not surprising that the majority of Cuban-American non-profits have taken on the job of lobbying for foreign policy adjustments or crackdowns, as the predominant political issue in the front of almost every Cuban-American exiles mind is Castro and the status/operations of his administration. The outcomes of this heavy concentration on ethnic lobbying has contributed greatly to the Cuban lobby becoming widely considered the second most powerful ethnic lobby within the United States, second only to the Israeli/Jewish lobby juggernaut (Paul, 2008, p. 10). Liberalizing Cuban-American engagement strategies, especially those engaged in by the Carter Administration which will be covered extensively further on in this analysis, were frequently met with staunch protests by the Golden Exiles, Freedom Flighters and to some extent the older Marielitos who still held vivid memories of the Castro regime nationalizing their family business enterprises and communalizing private property. This relatively well voiced group of anti-Castro ideologues have for the most part controlled the debate over America's future approach to Cuban relations, even though they lack the organization and much of the funding of the apologists and humanitarian groups that control the formal interest groups represented in Washington and Miami-Dade County (Paul, 2008, p. 14).

## **Part 2**

### **Theme Based Research (Cuban Politics in a Heterogeneous Age)**

If we examine the above impact of Cuban-American interest groups and look at the previously analyzed history of the Cuban migrations and assimilation processes I believe we can somewhat accurately determine, or at the very least generalize, where the Cuban-American community may find itself in the coming decades. I believe that first of all we must analyze the precedent that has been set by previous attempts by the Cuban-American community to influence

US foreign policy, international relations and in some cases electoral and bureaucratic processes. I have chosen to do exactly this through the examination of a rather extensive case study, authored by Catherine Loiacano, that analyzes attempts made by the more conservative and anti-Castro Cuban exiles to influence Jimmy Carter's Cuba Policy during his first time as President.

Upon his election to the office of the United States presidency, Jimmy Carter put forth a starkly different belief in the utility of diplomacy and negotiation through dialogue when compared to his staunchly anti-communist predecessors. This view that diplomacy and dialogue were the cornerstone of any respectable international relations policy or platform unsurprisingly pushed the Carter administration into a position of strengthening ties with a Cuban government, led by Fidel Castro, that since 1962 had been close to completely ignored diplomatically by the US government. Carter's foreign policy was going to be guided by "human rights and the ideal of a global community rather than an obsession with possible communist expansion" (Loiacano, 2010, p. 3), and specifically his Cuba policy consisted of three major goals that were to be accomplished through direct dialogue with the Castro regime; the withdrawal of Cuban expeditionary forces from African nations, a cease in Cuban meddling in the Puerto Rican independence movement, and the release of Cuba's political prisoners (Loiacano, 2010, p. 1). This emphasis on open dialogue and equality of sovereignty championed by the Carter administration quickly came under substantial fire from the well funded and easily mobilized anti-Castro elements of the Cuban-American exile community, heavily represented demographically within the white Golden Exile and Freedom Flighters networks for reasons stated above. The early voice of this cross-section of the Cuban community was Juanita Castro, the exiled sister of Fidel Castro, who wrote to President Carter in 1977 quoting Benjamin Franklin, "Look upon your hands! They are stained with the blood of your relations." (Loiacano, 2010, p.1). The letter continues, "Mr. President, I submit your decision in this matter might well determine if you will ever again be able to look at your own hands" (Loiacano, 2010, p.1). The pressure that was to be placed on the Carter administration in 1977 and 1978 due to its seemingly soft approach to Castro-American relations was to be foreshadowed by Carter's appointment of a myriad of Cuban-American immigrants to state and federal positions (Alfredo Duran as Florida's Democratic State Chairman, Bernardo Benes as Florida's Director of Hispanic Affairs, and Mauricio Solaun as US Ambassador to Cuba just to name a few), in hopes that he could repair the loss of votes that would inevitably be produced by his approach to Castro's Cuba (Loiacano, 2010, p. 2). These measures taken by the Carter administration fell on the selectively deaf ears of the influential upper class Cuban-Americans who had suffered the most at the hands of Castro's revolutionary reforms and policies and outrage at Carter's attempts at normalization continued to grow. However, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1977 marked the point of departure from casual tongue lashings directed at the Carter administration to open violence when the Pedro Luis Boitel Commando Brigade, a far right wing anti-Castro dissident group, bombed the Ft. Lauderdale offices of Mackey International Airlines in response to scheduled flights to Cuba following Carter's partial lifting of the travel ban (Loiacano, 2010, p. 6). Another series of bombings were perpetrated on September 8<sup>th</sup> of the same year near the Soviet embassy in Washington, DC and the Pedro Luis Boitel Brigade also claimed responsibility (Loiacano, 2010, p.6). Soon after these events non-Cuban public outrage forced President Carter to take a tough stance on the rising tensions produced by the terrorist attacks and later that same year Carter and his advisors negotiated an intelligence sharing program with the Cuban communist government in hopes of combating this rising wave of terrorist activity (Loiacano, 2010, p. 6). This policy in particular was met with utter outrage within the Cuban-American upper class, as it was seen as a direct

appeasement to the Castro regime and a betrayal by the Carter administration and greater Democratic Party. By 1978 public outrage over the terrorist attacks had grown to such a crescendo that Carter had no other viable alternative to abandoning his plans of diplomatic normalization with the Cuban government, thus destroying any further hopes of open dialogue within that decade and resulting in a victory for the more conservative and extreme sectors of the anti-Castro Cuban community (Loiacano, 2010, p. 7&8).

The kinds of conglomerated power that the Cuban exile community showed during the Carter administration is more than likely a thing of the past now that the US has entered into the twenty-first century. The changing demographics, a result of the influx of black and middle/lower class Marielito and Balsero immigration waves, make it unlikely that the Cuban community will ever be able to band together and make such a concentrated and unified demand on US foreign policy in the future. The introduction of the Marielito and Balsero immigrants into the South Florida and New Jersey Cuban enclaves has led to a divergence of Cuban political and social views that are no longer allow the Cuban community to come together behind Cuban policy initiatives as it once did. However, not all factors point towards the disintegration of Cuban-American political influence in the developing twenty-first century. Paul states that one of the major factors in how effective a minority ethnic interest group is in pushing national policy is the degree of centralization of their membership (2008, p. 4). The centralization of the Cuban community within South Florida is by no means showing signs of dissipating or disappearing. Just as important is the pool of collective memories and traumas that an ethnic community has, in this case the collective memory of communist dictatorship of Cuba and the freedom flights (Paul, 2008, p. 6). Due to the relatively young age of the Golden Exiles and Freedom Flighters that fled in the early years of the Castro regime it is unlikely that this pool of collective memories will disappear or lose relevance while the first and to a lesser extent second generation of Cuban exiles are able to remain active and engaged within the Cuban-American community. Dispersion of the Cuban enclaves also lends itself to the idea that Cuban-American influence within US government and policy making will remain at the very least stable levels (Paul, 2008, p. 5). Cuban communities are fairly widely dispersed throughout South Florida and New Jersey, while retaining their regional centralization, which makes it very difficult for Congressman and other representatives who are hoping to be elected to ignore the Cuban-American platform, especially when paired with their comparatively high rates of political mobilization.

Delving further into the question of Paul's collective memories and traumas (the backbone to many a nationalist and ethnic conflict theory) is the question of what effects assimilation and aculturalization will have on the politically active cross-sections of the Cuban community. I have seen first hand within my girlfriend's Cuban-American family in Miami the changing ideas and perceptions that are effecting the younger generations of Cuban-Americans. Their lack of the collective memories that have fueled everything from terrorism to hunger strikes among the first generation Cuban immigrants make those born in the US much more lenient and forgiving of the Castro government. Statistics show that the more moderate Cuban-Americans within such political and activist groups as the Cuban-American Nationals Foundation and the US-Cuba Democracy PAC are disproportionately young, of various racial backgrounds and US born (Woltman & Newbold, 2009, p. 76). The changing face of the Cuban-American community, as the first generation immigrants pass out of the picture and their sons, daughters and grandchildren take their places, would seem to suggest that policies such as those



pushed for by Carter will fair much better in a future where they will inevitably debated and possibly enacted.

Political representation of Cuban-Americans within state and federal governing bodies has grown exponentially as the Cuban community further assimilates into American culture and politics. In the 1990s three Cuban-Americans were represented within the United States House of Representatives; two Republicans in Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Diaz-Balart of Florida and a Democrat representing New Jersey Robert Menendez (Vanderbrush, 2009, p. 292). And the Cuban influence in the US Congress and bureaucracy has only grown as there are currently four Cuban-Americans within the US House of Representatives (Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Mario Diaz-Balart, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Albio Sires) and one Cuban-American Senator (Robert Menendez) (Vanderbrush, 2009, p. 292). In the bureaucratic sector Carlos Gutierrez served as the U.S Secretary of Commerce from 2005-2009 and Eduardo Aguirre served as Vice-Chairman of the US Export-Import Bank, Director of Immigration and Naturalization Services and Ambassador to Spain just to name a few prominent Cubans within the US bureaucracy (Vanderbrush, 2009, p. 292&293)

#### Implications for Society

As loosely examined above, the implications of these demographic changes within the Cuban-American community for Cuban-Americans is understandably hard to determine. However, there is little evidence that suggests the political, social and cultural power that the early Golden Exiles established within South Florida and New Jersey is declining and many factors seem to point to an increase in Cuban-American political power in the coming decade. Cuban Americans enjoy a disproportionate representation and electoral influence within an important swing state in US elections and as the population increases at a rapid pace this disproportionate influence would seem to only grow over time (Vanderbrush, 2009, p. 301). The implications of the changing political views of the US-born Cuban-American population will undoubtedly be massive and far-reaching but it is fairly hard to tell at this point in history what specific changes it will bring to the greater Cuban-American enclave communities and society.

The implications of a “blue” Cuban community could be just as far-reaching for American society as it will be for the Cuban enclaves themselves. The older Republican voting Cuban community played a leading role in swinging Florida for George W. Bush in the contested 2000 Florida electoral crisis. Looking back, a predominantly Democrat Cuban community could have possibly changed the course of US electoral and presidential history and there is no evidence to say that something along the same lines will not happen again, and once again the Cuban community may be called up to decide for the American nation. Cuban-Americans currently show fertility and birth rates on par with the national average, just above the rate of replacement, at 2.1 children per woman (Klein, 2004). What this says about the future is that Cuban-American population will not drastically decrease in comparison to other American ethnic groups anytime soon, and if we factor in the always present possibility of a fifth major wave of immigrants arriving to the US in the future the proportion of Cuban-Americans to non-Cubans may even rise.

### **Part 3**

#### **Self Reflection**

My girlfriend and I have been dating for just over two years now and she and her family have been responsible for almost all of my interests and preconceptions towards the Americanized Cuban community. Three different trips to Miami, usually consisting of three

week periods at a time, have taught me much of what I know about the Cuban-American through personal experience alone. The Cuban-Americans, especially the older generations, have always struck me as highly political and extremely motivated on every one of these trips. One can overhear all kinds of political views, and many times various slanders by merely sitting around Domino Park, walking down the famous Calle Ocho, or smoking a cigar in one of the many family patios and cigar bars throughout the city. I believe these feelings towards Cuban-Americans were further justified by the fact that my girlfriend's grandfather was recruited in Mexico for the CIA-led Bay of Pigs invasion and as a consequence was jailed in Cuba for nearly a decade upon the failure of the operation. Another preconception of the Cuban people that I had was that nearly fanatical attachment to the land of their origin. The fact that the Cuban-Americans I know could be assimilated into the American economy and society so well, but staunchly defend their culture and origins at the same time was, and still is, absolutely amazing to me personally. The Cuban culture of family, food and friends is not drastically different, although it is weird to say, from my Scottish farmhouse upbringing and socialization in Central North Carolina. Save for the constant debate atmosphere one can easily stumble across in Miami, I found the Little Havana to be quite like my home town (just placed within a much larger city).

Much of the information that I compiled for this assignment further justified the preconceptions that I already held about the Cuban-American community. The research I did left no doubt that Cuban-Americans could be extremely docile and easy going political beings at one moment and rapidly mobilized, and sometimes violent, in the next moment. The racial and economic divides between different cross-sections and immigration periods was no surprise as well, as it can plainly be seen when comparing the different Cuban communities of Coral Gables, Hialeah, Kendall, etc. Just by visiting the city and living with a Cuban family for roughly two months over the last two years will leave no doubt that there are deep schisms within the Cuban community and especially between the Cuban community and other minority out-groups (Haitians, African Americans and Puerto Ricans just to name a few). The research I compiled, as a whole, led me to more strongly believe that the Cuban community is at the same time a highly centralized and unified identity when viewed from outside the group, but at the same time a highly divided and stratified society when viewed from the inside.

#### Self Discovery

I interviewed my girlfriend's grandmother Olivia Santana who resides on the perimeter of the Cuban enclave of Coral Gables in Miami, FL. She was a first generation immigrant to the United States who arrived via Operation Pedro Pan; a joint federal/state program that took children out of Cuba at the request of their families and resettled them in Miami with the help of the local Catholic deices. She arrived and was placed in the custody of her uncle and aunt who had come to Miami before the communist revolution had reached its height in Cuba. She is currently 65, putting her snugly within the older and predominantly conservative cross-section of Cuban-American Miami, demographic generalizations that her personal political views are well in line with.

1 - Do you believe there were any advantages/disadvantages in being part of the first massive wave of Cuban exiles/immigrants to Miami?

