

Modern day Latino Professors used C.H.I.L.L.E. to succeed in graduate school: Five strategies from the front lines

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Abstract

Latinos with doctorate degrees working in academe were interviewed about their experiences in graduate school. They were asked to elaborate upon what they considered to be their most meaningful experiences that shaped their personal, academic and intellectual lives that influenced their success throughout graduate school. A thematic analysis of the interviews revealed five major findings that can be summed up by the acronym C.H.I.L.L.E. These crucial events and circumstances were experienced by all the interviewees. They were both positive and negative, and were shaped by a complex interplay of the influence of critical masses and peers, a search for identity and individuality, professional guidance, intellectualism, varied campus culture and time.

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Using C.H.I.L.L.E. to succeed in graduate school.

People labeled as Hispanic/Latino/Chicano according to the US Department of Education (2006) remain the least educated ethnic group in the United States. They fail out of primary and secondary schools and universities in the highest rates in proportion to their enrollment numbers. They are also the least likely to enroll in college and graduate (Adam, 2001; Garcia, 1998). While a significant percentage of Whites who attain their bachelor degrees will eventually move on to graduate school, only one percent of Hispanics and three percent of Blacks do (National Center for Educational Statistics,

2000). Similarly, in 1999, 82.6 percent of all Masters degrees and 83.2 percent of all doctorates were awarded to Whites, while Hispanics attained 4.1 percent and 3.2 percent of those degrees respectively (Gaquin & Debrandt, 2000).

The bulk of research explaining this phenomenon purports that this group will encounter four main problem areas preventing them from succeeding in higher education: 1) that monetary constraints is denying them access to college, 2) the lack of substantial mentoring and role modeling relationships between faculty and student, inadequately provides guidance or direction, 3) cultural and ethnic differences of the student prevent them from participating fully in college life, and 4) lack of academic skill development (Aguirre & Martinez, 1993; Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994; Gandara, 1993; Gonzales et. al., 2000; Hurtado, 1999; Tinto, 1993). These projects provide researchers with broad insight into a significant social dilemma but are still limited; the following section examines these issues in depth.

Latino's in Graduate School

It was not until the mid 1960s that a Chicano movement directed considerable attention, energy and resources toward educational change. Student organizations throughout the US like El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA) battled discriminatory practices grounded in notions of language and cultural deficiencies (Araujo, 1996). Likewise, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin in voting rights, places of public accommodations, and employment. Additionally, by 1970 the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare had called for steps to rectify language deficiencies and an end to placement in limited access classes in education. These

policies began to create institutional change which eventually propelled many students into the higher levels of the educational spectrum.

The first studies to compare and contrast the backgrounds and performances of graduate students of different ethnic backgrounds were produced by the Educational Testing Service in 1979 (Nettles, 1990). This research generated test score comparisons among Blacks and Hispanics but did not explain the reasons for any differences in those scores. In 1982, Patricia Gandara published a study where she interviewed 17 Mexican American women who had completed their J.D., M.D., or Ph.D. degrees. Her intent was to understand why they succeeded. Her findings revealed that respondents were most influenced by what they had learned at home: persistence, hard work, equality, and being comfortable in Anglo and Mexican worlds. In the early 1990's, more research began to emerge that specifically detailed the experiences of Hispanic doctoral students (Gandara, 1993; Hurtado, 1994; Ramirez, 1999). The work of Nettles (1990) revealed that Hispanics and African American students who interact with faculty perform better, are happier, have higher grade point averages, and enjoy a greater amount of satisfaction with their doctoral programs when compared with those who do not interact with faculty. In 1994, a significant qualitative study aimed at understanding the experiences of Hispanics/Latinos in graduate school emerged (Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994). This research, through a narrative exploration of specific points in the author's lives, described the emotional, physical, and intellectual transformations that were necessary to succeed in graduate school. In 2000, Morales investigated the lives of Latinos who were enrolled in or graduated from doctoral programs in the 1980s. Her results revealed critical emotional and intellectual strategies employed by students to survive in school. Morales found that

those students who survive frequently challenged pedagogy and stereotypes in the classroom and rejected any underlying messages of their unworthiness. It is around this time that we begin to see the emergence of literature specifically targeted at understanding these issues more precisely (Gandara, 1995; Gonzalez et.al, 2000; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Solorzano, 1998).