I can tell you that in my case the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, mostly because since there were only a relatively small group of immigrants, I was able to integrate to the American

way of living much faster than those who came later. I don't regret coming when I did even though I missed my parents a lot.

2 - Have you witnessed any discrimination against the Marielito or Balsero communities within the Cuban-American community in Miami?

Of course, those that came first believe that the Marielitos and Balseros came just for economical reasons, however, this might be true for some but not for everyone. Another negative aspect against them has been the antisocial elements included in those groups.

3 - What is your current opinion in the current safe shore policy in South Florida?

I believe that the policy had its time and place, but it should not be applied anymore. That kind of privilege is not given to any other country in the world.

4 - Would you ever travel back to Cuba if you were given the chance by new federal laws?

5 - What implications do you think the handover of political power to Raul Castro will have for the Cuban-American exile and immigrant communities in South Florida?

I was actually thrilled when I saw the responses to my questions because they fit so well into my paper overall, something that I take to be a sign of a fairly well researched paper. Question two I think was most important in this regard because it showed real world, non-academic signs that racial prejudices and predispositions in thinking were active and still are within the Cuban community of Miami. The preconceptions of the Balseros, and many of the Marielitos, as possibly criminal and economically driven have factored into their assimilation into both the American and Cuban societies of their residence and the preconceptions are still present according to my interview answers. I was not surprised by any of the interview answers, although I would have liked to have been able to flesh out some of the responses a little more (particularly question three).

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**Table 3** Percentage distributions of selected cultural and socioeconomic assimilation characteristics, Cuban and native-born cohorts by race, aged forty to sixty-four in 2000

	Freedom Flight Cubans		Mariel Cubans		Native-born	
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	White	Black
U.S. citizenship						
Citizen	87.9	75.8	49.5	36.2	100.0	100.0
Noncitizen	12.1	24.2	50.5	63.8	N/A	N/A
English ability						
Only	4.5	5.2	4.0	7.0	91.4	96.8
Well	63.7	51.4	34.4	30.6	8.1	2.9
Not well	31.7	43.4	61.6	62.4	0.4	0.3
Education status						
<High school	59.9	71.9	73.6	86.9	32.3	61.3
High school	25.4	20.1	15.7	7.8	33.1	24.4
Postsecondary	14.8	8.0	10.8	5.3	34.7	14.3
Tenure						
Rent	21.0	24.8	35.0	54.3	23.8	41.0
Own	79.0	75.2	65.1	45.7	76.2	59.0
Poverty status						
Above	89.4	83.3	83.9	72.1	93.3	80.3
Below	10.6	16.7	16.1	27.9	6.6	19.5
Employment status						
Employed	67.2	62.4	67.3	63.6	72.9	76.1
Self-employed	11.6	10.9	14.3	12.5	14.7	5.0
Other	21.2	26.7	18.4	23.9	12.3	18.9
Occupation						
Professional	21.5	10.4	14.3	7.3	36.8	20.6
Technical	27.0	21.5	18.2	13.2	27.9	18.8
Service	11.1	17.9	15.7	19.3	9.4	20.5
Farm, fish, or forestry	0.5	1.0	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4
Precision, production	7.0	10.1	13.7	17.5	7.2	8.0
Labor	12.2	12.4	18.7	18.2	6.3	13.0
Military	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Other	20.8	26.7	18.3	23.9	12.0	18.7
Mean income (\$)	27,274.76	21,468.28	18,740.24	13,788.85	46,985.37	25,143.56
N weighted	59,824	4,251	51,586	4,985	453,515	110,745

# **Jesus Christ, Superstar: The Growing Impact of Catholicism in America**

**Amy Slazyk**

## **Abstract**

The Catholic religion is one of the world's oldest and perhaps one of the more controversial, especially in America. Throughout the latter half of the 20th Century, the Catholic Church has been a very outspoken voice when it comes to several of our country's controversial issues. With Pope Benedict being in the news recently due to the Church's infamous sex scandals it is hard to gain an unbiased opinion of the Church and its teachings. This paper will examine the role that Catholics play in our current and future American society and illustrate how influential Catholic family values are on American Politics as well as the influence on society as a whole. Throughout various forms of evaluation this paper will ultimately discuss how and why this out-group, American Catholics, functions in society and contributes to American family values.

## **Part I**

### **Conceptual Framework- Identity Theory**

The conceptual framework used to examine Catholics and Catholicism in American is the identity theory. This theory was first established by Stryker in the late 1960s. The identity theory explains the relationship between self and society (Hogg, et al.). It is based on the idea that the society and environment that one belongs to strongly affects their personality and various characteristics. The theory supports that because society is ever-changing and complex it greatly affects people as individuals and as groups within a society. Also similar are the social identity theory and the organizational theory.

The identity theory is quite similar to the social identity theory, however they are not the same. While the identity theory focuses on how society affects individuals the social identity theory focuses more on inter-group relations and how groups function as a whole (Hogg, et al.). The essential concept of the social identity theory is that a social category, or one's in-group, helps to define one's character or, "a self-definition that is part of the self-concept" (Hogg, et al.). The social identity theory then claims that Catholics who interact with other Catholics in a group setting such as attending mass or volunteering through the church, are liable to develop similar personality traits and characteristics over an extended period of time.

The organizational theory is more of comparing a social interaction to information that one already knows about a particular unknown. This theory is strongly based on how an individual interacts with others and in specific situations (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). Hatch and Schultz note Albert and Whetten's description of the organizational theory: the process takes place when an individual compares a stranger to them self, convey information about the comparison through conversation with the stranger, both individuals take the experience and new information into account which they again make personal by comparing with other outsiders which ultimately affects their self-definition (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). This theory is easy to apply to a realistic scenario and is comparable to the premise of this paper. By observing,

experiencing, and gaining knowledge of an out-group we are able to process the new information or experience and reflect it upon ourselves to further define who we are as individuals.

This idea of identity theory relates to Catholics in America in several ways. The two of the affects of identity theory being how Catholics understand mainstream American politics and how society has gradually become more accepting of a conservative, religious lifestyle. Firstly, it is commonly know that the Catholic religion consists of many layers with many different Church leaders. As with many religions, the followers take the political views and opinions of their church into strong consideration when deciding for themselves what issues are important and for whom to vote. However, one survey shows that the Catholic vote is more secular, that it does not follow the same ideologies as the Catholic bishops (Belden, et al.). This survey found that by more than two to one Catholic voters deny that the views of the bishops are important when deciding for whom to vote, while only seven per cent admit that the bishops' views are very important to them (Belden, et al.). The review of the survey does not mention how devout the Catholics are that were surveyed, only that 2,239 Catholics were surveyed. Given that the people surveyed are devout enough to publicly consider themselves Catholic, this relates back to identity theory by acknowledging that perhaps the relationship between self and society is more secularized than anticipated. Catholics share a more secular view of politics which suggests that the burden of religiously neutral society weighs more than the religious teachings of priests and bishops in the Catholic Church.

The second affect of identity theory and Catholicism is society as a whole gradually becoming more accepting of a lifestyle that has not been mainstream in our country in several decades, if not centuries. This is a prime example of how society is constantly changing and in result changing individuals. Catholic education teaches that the only form of contraception before marriage is abstinence whereas other groups and organizations suggest otherwise claiming that the birth control pill and condoms are perfectly acceptable. While the Church has not budged on their stance society has come to be more understanding when it comes to educating teens about reproduction. Public schools teach their students it is best to wait for marriage but at the same time they offer students resources for more information if they feel that premarital sex is a path they plan to walk down. This seems to be a satisfactory solution. Mainstream politics cannot escape the issue of abortion and neither can the Church. Although abortion is a legal right, it is a state-wide issue, not a federal issue and not all forms of abortion are legal. This is another compromise that the Catholic Church is not happy with, but is a good makeshift position that alleviates a small amount of concern for conservative religious groups and keeps the liberal, human rights supporters at bay as well.

## **Macro-level**

Catholicism has been in the United States since 1565 and has since been one of the largest denominations in our country (ARDA, 2006). According to the Association of Religious Data Archives, the Catholic population has grown from about 16 million in 1925 to about 67.5 million in 2006 and is expected to grow even more over the next several years due to the growing Hispanic population. The Hispanic population, in particular, is expected to grow significantly by the year 2050 (Day, 1996) and this vast growth it is practically guaranteed to affect our nation. Hispanic Catholic voters are expected to be a major influence in future elections, especially for the Democratic Party. The selection of Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic on the Supreme Court is Catholic and is a prime example of the potential influence of

Hispanic Americans in the years to come.

According to research conducted by John Russonello and Kate Stewart for Catholics for a Free Choice, Catholic voters make up about one quarter of American voters and have not been strict supporters of one party over another. For the past thirty years the presidential candidate that wins the Catholic vote, ultimately also wins the presidency (Russonello & Stewart, 2005). Because the Catholic vote has been proven to be so significant in presidential elections from 1974-2004, the increase of the Hispanic population will be a significant asset given that Catholicism is a very popular religion among this population. A Pew Forum survey from 2008 notes that in 2005 Hispanic population was around 42 million and is expected to grow to nearly 130 million by the year 2050. This is an especially interesting statistic for the Democrats for Hispanic Catholics tend to identify more with liberal-sided affairs (Russonello et. al, 2005).

Another positive aspect of American Catholics is that they take up about a quarter of the voting population (Balden Russonello & Stewart, 2004). Regardless of party affiliation this is a comforting statistic for political candidates. Because Catholic voters represent one quarter of the voting community it will be easy for campaigns to target certain groups, especially since, according to Balden et al., Catholic voters have been a good indicator of the nation's views and opinions concerning presidential elections. Republicans used this knowledge to their advantage in the 2004 presidential election when President Bush visited Catholic churches, not to target the religious vote, but the conservative vote (Russonello et al. 2005).

The Catholic Church is also well known for their charity work. In addition to countless hospitals and children's homes that are associated with the Catholic Church, Catholic Charities and the Knights of Columbus are the two most well known charitable organizations. According to their website, Catholic Charities is involved with services such as adoption and foster care, disaster recovery, food and basic needs, pregnancy and parenting assistance for adolescents as well as AIDS ministry. Catholic Charities is undoubtedly a more liberal organization compared to the Church in general. The Knights of Columbus are more conservative and their website lists specific organizations that they donate their time and money to such as Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, Global Wheelchair Mission, as well as Coats for Kids.

Although the Church may have taken some hits in the past few years about priests taking advantage of children, overall the Church and its followers do their best to promote strong, healthy family values. Catholics are known for their firm beliefs against premarital sex, abortion, and the death penalty however it is not without good reason. In regards to the premarital sex debate, their motives and reasoning may not be the most realistic for the 21st century. In a society where sex is in the media as much as, if not more than, national and international affairs, preaching abstinence is not a realistic approach for sex education. The important note is that they are not ignoring the important issues of today's youth and the Church does acknowledge that it is an issue and is doing what they feel is best to address this concern.

Despite the numerous positive aspects of the Catholic Church there are just as many that are negative. One of the first issues that must come to mind to anyone who is less than familiar with Catholicism are the sex scandals that have been in and out of the eye of the media for several years. The abuse stories have been in the news as recently as September 24, 2010 where CNN reported in an hour-long special titled "*What the Pope Knew*" that Pope Benedict XVI did not do his part in protecting the victim and refused to remove the guilty priest from his position. Father Alvin Campbell was convicted in 1985 of multiple sexual assault charges but was not defrocked, or striped from his position as a priest. Bishop Daniel Ryan was disturbed by this and brought the case to the attention of the Vatican's Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith

whose head was none other than Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, current Pope Benedict XVI. Ratzinger responded to Ryan with a signed letter stating that he would not defrock Campbell without Campbell's permission.

Although the Church's views on family value are reassuring in a time of acceptable promiscuity, these values are also a detriment to the Church. Because the Church's major issues are also major political issues it makes for an interesting debate. Abortion is one of, if not the, most controversial issues in American politics. Abortion is such a controversial issue that there have been countless state and federal government policies issued, both positively and negatively affecting the Church and its beliefs. Earlier this year with the new healthcare reform bill, the Democrats said early on that there would be no amendments allowed, however Representative Bill Stupak who is a Catholic Democrat was allowed to add an antiabortion amendment to the bill. Catholic Bishops and Cardinals were sent to Washington DC from several dioceses, including Rome, Italy to speak with representatives about the bill. Ultimately the Stupak Amendment passed. Bishops urged Democratic Senator Bill Nelson to introduce an amendment in the Senate bill that restricted access to abortion and as a result, on March 21, 2010 President Obama came to consensus with Stupak and agreed to the Senate bill, reaffirming the restriction on federal funding for abortion (US Bishops, 2010).

A policy that has negatively affected the Catholic community from 2007-2009 took place at Belmont Abbey College, a private Catholic school. The issue began when the administration dropped reproductive healthcare services such as prescription contraceptives and abortion as well as other services from their employee's health insurance coverage. Eight employees claimed that the exclusion of prescriptive contraceptives violated the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which was found to be a valid complaint in August 2009. The Charlotte District Office Director of the EEOC wrote the administration saying that "by denying prescription contraception drugs, Respondent [the college] is discriminating based on gender because only females take oral prescription contraceptives. By denying coverage, men are not affected, only women." The school did not go down without a fight; they obtained an "ultraconservative" Catholic legal outfit known as the Becker Fund for Religious Liberty to help appeal the EEOC's decision (Faculty, 2010).

## **Mezzo-level**

The Catholic community has several non-profit organizations that work on their behalf. Perhaps one of the best known organizations is St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. It was founded in the early 1960s by Danny Thomas. Although this organization is not fully funded by Catholic funds, the hospital offers its services free of charge to children who have fallen ill with cancer or other equally debilitating conditions. The hospital's mission statement includes many values that the Catholic Church can identify with. (Our Mission, 2010).

One of the charitable groups that has impacted the community the most is the Knights of Columbus. The Knights of Columbus are an organization of devout Catholic men that work towards bettering the community with a Catholic influence. The group donates their time and money to many charities such as Habitat for Humanity and Special Olympics. Through their charity work, the Knights of Columbus portray the Catholic community as hard working and sympathetic to those who are less fortunate. (About Us, 2010).



## **Micro-level**

When working with this identity group it is important to acknowledge that American Catholics are firm in opposition of abortion. Although Belden et al. note their survey found that six in ten Catholics believe a woman has a legal right to abortion, it is still a subject that is sensitive. An equally vulnerable subject is the on-going sex scandals within the Church. Priests are often accused of misconduct with children and this is not a subject to be taken lightly.

Although this identity group is different from what many may associate with, there is no particular manner in which one should appear when in the presence of a Catholic. Because this group is very consistent with mainstream American society there really are not many social norms to be observed when interacting with Catholics.

## **Part II**

### **Theme-based Research- Family Values**

Catholicism can lead to many controversial issues for some people due to the Church's strict beliefs and traditions about family values. The Catholic Church has been one of the major voices in advocating for abstinence-only sex education for school children as well as other Catholic-oriented ideas such as religious sex education classes and natural family planning.

In 1984 Patricia Donovan wrote an article titled "The Adolescent Family Life Act and the Promotion of Religious Doctrine" that discusses the Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) and its impact on the Church as well as on society. Although the article is quite dated it does provide some idea of the Catholic Church's family values as well as some potential goals for society, it gives a good, basic illustration of what is important to an American Catholic society.

The AFLA was founded in 1981 as a means of demonstration and research grants (HHS, 2010), and was initially stemmed from concern about the rising teenage pregnancy rate and the consequences of childbearing at such a young age, physically and mentally. It was an amendment to Title XX of the Public Health Service Act. Title XX did not mention teens as recipients of contraceptive services but it did require that said services be available to all individuals regardless of age or sex. The AFLA was instated to help provide an alleged "moral" solution to teenage pregnancy by advocating adoption over abortion by denying pregnant teens any information about the former option. Donovan notes that:

"Parental notification and consent are required for virtually all AFLA services and grantees must tell the government how they will involve parents to 'maximize the role of the family' and how they will involve religious institutions in their programs. The law itself contains no provisions for ensuring that church groups do not use AFLA funds to teach religious doctrine." (Donovan, 1984).

Another aspect of the AFLA was religious sex education classes. Although the Constitution specifically prohibits the government funding of religious doctrine, St. Margaret's Hospital in Massachusetts had been receiving funds for over two years. Although they had developed two curricula, one for public schools and one for private or parochial schools, both versions pay an unfair amount of attention to natural family planning as a form of contraceptive. Donovan notes that the curriculum dedicates almost nine pages to natural family planning versus four pages to alternative methods.

In addition to promoting natural family planning, the AFLA is also a strong advocate for adoption and has transformed its initial purpose to a more contemporary, impartial program that aims to help pregnant teens and their families. Today the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs (OAPP) is responsible for administering demonstrations and ALF research (Adolescent Family Life), which is now what it is more commonly known as. The AFL supports two main demonstration projects:

“(1) prevention demonstration projects to develop, test, and use curricula that provide education and activities designed to encourage adolescents to postpone sexual activity until marriage, and (2) care demonstration projects to develop interventions with pregnant and parenting teens, their infants, male partners, and family members in an effort to ameliorate the effects of too-early-childbearing for teen parents, their babies and their families” (HHS, 2010).

This program has grown greatly since its initial formation. It is more focused on helping teen parents and their families through the process and providing them with the needed information about the child-bearing process and parenting. The AFL helps in several ways by contributing funds for grants that support research on causes and consequences of teens that partake in the premarital sexual lifestyle in addition to teen pregnancy and parenting. (HHS, 2010).

### **Implications for Society**

Based on how the Adolescent Family Life (AFL) program has grown and developed it seems that it is likely to satisfy the Catholic community as well as the part of society that is less in favor of a strict sex education format. The AFL satisfies the Catholic perspective because it has a strong sway towards preventing premarital sexual relationships, especially among teens. The program funds other organizations that share similar goals and will therefore spread the message of abstinence further than the Catholic Church might be able to. This particular in-group is not able to affect, or make their message available to as many people as they might want to because of its religious connotation. By recruiting a program such as AFL, the Catholic Church ultimately conveys the message of natural family planning, abstinence, and adoption over abortion. Those people who are not Catholic or not necessarily affiliated with any religious group will find the information provided by this program just as informative and supportive as any other program or organization that serves to inform the public about reproduction. For instance, Planned Parenthood is an organization that is known for helping women with their reproductive rights. It is a government funded organization that provides free information about whatever services a woman may require as well as serving as a clinic. Planned Parenthood's services do not include abortions, however they do offer referrals as well as free condoms and reduced or even no cost for prescription contraceptives. A conservative, religious person is not as likely to seek services provided from or by Planned Parenthood. However, it would seem more likely that they would seek information or services provided by an organization that is funded by AFL. AFL funded groups and Planned Parenthood do not offer the same services or information, but they do offer essentially the same concept. Both organizations offer information and education about all of the options available for those who are experiencing an unplanned

pregnancy, or those who are just curious about the various forms of birth control. Both groups provide accurate information, the difference is how the information is swayed and conveyed.

### **Part III**

#### **Self-Reflection**

Prior to writing this paper I did not know much about the Catholic Church. I grew up in a mixed-religion family where my mother, sister, and I identify with the Jewish religion and my father observes the Catholic faith. My mother has never forced a religion on any of us and we usually celebrate both Jewish and Christian major holidays and I went to Sunday school and Hebrew School on and off through elementary school but that is about the extent of my devotion. I find myself leaning more towards apathy or agnosticism. My father on the other hand, grew up in a Polish Catholic household and went to Catholic school from kindergarten through high school. Every now and then he drops hints that “there is something more out there” or another platitude people tell “non-believers”. I find this somewhat offensive for I see being Jewish not just as a religion, but as a race or ethnicity because it is something you are born into. Yes, one can convert to Judaism but it is no the same as inheriting it from your mother. I identify with the genetic sense of “being Jewish” rather than the religious aspect. However, I decided to research the Catholic Church probably because of my father.

With some knowledge about the world’s religions, I decided to examine the Catholic Church. After watching a CNN special in late September about the current Pope supposedly knowing about a case of sexual abuse and doing nothing to strip the guilty priest of his position I was motivated to find out more. I noticed that it seems that the Church puts more effort into defending themselves than doing anything to put an end to these horrible crimes. There have even been a few accusations of sex abuse among clergy members in the Triad area and instead of trying to resolve the issue of pedophiles in the Church and addressing the public’s concerns the Diocese sends the priests away, perhaps to another Diocese or another unspecific location.

I suppose my thoughts and views about the Catholic Church have stemmed from my father, my own spiritual and political beliefs, and the media bias against the Church. I am not opposed to the Church; I do not understand why the problem persists. There are dozens of websites that track the homes and neighborhoods of convicted sex offenders, but no similar concept for accused Catholic priests. Perhaps the church should conduct background checks or some form of psychological evaluation before they allow someone to dedicate their life to the priesthood.

One of the reasons why I do not practice religion is because of where I find myself politically. When it comes to social issues I find that I am a strong supporter in everything most religions, particularly Catholicism, strongly oppose. A woman’s right to choose is the most important issue in American politics and abstinence-only sex education is obviously a weak form of education, disguising the truth about birth control methods is not a realistic approach to dealing with unwanted pregnancy.

After doing my best to take an unbiased look at where Catholics stand in regard to some of America’s social issues, and my political leanings and I will admit, I was surprised. One source says that six in ten Catholic voters agree that the right for a woman to have an abortion should be legal and that more than half consider themselves to be pro-choice (Belden et al, 2004). In fact, the same source notes that Catholics are more likely to follow their own political views than to take into consideration what the Bishop or other church leaders say. Meaning that,

Catholics are more likely to follow mainstream American political views, perhaps not finding the traditional Catholic views practical in today's society.

### **Self-Discovery**

I found that so many Catholics support a woman's legal right to an abortion to be quite profound and decided to base some questions around it. I interviewed a 23 year old, Caucasian, Catholic female. I alerted her that some of my questions might be considered controversial, but she assured me that she would give me her honest answers, and I assured her that she would remain anonymous.

**Q. How do you feel when you hear according to a survey conducted by Belden, Russonello, and Stewart that six in ten Catholics feel that it should be legal for a woman to have an abortion?**

*A. Wow! I honestly had no idea! I do consider myself a Catholic but have never really let that affect my political affiliation. I feel like I have always been fair in keeping my religious and political life separate. I would consider myself to be one of those six in ten Catholics, though. I consider a woman's right to abortion one of the most fundamental rights in our country.*

**Q. To what extent do you take into consideration what the Church says you should or should not do? How much does the Church affect your morality, would you be just as moral if you affiliated with another religion or none at all?**

*A. I'll be realistic and admit that I don't make it to church every single Sunday but I do my best for a busy college student. I go often enough though. I follow the Ten Commandments but so do you, the Ten Commandments are basically society's most basic laws. As far as my morality is concerned, of course the Church affects it! I find it hard to separate my personal morality from what the Church has taught me. Agnostics are just as moral as anyone else no matter their religion. Just because someone does not believe in the same god or any god for that matter does not mean they are immoral, they just might not have faith. Morality and faith are two totally different things.*

**Q. Why do you think the Catholic Church has not been more pro-active about the infamous sex scandal? They seem to care more about abortion in regards to the new health care system than protecting children and prosecuting the many priests found guilty of molesting and/or taking advantage of children. Shouldn't stopping child molesters trump abortion?**

*A. I don't disagree with you on this matter at all. I can't imagine how many issues the Vatican, Diocese, and other heads of Church deal with on a daily basis but I would like to think, or at least hope that there is some form of prioritization. I actually went to a meeting that was kind of related to this question and a lot of people raised the same concerns. Many people said that they don't necessarily consider government funding of abortion more important than the sex scandal but that it is and should be considered it to be more of a pressing issue. There have been priests taking advantage of altar boys for decades and abortion has been an issue for just as long but I personally feel that molestation trumps abortion ten-fold! Abuse is a horrible cycle that takes years of therapy to correct. I'm sure that Church leaders are doing SOMETHING about the controversy and it's just not in the public's eyes. I think that if the public knew more about what the Church is doing to prevent pedophile priests they would regain some faith and*

*comfort in the Catholic Church that definitely would not hurt.*

After conducting the interview I learned a lot about my friend and about being Catholic in general. I attended mass with her one Sunday evening which I had not done in many years. It was enlightening to actually experience a Catholic mass and relate it back to the initial assignment. My friend told me that the mass we attended was the Teen Night where they have a full band and the songs they sing are a little more contemporary than the Sunday morning mass.

I learned a lot about myself as well. I paid attention to the homily, the part of the mass where the priest explains how the Bible reading can be applied to our individual lives, and reflected on how it applies to me as a racially Jewish and religiously apathetic female college student. The experience overall was very comforting. I now realize that many people might attend a Catholic service, or any denomination's religious ceremony as a means of meditation and reflection. I learned that going to church does not always mean being religious, but is more about being spiritual and in touch with yourself.

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## **African American Social Networks: How the church and family has been a source of support**

**Ben Ledbetter**

**SUMMARY:** Social networks are groups of people that a person uses for support and other resources. Two prominent social networks for African Americans are the church and family. The church has been a source of support for many years as it has been involved with civil rights activism and other social welfare needs. While many African Americans were enslaved and subject to discrimination for a long time, the U.S. government took steps to stop that in the 1960s. The 1965 Voting Rights Act helped increase voting by African Americans. While social networks can help people of many races, they are an important part of life for African Americans.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual**

Social networks are groups of people, such as friends and family that provide support for a person. A definition of the term by Kebede and Butterfield states that social networks are actors linked by relationships or other connections. Networks can have few or many actors as well as more than one relationship between different actors. A relationship is the interaction of members in a network and it can include the exchange of ideas and other resources. Communication between members of social networks include direct contact through speech, writing, and face-to-face contact. Members share information, advice, and common interests with a level of trust when they communicate. Social networks have various forms and functions and they can be for one individual or whole communities (2009). While individuals are typically thought of as actors in social networks, communities as a whole can also benefit from these connections. For example, in Ethiopia, rural communities depend on the extended family of a citizen for food, housing, and mutual support (Kebede and Butterfield, 2009).