Gloria Cuadraz and Jennifer Pierce (1994) explore the dilemmas graduate education poses for women of working class origin who come from different ethnic and racial backgrounds (p. 22). Through a narrative exploration of specific points in their lives, they describe the emotional, physical and intellectual processes that occurred as they proceeded to attain graduate degrees. Cuadraz and Pierce succinctly describe their relationships within departments that they believed were necessary for success, including the process of inculcation and socialization which gave them insight into the attitudes and motivation that is expected in academe. The socialization processes and how it might vary between ethnic groups is an important phenomenon for researchers. It was also explored by Michael T. Nettles (1990). Nettles found that Hispanic students were better off than their Black counterparts, especially in ways that lead to easier transitions into doctoral programs and better experiences once enrolled in doctoral programs (p.514). Moreover, Nettles states, "Hispanics were still more likely to receive graduate teaching and research assistantships and they devoted more time to studying than both Blacks and Whites in graduate school and had more frequent interactions with faculty" (p. 515). These findings are important because they parallel what Cuadraz and Pierce (1994) ultimately discovered that students who interact most with the faculty perform better and enjoy the greatest amount of satisfaction with their doctoral programs. Angela Louque

and Helen M. Garcia (2000) examined the dynamics of educational attainment by Hispanic American and African American women who have obtained the Ph.D. Through in-depth interviews their work revealed several items identified as crucial to the academic success for Hispanic women. The first is a cultural value system. This was attained through the knowledge of traditional family values. It is characterized as “respect, traditions, hard work, fairness, religion, compassion, community, education and deference to mother” (p. 12). These informants cited these items as core to their family values system. The second factor was an intact language system, where they were able to speak Spanish and English freely, without being castigated for speaking either one. The interviewees mentioned they had a strong sense of language background, language proficiency and had acquired proficient English skills early on. Louque & Garcia (2000) findings are significant. They argue that the Hispanic culture and language allowed their research participants to feel more at ease within uncomfortable environments. Similarly, Ramirez (1998), Ruiz (1997) and Garcia (2000) found that the maintenance of language and cultural identity is of primary importance to successful and healthy adaptation to foreign environments. Healthy adaptation influences how relationships with the university culture and with others develop and created the attitudes about the sensitivity of the university as a whole. Also, experiences that can provide students with the opportunities to engage their cultural identities are beneficial because they provide reciprocating relationships; where students develop a sense of belonging to the university and the institution is viewed as a positive influence on the intellectual development of the student. Additionally, the maintenance of Hispanic/Latino culture for these women was important in their experiences as graduate students. As Martinez & Mendoza (1984)

describe, the language spoken at home is the primary language of choice, the one to which we retreat in times of need. The authors explained that during times of high stress they would begin to speak Spanish and long for their cultural roots. Speaking Spanish, they describe, was intrinsically tied to their cultural identity, which manifested itself by clinging to friends who were culturally similar and finding a place where they could speak Spanish, openly and freely about the pangs of graduate school. The authors highlight the importance of forging experiences where they could dwell in another emotional and intellectual state, where they could think and act different, and feel as if they were close to home, and quite possibly, more comfortable and relaxed about the hard times in front of them. The ramifications of this research suggest the necessity of developing diverse, culturally appropriate avenues of expression within the academic climate. Places to feel comfortable, to identify with what is known and safe places to say what is on their minds. Patricia Gandara (1993) provides an in-depth narrative analysis of family experiences, cultural influences, community characteristics, and individual perseverance that lays the foundation for an understanding of how these variables influenced student academic achievement and success. Gandara lists the value of retaining a hard work ethic, making good grades, being challenged by White peers, having a primary care taker that was directive and remembering how much parents espoused the importance of education to forge ahead in life as factors that were attributed to student success. She further emphasizes however, that in all cases, the subjects were exposed to a high-achieving peer group against whom they could realistically test their own skills and validate their performance. These peers also helped to keep them on the right academic track, even in the face of competing peer values. The fact that almost all