In this paper, I will be examining how African Americans interact in churches and the importance of the network of extended family. According to Lee and Sharpe, African Americans have a long history of survival and coping with oppression, discrimination, and other socioeconomic challenges. The manner in which African Americans have usually dealt with those issues is found in their values of communalism, interdependence, and extended family. These values are derived from spiritual tradition, prayer, and other faith-based practices (Lee and Sharpe, 2007). The role of church members in the support network of African Americans is important because they have addressed several supportive needs through health and social welfare initiatives, community organizing, educational development, and civic endeavors (Taylor, Lincoln, & Chatters, 2005). Research indicates that because of exclusion from many

aspects of mainstream life, such as voting, the religious institution plays an important role in African American communities and is responsive to the support needs of individuals and families. The church's supportive functions are particularly important given low levels of education and income, high rates of poverty and hurdles to access health and other organized services.(Taylor, Lincoln, & Chatters, 2005). Historically, Black churches have served as a source of support in dealing with racism, poverty, and other deprivations (Lee and Sharpe, 2007). According to Lee and Sharpe, civil rights activism has been a role of the church: “This has been achieved through the provision of civil rights activism, community health resources, and psychological support through prayer and ministerial counsel. Connecting people to community health resources and providing counsel and spiritual support are an essential role of the black church” ( 2007).

African Americans indicate that church members play an important role in their social network, according to research by Taylor, Lincoln, and Chatters. Their study states that nine out of 10 respondents felt that their church networks were either very close or fairly close. One out of four respondents indicated that they saw, wrote to, or talked on the telephone with a church member almost daily. Six out of 10 respondents indicated that they often or sometimes received support from church members (Taylor, Lincoln, and Chatters, 2005).

While churches were active in the communities they served, members also reaped individual benefits. Lee and Sharpe found that private religious activities like prayer have a positive effect on physical health for African Americans. There is research that indicates a strong relationship between faith and a person's health. The Christian belief in a life after death has helped cancer patients feel calmer. Among African Americans with cancer, prayer was related to fewer depression symptoms. In a study of how both White and African American women dealt with breast cancer, both groups tended to seek support as a way of coping with their disease. Both groups differed in their sources of support. White women received emotional and informational support from their spouses and friends while African American women indicated receiving all of their support from God (Lee and Sharpe, 2007).

While a church or other house of worship provides a source for a network, extended family is another. Jarrett, Jefferson, and Kelly cited studies stating that African Americans have consistently identified the importance of extended family. According to the authors, families are anyone who is related through blood, marriage, and friendship ties. Typically, African American kin networks are centered around a core group of women from different generations and include grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, cousins, and other related offspring. Networks for women are usually made with the birth of children and these can be inside or outside marital unions. Also, these networks can include relatives from the maternal and paternal sides. While women are the center of these family networks, men are also principal members. Fathers, brothers, grandfathers, uncles, children's fathers, and significant others are identified as regular members of women's networks. Some networks also include unrelated friends who are treated like family members (2010).

The networks also have survival strategies that they use to manage the challenge of individual and neighborhood poverty. Examples of coping strategies are the exchange of financial resources, the provision of food items or food stamps, the purchase or passing down of clothing, and shared housing. Jarrett, Jefferson, and Kelly also use providing rides, running errands, telephone usage, short and long term childcare, and flexible parental roles as examples of coping strategies. Researchers have also found emotional coping strategies that are most

prevalent among female relatives. These strategies are listening to each other's problems, giving advice, expressing care and concern, and offering words of encouragement. These strategies are generally viewed as positive since they ensure family members will not go hungry or become homeless and young, ill, or elderly family members are not neglected (2010).

However, there are some negative aspects of African American family networks. Network members are sometimes faced with inadequate resources to share, loss of independence, relationships with a lot of conflict, lifestyle differences, unreciprocated exchanges, group needs that overshadow personal needs, unmet assistance expectations, conditions attached to assistance, family barriers to social mobility, and feelings of shame among members that don't contribute. Although family networks vary in their abilities to address these challenges, depending on others could subtract from the positive aspects of participating in extended family networks ( Jarrett, Jefferson, and Kelly, 2010). Within the network resource pool, tangible resources were the most frequently discussed assets used by women. Tangible items include money, clothing, and food. Financial resources are usually channeled back and forth during crises or as part of everyday exchanges between family members. Money can be a gift and at other times it is a loan. According to Jarrett, Jefferson, and Kelly, resource pooling also includes non-tangible services like transportation and assistance with household tasks. Transportation assistance from family members made errands like going to the grocery store, laundromat, or doctor's office easier ( Jarrett, Jefferson, and Kelly, 2010).

In times of bereavement, many people have support networks on which to rely and supporters are often an inner circle chosen by the griever. People that are in that select group have their positions as a result of the loss. Burke, Neimeyer, McDevitt-Murphy (2010, 5) further describe the differences between family and friends in support networks:

Whether the inner circle is mostly comprised of family members, non-family members, or a combination of both, there appears to be a clear delineation between what characterizes family and non-family support. Taylor, Hardison, and Chatters (1996), found in their sample of 1322 Black individuals facing serious physical and emotional life stressors that non-family members were particularly beneficial in providing emotional and interpersonal support. Conversely, even though family members may feel more obliged than non-family to offer long-term help to their own who are in crisis by offering physical (e.g. caregiving) or material (e.g. financial) support, family interactions are also likely to cause greater stress, perhaps because family members themselves are affected by the same stressors and losses. Burke, Neimeyer, McDevitt-Murphy (2010) also mention that while friendship support can be seen as positive and helpful, family support can both be seen as both positive and negative. However, pointing African American homicide survivors toward faith-based counseling and grief support groups can also aid them in the grieving process.

According to Greene, social identity theory tries to explain how self-perceived membership in a social group affects social perceptions and attitudes. The premise of the theory is that individuals try to maximize difference to the in-group, or the group to which an individual belongs, and an out-group. Also, the individual perceives greater differences between one's in-group and the relevant out-group than actually exists. The individual also shows favoritism to members in the in-group (2004). Both social networks and social identity theory deal with groups. However, social networks are a collection of family and friends that provide tangible or intangible resources to an individual. Social networks contain no opposition groups since the sole purpose is to give aid to an individual. While an individual can favor some people in a social network over others, this does not cause a split between in-groups and out-groups.



Organizational identity is, essentially, the identity of a group and it describes who the group is as a whole. Dougherty and Huyser state: "It is the socially constructed sense of 'we' that bonds members to the organization and to each other. The stronger the sense of 'we' becomes in a group, the less salient personal differences seem. Group values, norms, and practices unite individuals and reinforce a shared social identity." Furthermore, a strong organizational identity can ease the internal differences between groups (Dougherty and Huyser, 2008). Social networks have an identity and that identity is that of a support system for an individual. There is really nothing in the definition of social networks that states that it helps ease or increase differences between different groups. Organizational identity would work well with athletic teams, businesses, and other organizations that need to have all people involved functioning as one. In a social network, people might work for the betterment of a person or neighborhood, but any differences among network members are not that important. This is because social network members tend to function mostly independently.

## **Macro-Level**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's website, there are 36,419,434 African Americans living in the country. This includes those that are purely African American and also people that share another ethnic identity. One deficit facing African Americans is benefiting from economic prosperity, especially that coming from other neighborhoods. African Americans are less likely to live in affluent neighborhoods and reap the economic benefits coming from those areas. Johnson found that African Americans living in a middle class area are less likely to benefit than their white neighbors. However, Johnson states that these findings could be speculative because of likely quality variations in the studies (2010). Property value is another factor that could be a negative for African Americans. This focus on community property values is not a short-lived trend, however. Government agencies have recommended best practices, including past discrimination for preserving property values. It is still a common practice for homeowner associations to protect and boost property values through quasilegal means of supervision. Developers also use marketing to boost and increase property values. Woldoff and Ovadia go on to describe that African Americans are to have greater financial and social capital resources to achieve residential parity with whites. This is after disregarding economic and educational factors (2010).

According to a 2010 study by Holmes and Goodman, African Americans are not satisfied with police services: "African Americans rate police services the lowest among municipal services. Not only are African American less satisfied with the police, they also have lower levels of trust." African Americans are also not consistently represented in management positions. While policies are relatively uniform in parent companies, managerial representation may be influenced by regional and environmental factors such as state politics and labor support (Skaggs, 2010). African Americans are prone to higher rates of mortality than whites because of economic and other inequalities (Kwate, 2010).

While there are several deficits hurting African Americans, there are also assets. African Americans have a long history of survival, endurance, and coping in the face of oppression. Historically, the Black church has served as a source of support in dealing with racism, poverty, and other problems African Americans have faced. This has been achieved through civil rights activism, community health resources, and support through prayer and ministerial counsel (Lee and Sharp, 2007). While church-based networks are strong for many African Americans, family

connections also can play a big role. Family members provide the majority of assistance in situations that are extremely difficult (Taylor, Lincoln, and Chatters, 2005). More African Americans are moving into management positions. Several legal and political coercive pressures have come into play over the past twenty years in the grocery industry and this has led to slowly changing the amount of African Americans in top roles (Skaggs, 2010). African Americans have also increased their participation in politics since the 1960s. The percent of African Americans who have registered to vote and voted in local, state, and national elections increased steadily and significantly (Kaba and Ward, 2009.).

Various state policies on unemployment have hurt African Americans who seek to collect the insurance benefit. In 2000, only 16.8 percent of African Americans and Latin Americans received unemployment insurance compared to 23.5 percent of their white counterparts. States should be required to re-evaluate their unemployment insurance requirement in order to let more African Americans qualify for benefits. According to Lee, “The unemployment insurance system should be designed to allow for an extension of benefits, for individuals who are actively seeking employment, but may have trouble finding work due to labor market discrimination and other barriers”(2004). One piece of legislation that has helped African Americans is the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was proposed by then President Lyndon B. Johnson.

According to a document found on the U.S. Department of Justice website, Congress was looking for a stronger mechanism to ensure African Americans could vote:

Congress determined that the existing federal anti-discrimination laws were not sufficient to overcome the resistance by state officials to enforcement of the 15th Amendment. The legislative hearings showed that the Department of Justice's efforts to eliminate discriminatory election practices by litigation on a case-by-case basis had been unsuccessful in opening up the registration process; as soon as one discriminatory practice or procedure was proven to be unconstitutional and enjoined, a new one would be substituted in its place and litigation would have to commence anew.

Soon after the 1965 law passed, federal examiners were conducting voter registration and they noticed black voter registration had started to increase.

### **Mezzo-level**

Weiz, did a study of battered women in Detroit and found most of them rated domestic violence as being helpful. This helpfulness was tied to a satisfaction with police and receiving referrals from the legal system. When victims received information, felt emotionally supported, and felt advocates were readily available, they were likely to rate their advocate as being helpful. Less than half of the women in the study who experienced domestic violence reported that advocates helped them with safety planning, and there was a low-rate of follow-up referrals provided by the advocate. Nothing was remedied in this example, however, the author stated that the results of the study can contribute to more effective advocacy: “The study can add to knowledge about how to form empowering working alliances with African American battered women, and it suggests ways to improve advocacy by increasing training on how to do effective outreach and referrals” (98, 2005).

The Black church has traditionally offered programs such as parenting classes and marriage counseling to make the connection between family and religious life stronger. Under the right circumstances, clergy and the people that work with the families can form effective partnerships can form effective partnerships that can enhance access to health and social welfare

services and programs for church members. However, church networks can be like family networks with interpersonal problems like bickering, arguments, and gossiping (Taylor, Lincoln, and Chatters, 2005). Connecting people to community health resources, providing counsel, and providing spiritual support are an essential role of the Black church (Lee and Sharpe, 2007).

Sometimes groups of African Americans work together to provide each other with assistance. For low income African American mothers, social support is seen as a mechanism that gives them the capacity to adapt to social and economic pressures as they struggle to meet the various needs of their family members. Through family members and other friendships, African American single mothers are provided social support. Examples of support include housing assistance, source of childcare, a large portion of household income, and assistance with household tasks (Woody and Woody, 2007). By receiving aid from family and friends, this helps keep the single mothers from having to seek all or a portion of their needs from the government. Unfortunately the problem of domestic violence, the effectiveness of victims' advocates, and the availability of social services are still problems. However, by using certain organizations like churches or existing social connections, African Americans can continue to find other ways to potentially fill needs.

### **Micro-level**

A culturally competent HIV/AIDS prevention must embrace social, economic, cultural, religious, and spiritual contexts that impact the lives of African Americans. A category of a culturally competent practice are foundational values. This awareness promotes acceptance and understanding of others' lifestyle and communication needs. A foundational value is that African Americans have a strong sense of family and that also extends to the larger community through a collective identity. For the prevention programs to work well, the professional will need to show humility, respect, and a willingness to learn from others. The program developers should consider the language patterns of African Americans like interrupting someone not being considered a sign of rudeness. This is considered a way for someone to gain the floor when someone is passionate about a topic. Prevention professionals must also be familiar with community systems, facilitators, policies, and barriers that might affect program implementation. That means the professionals will have to reach beyond school settings and work with parents, civic, and religious leaders to craft a program that is sensitive to the needs of community members (Ardley and Sielo, 2009).

### **Theme-based Research**

While older African Americans tend to have involvement in the church, children can potentially be involved with gangs. There are many ways to know about gangs, either directly or indirectly. Television, movies, local stories, and even intervention programs may contribute to a child's knowledge of gang activity, according to Cadawallader and Cairns (2002). Direct exposure to gangs is not required although a detailed familiarity with gangs can suggest an attraction to this dangerous aspect of some American neighborhoods. Gang activity is a salient aspect of many inner city neighborhoods and familiarity with these groups can help other community inhabitants survive. Safety in neighborhoods where gangs are active depends on knowing the identity of gangs and gang members, the gang colors, which locations are safe, and which ones to avoid.

In their 2007 study, Lee and Sharpe found that African American elderly have higher levels of daily spiritual experiences, forgiveness, and private religious practice. Their study states that, compared with Whites elderly, African American elderly that regularly attend church have larger social networks, more frequent contact, and greater perceived support. Research suggests that the African American elderly population's strong reliance on spiritual coping can be attributed to the fact that they have less access to secular resources and power in our society.

### **Implications for Society**

What does this all mean? Indeed, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau's website states that are about 36 million people that are purely African American and also share another ethnic identity. There are certainly obstacles this population faces such as a dissatisfaction with police services and some remaining discriminatory housing practices. However, African Americans have had a long history of survival and coping in the face of oppression. Bolstered by the 1965 Voting Rights Act, African Americans have steadily increased their participation in politics by voting (Holmes and Goodman, 2010; Woldoff and Ovadia, 2010; Lee and Sharpe, 2007). With its long-time strengths coupled with its increased participation in the political system, African Americans can continue to be an important part the United States population.

### **Self-Reflection**

African Americans, like Whites, are prevalent in many communities across the country. I have known and continue to meet many. When I was growing up, the racial makeup of the communities I lived in were mainly black and white. This has provided me many opportunities to know African Americans and outside of the history of overcoming a lot of discrimination in this country, the only real difference I have seen with African Americans is the color of their skin. Like me, they are human beings with thoughts, feelings, and a heartbeat.

I don't think I learned anything that was really to new to me. I did, however, expand on knowledge I already had. For example, I knew African Americans had strong ties to churches, however, I did not know the elderly had such strong reliance on it for many needs. While I was aware of the sometimes odd laws that neighborhood homeowners associations had, I was not aware that these were sometimes used to keep someone out of a neighborhood based on race. My initial assumption was that the associations tried to exclude people mainly based on socioeconomic status.

### **Self-Discovery**

I would ask an African American about what his or her strongest social networks were. Also, does any network provide more support than the other? What is an instance where a social network played a crucial role in your life? How important are online social networks to you? Are you utilizing social networks more online or offline? I sent an email with the first three questions to Herman, who was my manager when I worked in the customer service department for a large telecommunications company for one year. He is a male 28-year-old African American man. While I did not receive a response from Herman, I do remember the informal networks that were in the workplace. There were certainly managers with the same authority that came over to talk with Herman. Those connections can serve as an exchange of best practices within the business

and serve as a valuable source for job leads as the managers sought to move throughout the company. Herman played on the company basketball team that was coached by someone that was above him on the organizational chart. While all of the upper-level managers seemed responsive to issues from Herman and others in his position, participating in an after work activity like basketball can only serve to keep communication open and possibly foster rapport.

None of these observations really surprise me, nor do I find them particular to African Americans. Informal connections between people in similar positions can help anyone succeed in their job. However, given the strength of many family and church connections among African Americans, I believe it is an important aspect of life for this population.

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## **You Don't Know Anything, and You Never Will**

**Brandi Young**

The military is a complex out-group that most people do not take the time to understand. Soldiers and veterans create a group that is completely different from the larger in-group of civilians. As a smaller and militant group soldiers and veterans often see themselves connected to group that the major population does not understand. The following article gives an in depth view into the out-group of the military. First, a psychological approach is given in terms of identity theory, social identity theory, and organizational theory. These three theories provide information on what makes services members different from the larger population and how soldiers view themselves as individuals and a group. Next, statistics are provided as a comparison between the civilian population and service members. This is followed by government policies that affect service members. These policies include: Don't Ask, Don't Tell, health insurance, and educational funding assistance. Throughout the article are examples of assets and deficits associated with soldiers, veterans, and the military. Lastly, a personal reflection of the military is given by the author. This reflection includes: the author's underlying purpose for writing this article, views on scholarly works, personal ambitions, personal interviews and encounters the author has had with service members and veterans, and why it may never be possible for civilians to ever know anything about veterans of war.

Identity theory focuses on how society affects how we see ourselves, our identity, and how that identity affects our behavior. "From the perspective of identity theory, we are motivated to maintain thoughts and behaviors that support our sense of who we are, in part, because it is stressful to live in a world where [our] thoughts and behaviors are inconsistent with our sense of self."<sup>1</sup> A person may have many identities that they associate with. For example, a man could be a husband, father, and soldier. The more attached a person is to an identity role, the more of an effect that role has on the person's behavior. The military offers a person a clear sense of identity. This identity is formed and developed during basic training or boot camp. The soldier identity is then reinforced throughout a person's commitment to the military. Most of the time a person retains the identity of a soldier even after they have fulfilled their duty to the military. This retained identity is commonly expressed as a veteran, but this label has a similar connection the military as the label of soldier.

There are many ways that soldiers can relate to their military identity. "The military is often considered to have a culture in and of itself, serving to protect a society while maintaining a separate set of norms and values than its host culture...Service members are expected to play the role of soldier every hour of the day, every day of the week."<sup>2</sup> Soldiers are expected to see themselves as soldiers first and anything else, such as, father or husband, second. The military stresses different beliefs, norms, and values than the civilian populations. These beliefs, norms, and values are instilled at boot camp and continue throughout a person's military service and life. Soldiers are expected to see themselves as different than the civilian population.

Social identity theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner. "According to the theory, the individual is assumed to have several identities, each identity informing the individual of who he or she is and what this identity entails. Which identity the individual assumes is dependent on circumstances surrounding an individual."<sup>3</sup> This theory is closely related to the identity theory,

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<sup>1</sup> Rohall, David p. 4

<sup>2</sup> Rohall, David p.5

<sup>3</sup> Griffith, p. 41

as is its implication. As already mentioned, a man can have an identity of husband, father, and soldier. But, as a soldier the military identity is to have precedent over all other identities. This soldier first way of thinking could be problematic with regards to social identity's multiple identities. Obviously a soldier that is also a husband and father will remain all three identities, but the military's belief that the soldier must always be the first identity could interfere with other aspects of a soldier's life. For instance, a man can be a husband and a father at the same time without conflict from the spouse or child. But, when a man has to act on his identity as a soldier, when he is at work or gets deployed, he can only be a soldier. Often times he cannot continue the husband and father identity as easily.

“Organizational identity formation is likely to be a complex process subject to multiple influences and infused with ambiguity and one in which organizational identity is not defined solely by founders and leaders but negotiated by both insiders and outsiders.”<sup>4</sup> Unlike the identity theory and social identity theory, organizational identity does not deal with the individual soldier, but with the military as a whole. Organizational identity is based on the idea that the military's identity is based on the opinion of the in group, soldiers, and out groups, civilians. Identity theory and organizational theory are similar in the fact that out groups do play a role in the identity. Social identity theory, on the other hand, deals with identities a person creates or identifies with from only their own perspective. Social identity theory and organization theory are nearly opposites.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2008 that out of a total population of 226,353,941 the number of veterans from World War II through the Gulf War included 22,915,943.<sup>5</sup> This figure does not include veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. “Pentagon data show that more than 1.6 million military personnel have deployed to the conflicts since the war in Afghanistan began in late 2001.”<sup>6</sup> Some negative aspects of the veteran status found in the 2008 U.S. Census are statistics based on age, sex, and race. The largest portion of the population is made up of people between the ages of 35 and 54 years 38.3%, followed by 18 to 34 years at 30.5%. The largest percent of veterans is also in the 35 to 54 years with 26.8%, but the next to largest population group 18 to 34 years only have a veteran percent of 8.1% which is the lowest percent of any of the listed age groups.<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to remember that this data does not include veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. The statistics of men to female veterans differs greatly. Men veterans make up 93.2% of all veterans, whereas women veterans only account for 6.8%. Civilian women outnumber civilian men by 13.2%, with women making up 56.6% of the population and men accounting for the other 43.4%.<sup>8</sup> This imbalance in gender of veterans shows the clear use of gender roles in American history. There is also a racial imbalance of veterans. 84.8% of veterans are white. African American men make 10.3% of all veterans while all other racial groups make up the remaining 4.9%<sup>9</sup>

Other deficits for veterans include combat, physical and psychological injuries. “Just under one in three—31 percent—of those who've been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from a brain injury or stress disorder or a mix of both these conditions.”<sup>10</sup> Combat experience is

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<sup>4</sup> Gioia, p. 4

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>6</sup> Cockburn, p. 9

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census

<sup>10</sup> Cockburn, p. 9



a necessary evil for veterans. It is why they are recruited, employed, and trained. But, that cannot make the consequences of war any less devastating. Physical injury, especially amputation, is one of the toughest things veterans have to adapt to. Most of the time physical injuries are simple wounds that can heal easily and do not interfere with the soldiers' life for long periods of time. However, this is a rather new phenomenon and not always the case. Psychological injuries, most importantly Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), are impossible for veterans to overcome. Like cancer, no one has found the magical cure for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Various experiments for treatment have included drugs, such as morphine and ecstasy, and therapy programs, including group and individual counseling. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is best defined by Chuck Mosley, a Vietnam War veteran wounded three times. "I could not explain my sudden outbursts of anger for no reason, or my uncontrollable depression, or my inability to trust anyone but other Vietnam veterans."<sup>11</sup>

The U.S. Census Bureau also indicates several advantages for veterans over civilians in areas such as: income, employment, and education. The median income of the civilian population 18 years and over with income during 2008 was 25,654. For veterans it was 36,936 with male veterans 5,000 above their civilian counterparts and woman veterans nearly 9,000 higher than their civilian counterparts. The employment rate of veterans was almost 1% higher than that of civilians. Veterans were 1.2% less likely to be unemployed than civilians. The percent of veterans with some college or associate's degree rated 7.5% higher than civilians. Veterans with some college education equaled 34.1%, but civilians with some college education equaled 26.6%.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps this statistic reflects another benefit of the military which is paid education. "The Chapter 30 program is limited to payment for tuition and fees while the Chapter 1606 program provides a monthly stipend."<sup>13</sup>

A wide range of benefits are offered to veterans and soldiers during and after their service in the military. Some of these benefits including: life insurance, home loans, and health care. Life insurance can be purchased for service members or spouses and children are automatically covered for \$10,000 at no cost. Service members are eligible for VA home loans after ninety days of active duty. Service members have access of VA health care facilities and partial insurance coverage under TRICARE medical insurance.<sup>14</sup> Another benefit is educational cost assistance which is discussed later in the article. Also, having a military experience tends to be beneficial for job searches and employment opportunities.

One government policy that might hinder the military is the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. This policy makes it punishable for service members to be openly homosexual. Supporters of Don't Ask, Don't Tell claim that heterosexual soldiers would not want to room with openly homosexual soldiers and providing accommodations would become too costly.<sup>15</sup> However, there are four ways in which the policy could harm the military's reputation. First, the policy is inconsistent with public opinion. Various national polls have, "found that between 58 and 79 percent of the public believe that gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the military."<sup>16</sup> Next, there has not been any positive new media coverage of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. All media outlets are framing the policy in a negative way, which can lead to a negative

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<sup>11</sup> Mosley

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census

<sup>13</sup> Veteran's Affairs

<sup>14</sup> Veteran's Affairs

<sup>15</sup> Belkin, p. 277

<sup>16</sup> Belkin, p. 278

public image of the military. Also, antimilitary activists could possibly use Don't Ask, Don't Tell to gain support for their radical views or antiwar activism. Most importantly, service members oppose the policy. "A December 2006 Zogby International survey of 545 service members who served in Iraq and Afghanistan found that 73 percent are personally comfortable interacting with gays and lesbians."<sup>17</sup>

However, another policy of United States government that helps service members is the Department of Veterans Affairs Health care Benefits. Basic eligibility includes any active service member or any reservists or National Guard member that was called to active duty, as long as the service member did not receive a dishonorable discharge. Enrollment into the program is fairly easy and the benefits include: inpatient care, extended care, outpatient care, medication, reimbursement for travel costs, counseling, prosthetic and sensory aids, home improvements, services for the blind or impaired, mental health care, suicide prevention, outpatient dental care, nursing home assistance, and emergency medical care outside of the United States.<sup>18</sup> To enroll a veteran simply fills out a form and turns it in. The veteran is assigned to a priority group one through six. This allows the VA to balance the veterans' needs with funding they have been allotted. Some veterans are required to pay a co-pay for services, but the co-pay is equivalent to what most private insurance companies require members to pay, if not less. "Certain veterans can participate in a VA health registry and receive free medical examinations, including laboratory and other diagnostic tests deemed necessary by an examining clinician."<sup>19</sup> These veterans are men and women that served in the Gulf War or have specific ailments caused by factors, such as, Agent Orange or ionizing radiation.

The USO is a non-profit and private organization dedicated to helping soldiers and their families. The USO is not part of the government, but the President of the United States is the Honorary Chairman and the organization is recognized by several branches of government. "The USO offers a variety of programs and services to support the morale, welfare, social and entertainment needs of troops and their families free of charge."<sup>20</sup> The USO provides services for soldiers, such as: USO Wounded Warriors, Operation USO Care Package, Mobile USO, Pro vs. Joe, USO in a box, USO2GO, and MEGS. These are various types of entertainment and events for the soldiers to enjoy while deployed. Other services are family based, such as: USO Operation Phone Home, United Through Reading, Operation Mail Call, and Operation Speak Easy. Additionally, the USO provides services specifically for soldiers' family members. These include the Trevor Romain and Sesame Street Workshop.<sup>21</sup>

The USO and its services is an important organization to soldiers and their families because it is dedicated to boosting the morale of soldiers that have been deployed and their families. Deployment is hard, not only on the soldiers that has to leave, but the families that are left behind.