had extensive exposure to middle-class; White students also provided the opportunity to learn to move easily between different cultures and to adapt to widely differing situations. Specifically, her research suggests that a mix of motivation, persistence, ability, and hard work as the most frequently cited variables that were inculcated at a very young age that made people successful. Successful outcomes were developed through the maintenance of culture, through the family, by strength and faith in religion, the extended network of family support, and mostly honed by opportunities; either those provided by exposure to other people, or to varied educational contexts. Gandara's findings are important because they describe a process where Hispanic youth learn how to become enduring and resilient. Through the process of maneuvering through the diverse opportunities of the university, a more resilient person emerges, one who has built up a repertoire of experiences and has added inner strength and faith in oneself along the way. A project by Gonzalez et al. (2000) highlights the adverse nature of the academy, with respect to the Eurocentric curriculum, the lack of research opportunities, and the lack of respect for student's research interests. The project was accomplished in two phases. From their dialogues, the group arrived at three conclusions. The first concerns the nature of the academy. The participants discovered the academy to be conservative, restrictive, and racist. The students exchanges showed how intellectually confining institutions of higher education to be, in regards to the limited Euro centric curriculum, the breadth of research opportunities available, and most importantly, the perception that the students research interests, were not respected or nurtured. The second conclusion revealed forces that were perpetuating the conservative nature of the academy. The market culture, b) elitism, and c) faculty rewards and the tenure system

were seen as manipulating the students into work and research they did not necessarily like or was needed, because of its utility in the market place. These forces were seen to pressure students, faculty, and staff in behaving, thinking, and researching in particular ways. Additionally, the academy market culture was seen as a kind of status quo mechanism that discouraged these students from pursuing topics that resonated within their identities. This pressure, coupled with the obsession of prestige and status associated with tenure leads to a stifling environment, and the upholding of a system of socialization, where students are pushed to accept the values of prestige and status of the academy. The final conclusion revealed an alternative framework for doctoral education. Two main responsibilities while pursuing the Ph.D. for these students are to be kept in mind. The first was to become an independent scholar and the second involved creating a type of scholarship that would affect the social conditions of their individual communities. The benefits of connecting these two responsibilities would provide society with much needed leadership while maintaining a vision that was necessary for the students' professional and individual well-being. Gonzalez et. al. (2000) research is essential because it demonstrates how the socialization processes of the academic climate shapes students intellectual pursuits, their experiences with other faculty, and the types of student activities that are accepted. In the end it seems to describe a process of inculcation where the experiences of students are nearly entirely determined by departmental politics and self-interests. They also demonstrate how students who may rely too much on peripheral or external sources of mentoring, like those from outside the department or from the community, may find their much-needed intellectual alliances within their department stifled. Consequently, students are unable

to forge the types of meaningful intellectual relationships with faculty advisors they need to be successful in school. A 1998 research project by Daniel G. Solorzano provided an examination of how racial and gender micro aggressions affected the career paths of Chicana and Chicano scholars; at the pre-doctoral, dissertation, and post-doctoral stage. Micro-aggressions are described as subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges and acts of disregard toward one another. The intent of this project was three fold: 1) to apply a critical race theory analysis to the field of education, 2) to recognize, document and analyze racial and gender micro aggressions from the perspective of Chicanas and Chicanos, and 3) to hear the voice of victims of discrimination by more closely and thoroughly examining the cumulative effects of micro aggressions on the lives of Chicana and Chicano scholars. His methodology included the analysis of initial interviews, of open-ended survey questions, and then finally of in-depth interviews. Using critical theory as a basic framework, he analyzed the interviews looking for examples of race and gender micro aggressions. His results revealed three patterns. First there, were scholars who felt out of place in the academy because of their race and/or gender. Because of the content and varied experiences one can expect in academe the validation of personal and professional attitudes and opportunity for people of color and females is ignored, resulting in feelings of intense isolation and hostility, where there was no place to complain or no one to blame but oneself. Secondly, lower expectations resulted in stigmatization and differential treatment among students and faculty was reported. Some examples suggest students believed others viewed them as less than serious professionals, because of accents, being perceived as coming from a lower socio-economic background, gender status, interest in ethnic research, and the