Spouses of deployed soldiers experience loneliness, depression, anxiety, anger, and physical illnesses as result of the separation. Service members often exhibit guilt for leaving their families, and they may have some of the same reactions as their spouses: loneliness, anxiety, and depression.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Belkin, p 285

<sup>18</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs

<sup>19</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs

<sup>20</sup> USO

<sup>21</sup> USO

<sup>22</sup> Rohall, David E. p. 50

Naturally deployments during war will increase these feelings of anxiety and depression. Non-profit organizations such as the USO are designed to help the soldiers and their families cope with the separation and remain connected to one another throughout the deployment. “The availability of social and organizational supports has also been found to help families deal with problems related to separation.”<sup>23</sup>

During World War Two the government created the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944. In 1984 congress replaced the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act and passed the Montgomery GI Bill, which was made permanent in 1987. The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 was signed into law on June 30, 2008 and became effective August 1, 2009. The Act is considered an updated version of educational benefits for service members and veterans, but has not fully replaced the GI Bill. The terms of the GI Bill include service members deciding to participate in the program and paying \$1,200 to the Department of Veterans Affairs shortly after their initiation. The Act does not require payment to participate, but has other regulations.<sup>24</sup> For instance, “an individual must enroll in an ‘approved program of education’ offered by an accredited college or university.”<sup>25</sup> This means certain schools and programs are not approved for educational funds under the Act. There are no restrictions as to what program a service member wishes to take or which school they prefer to go to under the GI Bill. Service members may still use the GI Bill, but only if they originally signed up for the GI Bill program. “This requires that individuals decide what type of program they wish to pursue prior to making an election for which program to credit their active-duty service.”<sup>26</sup>

Finding scholarly works has been a frustrating challenge for this article. Perhaps the biggest obstacle has been to stop looking for what I know and letting the articles teach me. Before my Introduction to Political Psychology class I was using concepts related to the course. I would talk about the military in terms of spheres. There are two spheres, one is the civilian world and the other is the military sphere. A civilian can cross into the military sphere, by joining the military. But, even when their military service is complete and return to the civilian sphere they keep their military identity. As a member of the civilian sphere it has been my personal goal to educate other members of my sphere about the military sphere. Naturally most people would question why I would not join the military in order to achieve this goal. My reasoning was this sense of spheres.

In Political Psychology terms I am a member of the in-group, the civilian sphere. The military is an out-group, a sphere or group that is unlike my own. My goal is to educate my in-group about an out-group. To join the military would undoubtedly give me unlimited insight into that group, but it would also make me part of the group. Since it is my belief that service members never lose their military identity if I joined I would forever be a part of the group. Likewise, that would mean I would no longer be a part of the civilian group. I would be part of the civilian group’s out-group. I cannot say that it would be impossible to educate another group about my group. However, I feel that it is far more beneficial to educate my own group about another group. Regardless of the analogy I know it is hard to understand how a person could not want to be a part of a group, but want to know everything about that group. In my life it makes perfect sense.

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<sup>23</sup> Rohall, David E. p. 49

<sup>24</sup> Shankar

<sup>25</sup> Shankar, p. 2

<sup>26</sup> Shankar, p. 3

It was ten Thanksgivings ago when my uncle asked my granddad, “Dad, when was D-day? I think it was June 5<sup>th</sup>, isn’t that right?” Without thinking words tumbled out of my mouth, “No. It was June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944. It was supposed to be on the 5<sup>th</sup>, but at the last minute Eisenhower called it off because it was too cloudy and full moonlight was needed for the paratroops to land at night.” It was not the awkward stares that my predominately male family gave me that caught my attention. It was the look of disgust on Granddad’s face when he snapped, “How do you know that?” I calmly shrugged my shoulders and announced that I knew a lot about World War Two. His response changed my life. “You don’t know anything about the War and you never will! I thank God you never will.”

Ten years ago I was a teenager and naturally knew everything, except what he meant by that. My granddad served in Europe in World War Two for the 103<sup>rd</sup> Cactus Division of the United States Army. He may have served in the war, but I refused to believe that meant I knew nothing. Since then I have read every World War Two book, written by someone involved in the war that I could get my hands on. My original goal was to prove Granddad wrong. But, he was completely right. Unless you have been to war and experienced war first hand, you don’t know anything and you never will. The military is an out-group to all civilians. A war veteran is an out-group to everyone that has never been in combat. Both of which I have developed a great respect for.

I have done extensive research on the military and war veterans for personal knowledge. Among my common questions include: what branch of the military, rank, and reasons for joining. I have found that most soldiers before 9/11 joined for the educational assistance. Those that joined after 9/11 tend to say they did it for their country. I have recently developed an obsession with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, mostly because I cannot find a workable definition of what symptoms constitutes PTSD. All of the definitions include bad dreams, but only one veteran I know will not admit to having nightmares. It is not possible to talk to most service members about PTSD, unfortunately it is taboo. I still ask if they have bad dreams, and if they do what is the nightmare about. Are they random dreams about different events or is it the same event that reoccurs. I have found it is the latter that torments the veteran longer. The last question I ask is always open ended. What will you tell me? I have noticed that if the soldier knew me before he went into combat he will not tell me anything troublesome, worrisome or from my view point interesting. However, the soldiers I have met after their deployment have opened up about watching a friend burn alive in a truck with a faulty lock (Jordan Boggs, US Marine, personal communication, August 23, 2009) or accidentally killing a 4 year old because he could not let go of the machine gun trigger fast enough (Jeremiah Doub, US Marine, personal communication, July 6, 2010).

Recently I interviewed Ryan Peacock, a former corporal of the United States Marine Corp. Ryan has previously been interrogated by me, but as a good friend he accepted the challenge again. He is 25 year old white male with a southern Baptist upbringing. He joined the military in July 2005. He said he joined because, “I believed in a higher calling to serve my country” (Ryan Peacock, US Marine, personal communication, October 14, 2010). This response is consistent with answers I have previously received. Soldiers that joined the military after the events of 9/11 typically say they joined because of their desire to serve their country. Although, Ryan’s response is interesting because the belief in a ‘higher calling’. This adds a slightly religious undertone to his desire to serve. Ryan has been deployed twice to Iraq. From February to August 2007 he served in Al Paqaddul Iraq. On his second tour he served in Al Paqaddul and Al Asad Iraq from February to September 2009. His MOS, military occupational

specialty, for both deployments was field radio operator. He was assigned to a route clearing team with 31 other members. Although Ryan's team was hit by two IEDs, improvised explosive devices, during his last deployment Ryan reports he has never had bad dreams or nightmares of any kind (Ryan Peacock, US Marine, personal communication, October 14, 2010). This answer is exactly what I would expect him to say, but it is not consistent with what other veterans have told me. Perhaps Ryan is the one rare exception to war causing bad dreams. It is more likely that his last deployment has been more than a year ago and he no longer suffers from any negative side effects the exposure to war caused him. Since it no longer affects him it is easy to say it never bothered him.

In conclusion, the military, soldiers, and veterans are a complicated group to understand. Those that have never served in the military are hard pressed to understand the inner workings of this group. Regardless of military experience, veterans of war are an out-group to anyone that has never experienced combat first hand. The military has a lot to offer members of its group. There are benefits to belonging to the military. Such benefits include health insurance and educational funding. But, the military also offers its members a sense of belonging, the bond of brotherhood, and a lifelong identity that should be and is cherished by most of its members. Like with any group, the military has its downfalls and shortcomings. The Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy is still of concern and highly debated. There will always be people that oppose the military and disregard all that this group does and jeopardizes for our country. However, there will always be organizations such as the USO that understand the hardships soldiers and their families endure and they will always be available to help. The military is a complex interweaving of identity with a sense of belonging for its members. Soldiers are offered a new way of identifying themselves. The military offers a social identity and organizational identity for the soldiers that serve our country. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the military is that it is group of multiple in-groups and out-groups. Groups can be based on branch, rank, non-commissioned verses enlisted, active verses reserve, and combat experience verses peace time soldiers. Regardless of the grouping the men and women of the United States Military do not just deserve respect from other out-groups. Other out-groups should seek to learn more about the military and how this groups functions for the greater good of all Americans. My granddad was probably right. We are not members of this group and therefore we know nothing and we never will. But, in simply attempting to understand a complex out-group, there is no telling what we might learn.

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## **Brittany Rodman**

### **Part 2**

The United States is one of the most diverse countries in the world. With a population just over 300, 000, 000 there is a wide variety of people that live amongst each other despite differences in race, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, and orientation. And the typical American fairytale is that these unique differences will be accepted in such a free, liberal society. But what many Americans discover is that the very differences that make them unique also come with unique concerns and interests for their community. The Hispanic community in the United States is a valued entity that is comprised of many cultures, ethnicities, and identities. Hispanic Americans according to the White House's official website, make up 16% of the US population. That makes Hispanics "the largest ethnic minority in the United States". And as this group strives to make progress in their community they must continue to seek what is most essential; education. Education is the key to prosperity. A proud spokesman for continuing education within the Hispanic community is recently appointed Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

But despite all the achievements young Hispanics are making in the education field there is still striking evidence that suggest that a major education gap exist between Hispanics and other social groups in American society.

Higher learning is seemingly the ultimate goal of seeking an education. From elementary school to high school young students are taught to continually desire to acquire more knowledge. For that, most students are placed on a college-bound track of learning. But many sociologist and other researchers have discovered an achievement gap for post secondary education between Hispanic Americans and their white counterpart. “In a nation where individuals can be more or less confident that their economic prosperity, familial stability, and physical vitality will increase with educational attainment, Hispanic students have the lowest educational aspirations and expectations of all major racial and ethnic groups” (Desmond, Turley, 2009). One study done by a group of college professors led to the article *The Puzzle of Lagging Hispanic College Degree Attainment*. This article focuses on “the intergenerational educational mobility of recent cohorts of high school Graduates to consider whether Hispanics' lagging post-secondary attainment reflects a temporary lull due to immigration of low education parents or a more enduring patterns of unequal transmission of social status relative to whites” (Alon, 2010). The author compares Hispanic achievement rates to those of their white counterpart for the purposes of his study. He begins the article with giving statistics over the past 30 years concerning ethnic group's attainment of bachelor degrees. In 1970 there was a six percent gap between Hispanics and whites, but in the past 30 years that gap has more than tripled (Alon, 2010). To explain this issue the author examined how second generation Hispanics that come from lower educated parents lag in degree attainment. “Specifically, sustained immigration of low-skilled workers from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America has put downward pressure on the educational

attainment levels of second-generation Hispanic youth, whose low college attendance is traced to low education parents (Alon, 2010). This explains one of the complexities of certain groups within the Hispanic community; for many Hispanic Americans are not first and second generations. “The share of native-born Hispanic adults who have a bachelor's degree or higher rose from 10 to 15 percent between 1980 and 2000, while the share of foreign-born Hispanic college graduates declined modestly” (Statistical Abstract of the United States 2006). Once there is an understanding of the socio-economic background of many young Hispanics the disparities in education can be better explained. Typically educated parents encourage their children to seek higher learning and can help provide with the tools necessary to meet that goal; a cycle of education usually continues in the family for this reason. What is unfortunate is that many uneducated parents desire for their children to gain an education, but are not as able to provide the same tools for success.

Beyond higher education there are particular concerns in the primary education of Hispanics. “With many socioeconomic disadvantages and language barriers, Hispanic youth face obstacles in the American educational system that threaten to diminish their long-term prospects and block the future social mobility of the Hispanic population as a whole” (Crosnoe, 2005). Robert Crosnoe wrote the article *The Diverse Experiences of Hispanics Students in the American Educational System* and he seeks to highlight how the unique circumstances of some Hispanics cause hindrance in pursuit of a full education. He also provides insight on the solution to some of these pressing issues. One possible solution is that educators become more aware of their students situation and approach to learning. Knowing learning styles and possible methods to reach a wide variety of students is key. Crosnoe points out two dimensions of creating a student profile is understand the academic and social-psychological aspects of school (Crosnoe, 2005).



Unique teaching styles and “interventions” can be made to accommodate Hispanic youths that are struggling to find their place and purpose in the education system. The solutions are known but now the action is needed to reach this fast growing population before a destructive pattern is set into motion.

Education is a freedom that should belong to every human on earth. In America, everyone is given the right. But for the Hispanic community, the education system can be viewed as a form of assimilation or as a tool of isolation. These concerns must be overcome in order for this beautiful community to continue to prosper. As more Hispanic immigrants settle permanently here, future generations will accomplish more than past generations. There is still hope that the gap can be closed, but society must not only view this as a Hispanic problem but as a social problem in general. Identity groups aside we must find commonality and pursue equality for all.

### Part 3

While attempting to do this paper I learned new information yet also realized similar themes. I chose to do the Hispanic community because I’ve always been interested in their culture. The Hispanic community is very diverse yet presents an unified front. After years of discrimination they have still remained strong and important to American society. The significance of the Hispanic community cannot be ignored. They are a part of the American story as much as any other identity group within this land. As a minority myself I can relate to many of the social issues they face. African Americans and Hispanics experience many of the same struggles as a large minority group in this society. And although our story is alike it is very different. That is what is so special about the community; their differences. I will forever admire

the strength and intelligence within the Hispanic community. This paper only confirmed my thoughts. I only pray that as I desire to see the future achievements of my own identity group that I can be witness to the successes of the Hispanic community.

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### **Latino Immigrant Identity in the United States**

**By Erin Mezgar**

*This paper examines Social Identity theory and Organizational Identity theory in relation to ethnocentrism and Latino Immigrants in the United States. First, we create a framework of the two theories and the role that ethnocentrism plays in both concepts. Relying on this basic framework, we look at Latinos as a group and the way that nonprofit organizations serve them. After we establish an idea of the relationship between Latino immigrants and nonprofits, we will look at how Latinos are changing the face of politics on America. As a conclusion, the author reflects on her own experience with Latino immigrants and discusses the results of a brief interview that was conducted with a self-identified Latino.*

#### Part I

[Theoretical/Conceptual Framework]

*Ethnocentrism* can be defined as a tendency to view your in-group as the norm and other groups, not only as different, but inferior or odd (Farley, 2010, p89). This phenomenon can occur in any society, and it has positive and negative aspects. A group that is ethnocentric unites and cooperates in a common culture. However, ethnocentrism creates conflict between societies.

It also leads to ethnic stratification, and conflict is not only aimed at perceived enemies, but minority groups. This may put minorities in an even further disadvantaged position than they may already be experiencing. Ethnocentrism will always occur if there is a minority group present in society (Farley, 2010, p89).

Some forms of prejudice, like ethnocentrism, may be related to socioeconomic status (SES). People in low-SES groups tend to be more ethnocentric. Evidence for this phenomenon can be seen in the inflexible thinking, concern for status, and insecurity of the authoritarian households that tend to create prejudiced personalities. Low-SES households tend to maintain these same factors (Farley p36). For those who cannot endure uncertainty or vagueness, prejudice becomes a way to simplify the information that they must interpret. One thing that may aid in reducing the uncertainty that leads to ethnocentrism and other prejudice is education. Scholars argue that the more education that an individual receives the easier it would be for that person to process ambiguous information about others that they encounter, and make judgments based on their individual characteristics (Farley, 2010, p37). Ethnocentrism can be especially prevalent if the low-SES individual must compete with other outgroups for jobs, housing, and education. In other words, the higher the perceived threat, the more likely it is for an individual to develop authoritarian personality or prejudice (Farley, 2010, p40).

When individuals feel frustrated and, as a result, more aggressive, but cannot take the frustration out on whatever caused it, they may choose an easier target. This phenomenon, also known as scapegoating, can occur in majority and minority groups. If minorities are oppressed by a dominant group, and they have no ability to fight back, they may displace their aggression. This can explain the fact that crime rates in minority communities are often higher than their counterparts; they are committing violence against one another. In areas of recurring poverty and hopelessness, intragroup crime tends to rise. Ethnocentrism on the part of the majority may negatively affect the lives of Latinos in many ways, including the services that are carried out by agencies and nonprofits. Members of minority groups may also displace their aggression against other minority groups, rather than the majority group that is the cause of their frustration (Farley, 2010, p168). In a study of Latinos in Durham, NC, 58.9% of Latino immigrants felt that “almost no Blacks are hardworking”. One third of the respondents felt that Blacks are not easy to get along with, and half said that Blacks could not be trusted (Cottam et.al, 2010, p170). The study also found that 78.3% of Latinos believed they had more in common with Whites and least in common with Blacks (52.8%). With the growing population of Latinos in the US, the problem of ethnocentrism is no longer Black and White (Cottam, 2010, p171). Ethnocentrism is a concept that can be observed in both social identity and organizational identity.

*Social identity* is a subsystem of a person's self-concept. We can think of it as the process of locating oneself, and others, in a system of social categorizations. In other words, this is the manner in which we internalize a social category so that it becomes part of our self-concept. Social identity is our way of belonging to social groups coupled with the emotional value of being a member of that group (Tajfel, 1982, p18). Our social identity will monitor information that we take in from our environment, and regulate the way we behave as a response to those stimuli while interacting within groups. The groups that we are a part of are known as *ingroups*, and the groups that we do not consider ourselves a part of are known as *outgroups*. Social groups tend to be more competitive, or at least try to distinguish themselves more than individuals in similar situations (Tajfel, 1984, p21). They also “seem to precede and encourage social and psychological interdependence between individuals” (Tajfel, 1984, p22). Merely perceiving that we are a part of a category is enough to create group behavior, and there is no

need for similarity between members for discrimination against outgroups to occur. In other words, just the fact that you are a member of a group is enough to make you favor your group members over outgroups.

We like our group members because they belong; not vice versa (Tajfel, 1984, p25). Tajfel's law states that as categorical memberships become more important, there will be a tendency within the group to exaggerate differences between individuals in outgroups, and minimize differences within an ingroup, also known as a stereotype. These stereotypes lead to the "homogenization and depersonalization of outgroups" (Tajfel, 1984, p 28). Dominant groups assign their place in society by defining, locating, and ordering themselves. Only dominant groups members are "clear entities", while others are composed of undifferentiated elements. This leads to both dominant and minority groups members defining and evaluating themselves with the same norms (Tajfel, 1984, p 88). In other words, "discrimination does not occur in a social vacuum"; it is caused by the social arrangement of power (Tajfel, 1984, p 202). When comparing the theory of social identity, or the way we behave in groups, with the concept of ethnocentrism, we can see that ethnocentrism is simply a continuation and product of ingroup behavior. The more important that it is to be a member of a group, the more likely it will be for members to rationalize their own objectionable behavior while chastising outgroup members for similar behavior. If one group is dominant over others, those ethnocentric views will be solidified in the norms that they define for society. The way in which organizations identify themselves, as well as their own ethnocentric tendencies, may affect Latino immigrants as well.

We can define *organizational identity* as members' shared views about their organization's innermost, characteristic and lasting qualities; it answers questions about who they are as an organization (Brickson, 2007). This identity will guide the actions of the organization, and defines how they should act with others and how others should act with them. The way in which organizations like nonprofits treat stakeholders can be explained by the organizational identity orientation construct. This construct refers to the "nature of association" between the organization and its stakeholders as perceived by members of that organization. We can think of stakeholders as individuals that affect the organization, or are affected by the organization (Brickson, 2007). There are three distinct identity orientations associated with organizations. An *individualistic orientation* is characterized by self-conception as a "sole entity atomized and distinct from others". They create relationships based on usefulness and maintain them as long as they enhance the organization. A *relational orientation* can be described as a pair of "particularized bonds" with specific stakeholders. They create relationships with stakeholders based on "dyadic concern and trust". Finally, a *collectivist orientation* is characterized by the self-concept that the organization belongs to a group with ties to the stakeholders in that group (Brickson, 2007). These relationships are viewed as a means to an end to promote a collective agenda. Organizations that have hybrid identity orientations are also relatively common (Brickson, 2007).

The kinds of motivations that members have within their organizations, as well as the way in which they evaluate their organization, varies by identity orientation. Depending on the orientation, they are motivated by either "self interest, other interest, or collective interest" (Brickson, 2007). Each orientation sees reality differently due to the nature of independence and interdependence between stakeholders and organizations. This reality creates the basis for an organization's structure, symbols, and rituals, and makes change of orientation difficult. When deciding whether and how to approach an organization, stakeholders will look at how the

organization treats other stakeholders (Brickson, 2007). This idea of identity orientation is a framework that can be applied to for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

An example of organizational identity can be seen in our study of nonprofits. Survival is the first goal of Latino-serving nonprofits, and decisions that are made regarding external threats, such as immigration policy, will affect survival and service provision. These nonprofits responded to threats by becoming more professional and by framing their clients as deserving and the beliefs of these organizations will decide service provision. An organization can be community-based, client-based, or organization-based. Client and community-based organizations tended to be located in less-hostile areas, and were more accommodating to client needs. The organization-based nonprofits emphasized professionalism and confidentiality of client status. Here we can see evidence of orientation identity in the nonprofit world (Griffin, 2006). The way that an organization serves stakeholders may be based on the individual discretion of members of that organization. If the identity of the organization or the social identity of that individual favors ethnocentrism, the services that clients receive may reflect that sentiment. In other words, clients may be treated differently or as inferior if the organization or individual possesses ethnocentric tendencies, especially if the organization is individualistic in nature. Also, depending on the client's own ethnocentric tendencies, they may not even approach a LSNPO that is run by white men, for instance.

[Macro-level]

Today the US Census Bureau estimates that over 300 million people live in the United States. Of those people, the American Communities Survey of 2006-2008 has identified about 45.5 million of those residents as "Hispanic/Latino". In other words, almost one quarter of the population of the United States self-identified as Latino. More than half of these Latinos are Mexican. Other large ethnic populations include Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, South Americans, Cubans, and Dominicans. In fact, almost 54% of the US foreign-born population originates in Latin America. If we look at American households, a little over 12% of the people in those households speak Spanish. Of those speaking Spanish at home, 47% of them speak English less than "very well". Almost 22% of Latinos live below the poverty line (US Census Bureau).

One policy that has positively affected Latinos is the state and locally funded Doris Henderson Newcomers School, located in Greensboro, NC. Like the nonprofits that we will look at, the school has a vision.

"Inspiring hope in newcomers through challenging academics and language learning, by honoring all cultures and heritages, and introducing Newcomers to a new social environment."

The school's goal is to prepare newly arrived students with limited English proficiency for transition to American schools and culture. In addition to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, the instructors integrate mathematics, social studies, art, and other subjects into class. The school also offers field trips to their students, grades 3-12, to help them understand and integrate with American society. Additionally, they offer adult literacy programs to empower them in their language development

(<http://schoolcenter.gcsnc.com/education/school/school.php?sectiondetailid=158403&>). The school currently serves 239 students with smaller class sizes than the district average

<http://www.ncreportcards.org/src/schDetails.jsp?pYear=2008-2009&pLEACode=410&pSchCode=398> .

Programs such as the Newcomers School and other publicly funded ESL programs are essential to bringing Latinos out of isolation. The ability to speak the official language of the area that an individual resides allows them to become active, participating members of society. It gives them opportunities for success and independence. The ability to speak English also allows Latinos to complete every day activities, such as describing their child's symptoms to a doctor, or setting up water service over the phone. Without a public effort to assist Latinos in integration, Latinos that do not speak English may remain in the shadows. We will not benefit from their individual contributions. We may also end up paying more towards services that assist non-English speakers and welfare programs, as the inability to speak English may be reflected in one's income.

A policy which has negatively affected the Latino population are the requirements for obtaining a drivers license in North Carolina. First, the individual must provide proof of residency. This can be done with documents such as a lease, utility bill, government issued document, or a special document from the Mexican Consulate to North Carolina. It may be impossible for an individual to obtain any of these documents if they live in a household that shares finances or a household of mixed legal status. Often these documents will have only one resident's name as the lease holder or bill recipient, which leaves other household members without any proof of residence. Unless the individual is Mexican and has made contact with the Consulate, the last document is not an option for them. If the individual can obtain these documents, they must then prove their age and identity.

In order to obtain a drivers license in North Carolina, you must present the Department of Motor Vehicles with a social security card as one of two documents of identification. If you do not have a social security card, you must have documentation from the US government that you are living here legally

[http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver\\_services/drivingpublic/applying.html#Step2](http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/drivingpublic/applying.html#Step2)).

Without a drivers license individuals are without their *de facto* form of identification, and they are unable to drive legally. The inability to identify themselves may hamper their access to services that they *are* eligible for. Being unable to drive may have severe implications for Latinos and their communities; individuals, families, and communities may become isolated from the larger community. Being able to buy groceries, receive medical care, education, work, and interact with the public become much more difficult. Latinos may have to rely on others for transportation, diminishing their independence. Individuals having trouble getting transportation may engage in risk-taking behavior, such as riding in an over-stuffed car with no seat belt in order to get to work. If they are undocumented individuals, the person transporting them could get into legal trouble for giving them a ride to the grocery store, or to church. An even worse implication of this driver's license policy is that Latinos may continue to drive anyways, which puts them at risk of exposing their legal status. They may even drive without insurance which puts them and the larger community at risk.

[Mezzo-level]

Latino-serving nonprofit organizations (LSNPOs) are "instrumental in sustaining and supporting the Hispanic community" in areas such as economic development, legal and civil

rights advocacy, self-help, and social services (Gallegos, 1991). One of the major goals of these nonprofits is to seek the development of a healthy and well-educated Hispanic population that the general population views as an asset (Gallegos, 1991). The roles of LSNPOs are widespread; beyond social services and community programs these organizations serve as a liaison between immigrants and institutions (Modarres, 2008). Systemic problems, such as the undocumented being ineligible for public benefits, make nonprofits necessary (Modarres, 2008) and the fact that undocumented live and work in US communities make them *de facto* members of those communities, and therefore deserving of aid (de Graauw et.al., 2009).

"Community organizations are successful sites of immigrant organization and integration because of their bottom-up formation at the community scale"(Modarres, 2008). Nonprofits provide "core vehicles" for Latino civic education and empowerment (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). The role of nonprofits and service organizations are especially important in the aftermath of immigration raids. There are many fiscal, humanitarian, and social costs of these raids (NCLR, 2007). The long term effects of these raids include family fragmentation, economic hardship, and instability. The loss of a breadwinner can increase need for aid. In one particular study on nonprofit work with recently raided families, "each of the thirty families interviewed became heavily dependent on various forms of assistance offered by community groups and religious institutions" following raids. But very few relied on public assistance because they were ineligible (NCLR, 2007). Also, rapid enrollment of Latino immigrants in a new health insurance program suggests high need for more nonprofit services (Frates et.al., 2003). It is obvious that there is indeed a need for LSNPOs in the United States. Due to the circumstances of migration and establishing a family in a foreign country, immigrants may already be at a disadvantage economically, socially, linguistically, and countless other ways. Add to that an "illegal", undocumented status, and difficulty can increase for members of this group.