lowered prestige and social status of not being educated in a research-intensive institution. The final pattern that emerged focused specifically on the racist and sexist attitudes and behaviors of faculty and fellow students. These include, disparaging stereotypical remarks or slips of the tongue, sexist attitudes, inappropriate sexual advances, and racist remarks from both genders. Extrapolating from this work shows how racism and discrimination still exists within educational institutions even at the higher levels of the intellectual spectrum. Thus, job and intellectual security is not guaranteed in academe, and women's experiences will be more trying than men's. In addition, pressures to perform and become tenured are great; those interested in this career path should expect a difficult time. Solórzano's argument also discusses that the nuance of people's behaviors and attitudes results in ill feelings not just toward other faculty and staff, but also to the entire university environment. Some of his respondents described their isolation within the institution. This unfortunate reality demonstrates the idea that campus climates are transactional. It suggests how one person's slip of the tongue might become generalized to the entire university environment, in essence, doing little to stymie the storm of complaints arriving to them concerning personal issues. In the end, bad experiences could be defined and created by the negligence of individual departments and/or a larger academic structure that allows complaints and problems to remain unresolved thus perpetuating a cycle of failure and neglect.

Understanding Success in Graduate School for Latino's

A succinct and feasible way to think about what educators need to provide Latinos to set them up for success upon entering academic life has not been provided. The different experiences of students for example, due to gender, class rank

and social class will create varying experiences and unique needs. This project's findings from interviews with male and female Latinos who attained their doctorates over a span of 30 years highlights detailed good and bad experiences that pushed them on to graduate in spite of some huge setbacks. These are clearly explicated in this study. As Hurtado (1997), Padilla (1995) and Ramirez (1999) surmise from research with resilient minorities, the best way to capture the trust and faith of Minorities, is to employ a researcher capable of asking the right questions, within a common cultural context using appropriate examples. In this case, the researcher and the interviewees are culturally, economically, and linguistically in sync. Also, instead of a negative focus on why students fail out, this project understands the general experiences of graduate students and those factors, big and small that motivated them and pushed them to succeed.

Research Question Guiding this Project

What experiences/factors in graduate school do Latino/Chicano/Hispanics with doctoral degrees perceive as contributing most to their success in graduate school?

Participants and Setting

The project was undertaken at a mid-sized university in northern California. As of January 2002, the enrollment was 13,147 students of which 12,202 were undergraduates and 1,145 were graduate students. Fifty-six percent of the all students were women and 44 percent were men. There were approximately 425 faculty members. The faculty was comprised of 75.5% White, 11.1 percent Asian, 8 percent Chicano/Latino, 4 percent African American, and 1.4 percent American Indian. Approximately 45 percent of the faculty was male, and 55 percent were female. The focus of this research project was on males and females self-identified as

Hispanic/Latino/Chicano. For this study a purposeful sampling technique was utilized to increase representativeness among the population under study. It is a strategy that is utilized when one wants to learn something about select cases without needing to generalize to all such cases, and also when it is not possible to get detailed information from a sufficiently large sample size to make large generalizations (Patton, 1980). Likewise to maximize the variation in participants, stratification among age was incorporated. There are an equal number of males and females in the study. All attained their degrees between 1978 and 1993. This method is unlike a convenience sampling technique, where cases can be studied most easily. This project researched a specific phenomenon that required representatives of the population of interest. The interviewees in this case were identified as people who were directly affected by these issues. It was necessary so that the likelihood of detailed and specific information about a phenomenon could truthfully be extrapolated to only about that population of interest.