Nonprofits that work with Latinos often find themselves engaged in advocacy for the population that they serve. An LSNPO's role may transform to advocacy because if their clients can vote, then that means more support and funding for the organizations (Zurita, 2006). Nonprofits that cater to immigrants are often "hybrids" that both serve and advocate for immigrants (de Graauw, 2008) One role of nonprofits in advocacy is to combat exclusion and promote inclusion (Ghassemi-Gonabadi, 2006). Some organizations engage in advocacy, but others protect the status of their clients (Griffin, 2006). After 9/11 undocumented could no longer get drivers licenses in the US, which made it difficult to apply for services. In one case, immigrant-serving nonprofits (ISNPOs) in San Francisco wanted a city-wide identification card that could be used to access services to be available to everyone, so as not to single out undocumented. These ISNPOs organized rallies at city hall, stood as defendants in cases aiming to strike down the program, and formulated amendments to address security concerns. They also created workshops to educate immigrants about ID program, and provided city officials with feedback on the program. Immigrants could now get access to programs that they had already qualified for, but never had the documentation to prove their eligibility. In other words, ISNPOs brought the idea to the board, worked closely with the board, worked with city administrators, and served as watchdogs after implementation (de Graauw, 2009).

A local example of a nonprofit advocating for Latinos is the organization FLOC. The Farm Labor Organizing Committee began in Ohio in the 1960s. FLOC now boasts a membership of thousands of migrant farmworkers. In the traditional agricultural system, those at the bottom may be exploited for labor, while those at the top benefit. FLOC give migrants a voice that allows them to form a union for collective bargaining with employers. The large size

and voice of FLOC also allows for a roundtable of sorts, in order to address industry-wide problems that affect farmworkers. In the late nineties, North Carolina was one of the top pickle producers in the nation. FLOC approached the nation's second-largest pickle company, Mount Olive, to replicate the multi-party contracts that had been successful elsewhere. The company refused, and FLOC took action. The nonprofit organized a boycott that involved national organizations, individuals, and grocery chains. By 2004, FLOC had negotiated an agreement with Mt. Olive that improved the work conditions, treatment, and wages of 8,000 migrant workers (<http://supportfloc.org/default.aspx>).

Another local organization that advocates for this group is Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF). Among other services, the nonprofit advocates for justice in agriculture. Earlier this year, the nonprofit organized a national Farmworker Awareness Week for students and community members to raise awareness about farmworker issues. This week included over 100 events and participation from over 25,000 farmworkers and friends across the nation and Mexico. Through marches, film screenings, demonstrations, discussions, workshops, and many other activities, SAF was able to raise the public's awareness and understanding of farmworkers (<http://www.saf-unite.org/>).

[Micro-level]

Latino-serving nonprofits face many obstacles within their organizations, and with their clients. The idea of *confianza* or mutual trust, among Latino communities is essential to the success of LSNPO missions (Gallegos, 1991). Building trust among community members, documented or undocumented, is very important as immigrants do not necessarily go to the most convenient provider, but a trustworthy one (Jackson, 2006). Fear is a driving force in the life of immigrants, and especially the undocumented. While lack of documentation intensifies fear of police and public officials (de Graauw, 2009), and the fear that children would be taken (NCLR, 2007), it also creates fear of contact with public agencies and deters Latinos from seeking aid. Immigrant raids intensify this feeling of fear. Raids paralyze clients and families; they stay home and do not take part in services (Griffin, 2006). Non-citizen parents have a lot of fear of seeking services (Capps & Fortuny, 2006). "People are afraid to come in for services, not just the undocumented" (West, 2010). Latino immigrants need safe places for information and help (Modarres & Kitson, 2008), yet most Latinos do not see the conventional nonprofit sector as a place for them (Cortés, 1999). In order for an LSNPO's mission to be successful, it must establish a relationship of *confianza* within Latino communities. In addition to the de-motivation of fear, location is vital to attracting clients in need.

Location is an important factor in the effectiveness of LSNPOs. It is difficult to find a location for nonprofits that is safe and convenient for Latinos. There may be invisible social barriers that immigrants must cross in order to obtain services, such as cultural and linguistic challenges (Griffin, 2006). Religious institutions are often used as safe havens and distribution points (NCLR, 2007). In some studies, the locations of sites were often a barrier; places like churches were more familiar and trusted (NCLR, 2007). One trend that is taking place is a shift of immigrant populations from the city to the suburb, as urban areas become gentrified, and one study found that services for Latinos in the suburbs are behind demographic shifts (Zurita 2006). In regions with no government support for immigrant-serving nonprofits (ISNPOs), immigrants travel to other areas for services. The District of Columbia, for example, has refused to assist US Immigration and does not ask about client immigration status (de Leon et.al., 2009). In many of



the areas surrounding DC, the client's status is not questioned and some welcome all immigrants, regardless of status. In general, however, there is no common policy for providing service to immigrants across regions (de Leon et.al., 2009). When harsh measures against the undocumented are taken, for example the new bill in Arizona, LSNPOs expect an exodus of clients. These organizations have already seen losses only days after bill was passed. One LSNPO says it will soon have to reach out to veterans, disabled, and poor to fill housing vacancies (West, 2010). While a convenient and safe location is necessary for a healthy mission, what goes on inside nonprofits is even more important.

In order for LSNPOs to properly serve immigrants and the Latino community, a culturally-sensitive, well-trained staff is required. Training can include cultural sensitivity, language, and a focus on public policy. Latino-serving nonprofits must understand the needs of the community in order to fulfill their goals (Martinez, 1999) Immigrants need translation services, empathetic care providers, and simple application processes (Modarres & Kitson, 2008)(NCLR, 2007). They must ensure equality and cultural sensitivity in their service delivery. Nonprofits must find ways to fill gaps in services, and identify migrants in need (Cleavland, 2010.) As part of sensitive understanding of their clients, they must be aware that some ethnic subgroups are concerned with being lumped into the same group, and having to compete (Modarres & Kitson, 2008) These diverse circumstances and experiences that separate the various Latino subgroups are often an obstacle for LSNPOs (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). One of the most common suggestions of scholars is to have Latino staff and board members working in LSNPOS. There is a need for Latino talent in management and leadership, and an increased research capacity for LSNPOs (Ylvisaker, 1999). If LSNPOs have "board members with first hand experience of what immigrants and visible minorities undergo they may be more sensitive and better able to deal with their problems and provide real solutions."(Ghassemi-Gonabadi, 2006). However, LSNPOs lag behind government and business in hiring Latinos (Cortés, 1999). In fact, Latinos make up only 0.5% of board reps (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). Half of respondents in another study were asked by their institutions to recruit Hispanic staff and board members (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). Some boards were homogenous, and others were fully representative of their client populations. Without a doubt, There is a need for Latino talent in management and leadership, and an increased research capacity for LSNPOs (Ylvisaker, 1999). In addition to having a trained staff, an informed staff and client base is needed.

Much of what impedes service delivery to Latino immigrants is misinformation the part of the clients or nonprofit staff. Social workers face a "deficit of knowledge" as it pertains to accessing and migrants and providing services (Cleavland, 2010). Added to the idea that immigrants are unaware of the services available to them, they often believe that their lack of documentation makes them ineligible for aid. In addition to this revelation, LSNPO staffers do not always know the consequences or criteria for serving immigrants. In one study, some child welfare agents were unsure about the legal issues of working with undocumented (NCLR, 2007). In addition, there is a need for information dissemination for immigrants (Modarres & Kitson, 2008), and public education on immigrant issues (Frates, 2003). This absence of knowledge about eligibility can be evidenced in one study in which many immigrant families were not informed or were unaware that they could get childcare services, or they avoided service because they believed they were ineligible due to their status (NCLR, 2007.). Immigrants often fear that interaction with organizations can lead to deportation. Parents often don't know that their citizen children are eligible (Capps & Fortuny, 2006). This lack of public information is a barrier that causes ignorance on the part of immigrants, NPO staff, and the general population.

## Part II

[Theme-based Research]

Latinos represent over 17 countries, and for that can be considered one of the most diverse racial groups in America. Past projections about minority populations in the US argued that minorities would become the numerical majority by 2050. In a report released by the Census Bureau, this increase may occur by as early as 2042 (America.gov). Minorities, as a collective, make up about 34% of Americans, and are expected to make up half of the US population before 2050. Latinos are the fastest growing minority population. Their population is expected to triple by 2042, from 47 million to 133 million; from 15 to 30 percent of the total population from 2008 to 2050 (America.gov). The driving force of this Latino population increase is immigration. Immigrants and their families will account for 80% of the projected population increase. In fact, about 20% of Americans will be foreign-born by 2050 (America.gov). Of course this prediction could change based on immigration policy and the factors that drive immigration. With a voice of 133 million strong, Latinos may radically change the face of America and American politics.

We can already observe a change occurring by looking at voting and elected representation in the US. In 2006, 32% of eligible “Hispanic” voters actually voted. This increased in 2008, when almost 50% of “Hispanics” voted in elections (US Census Bureau). When it comes to how Latinos voted, we can look at the party identifications of this population. In 2008, almost 52% of Latinos were Democrats, while 21.8% were Republicans and 26.5% were Independents (Cooperative Congressional Election Study, 2008). We can also see the political change driven by Latinos by looking at elected officials in America. There has been an increase of Latino elected officials between 1996 and 2007, from 3,743 to 5,129 (NALEO). That is a 37% increase in just nine years. In higher offices, the number of Latino elected officials has increased more than 50% (NALEO). An even more exciting trend for Latina representatives has occurred in the past nine years with their numbers increasing by 74%! If these numbers are not convincing of a changing political face in America, we can look at another development. In jurisdictions where Latinos continue to be a numerical minority, Latino representation has increased by 142.1% since 1996. As of 2007, Latinos served as officials in 43 states (NALEO).

As with any group, Latinos can, at times, have common issues, problems, and goals. As their political power increases, their concerns may come to the forefront. For instance, Latinos that are eligible to vote may not have to worry about immigration law. However, as members of an ingroup, they may still advocate for other members that are still without legal status. In addition, Latinos may continue to push along with the rest of the country for common issues, such as education and healthcare. Even if Latino individuals are ineligible to vote, sheer numbers may make their voice immutable. As the voice of Latinos is brought to the forefront of politics the implications of this change may be widespread. The integrated nature of society allows for the effects of social change to be felt by all of its members, not just the target group.

## Part III

[Self-Reflection]

My own impression of the Latino outgroup is based on a combination of social learning and education. In my current environment, I come into contact with a disproportionately small

number of Latinos. Because Latinos tend to live in tight-knit communities, with some speaking limited or no English (and not being able to speak Spanish myself), my interactions with members of this group have been limited. My impressions of this group began in my childhood when I moved to North Carolina. I took on the common misconception that most of the Latinos in my community were Mexicans. Through my education I have come to find that, although Mexicans are the largest ethnic group, there are many other ethnic Latinos living in America. I observed throughout my experiences that many tend to live in large families, often in crowded living quarters. I also observed that they had created their own infrastructure and community within our society. Places such as Spanish stores, groceries, and other goods and services were regular sites in areas with large Latino populations. What I did not know was the reason behind immigration and this isolated way of structuring a community. Due to threats of ethnocentrism and policies on immigration, there is a fear in the Latino community of mainstream society. Avoidance of the majority is a common adaptive response of minority groups that are discriminated against (Farley, 2010, p168). Of course this isolation can also be attributed to the need to be around others with common culture, language, and concerns.

[Self-Discovery]

If I could ask a member of the Latino outgroup five questions, they may include the following:

1. As part of the Latino group, do you find yourself actively trying to represent your group in a positive light?
2. Has there ever been a time that you felt the group had a negative light and tried to separate yourself from the group?
3. Have you ever used any services available through nonprofit groups or government agencies? What was the experience like?
4. What are some things (in society) that you think negatively impact your group?
5. What are some things (in society) that you think positively impact your group?

I asked a friend and colleague who identified himself as Latino to answer three of these questions. When I asked the subject whether he attempts to represent Latinos in a positive light, his response may have been surprising had I not already researched the subject. He answered that he does make a concerted attempt to be a positive representation, but only for his ethnic group, Puerto Ricans. Through my research I found that it is a common problem for Latinos to be lumped into one racial group, when members of such group may actually have nothing in common with each other. The subject echoed the idea that Latinos are a diverse group, and should therefore be treated as such.

The subject said that he had never made any attempt to separate himself from his ethnic group. He said he was proud of his ethnicity regardless of any negative characteristics that may be attributed to Puerto Ricans, such as “being uneducated and stupid”. The idea that Latinos are arbitrarily categorized came up again when the subject reflected on the things in society that may negatively impact his group. His complaint that society thinks “all Latinos are Mexican” reflects the concept of diverse ethnicity within Latinos. There is no universal Latino experience. However, society takes an essentialist approach; that there is a single Latino experience that is shared and can be described independently from other aspects of that person. This is not the case. We cannot separate the characteristics of being male, homosexual, young, Latino, or

Puerto Rican; they are interlocking.

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