The Interviewees

The participants in this investigation were Latino/Chicano/Hispanics with PhDs working at a mid-sized Central Californian University. They shared a similar ethnic and educational background and all received their doctorates from American institutions between 1978 and 1993. They received their doctorates from Berkeley, the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Texas at Austin, Yale, and from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Six interviewees were interviewed three times. A total of eighteen interviews were cumulated. Two of the interviewees stated they were first generation Latinos, 3 were second generation Mexican-Americans, and one was third generation American born. Three of the interviewees identified themselves as

Spanish speakers; the other three did not discuss their Spanish speaking abilities. Of the six, one identified herself as from a professional class; four stated they were from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and one was from a middle economic class.

The Questions Asked

The questions asked sought to extract those experiences throughout the interviewees graduate school years, which were most important to them as they proceeded through school, all the way to the attainment of their Ph.D. There were six general topics covered. They were 1) demographics, 2) positive experiences, 3) family influences, 4) student and institutional influences, 5) issues of financing, and 6) if and how graduate school came together. The questions asked elicited information that was complex. Most times, the responses were long and covered multiple domains.

Thematic Findings: C.H.I.L.L.E.

A thematic analysis of all the interviews revealed five main overarching themes. The main themes are universal in that they characterize the experiences of all the participants in the study. The acronym C.H.I.L.L.E. describes these five themes succinctly. The main themes are: a) critical masses, b) a heck of a lot of personal advising, c) intellectual advising, c) lots of time and d) enough financial/monetary support.

Theme One: (C) Critical Masses

This theme relates to the necessity of developing social capital. Forging relationships with people who share common intellectual interests, who share similar life goals, and who are similarly, pursuing careers in academe buffered feelings of

departmental neglect, family despair and loneliness. The participants stated that developing and nurturing friendships with ethnically similar others, finding mentors, and participating and creating peer and cultural organizations were fundamental experiences in graduate school because it was within them, where many intellectual agendas were forged, where ideas were shared and developed, and where professional relationships were nurtured and maintained. Likewise, input from other Latinos was necessary so that resource-exchanges could take place and served as a springboard for the crafting of many intellectual ideas. Similarly, all of the interviewees, albeit in different contexts, relayed how important it was to depend on their peers, family, and role models in times of personal conflict. Because the extended family also feels the emotional and spiritual angst of an absent member who is entering a vastly different intellectual environment, critical masses provided relevant feedback for the individual in regards to the personal and mental negotiations necessary for them to continue to succeed in school. Mostly, they remind the student why they chose a particular vocation in the first place. Listening to the struggles and very often unfair and sad life stories of family and friends seems to justify the time and sacrifice the student is spending in school and away from the family. Seeking ethnic knowledge and truth, and building stores of emotional and physical strength and motivation, students depend on one another for common bonding. Critical masses is predicated on having access to people who can serve as trusted partners, who become life long friends, as people whose advice is necessary and honest, and as people who lend support, in whatever way it manifests itself, throughout their graduate school years. Generally, finding people along the path who are supportive and nurturing and understanding and helpful are seen as absolutely crucial to success in graduate

school. More than anything else, these people are going through or have gone through similar circumstances, have similar life goals and objectives, are empathetic, and provide emotional support, honest advice, and whose insight is coveted.

Themes Two and Three: (H) Heck of a Personal Advisor and (I) Intellectual

Advising

This two-dimensional theme vests itself within the development of academic and personal professionalism, where professors and formal advisers offer proper advice that is separate from but still influenced by intellectual advice. The first dimension is personal. The second dimension is intellectual. Together, they influence and construct the process, both personally and intellectually, that influences the growth and development a person needs to survive in graduate school. These mentors and advisors have a particular kinship with the student and are only trusted if they are viewed by the students as being similar to them on many levels, and in step with their personal and intellectual predilections, their preferences and life goals. Unlike the first theme, where students and peers play a pivotal role in the relationship formation and creation of groups that forge cohorts, this theme focuses on the exclusivity of information that the formal advising process plays, which is at once, both personal and intellectual.

Personal advising was clearly consonant with a successful path throughout graduate school. This suggests that people in positions to formally give advice, need to offer it to students. It is entirely necessary because it allows students to understand how to negotiate the rigors of the graduate school process. Discussing life objectives, family plans, personal interests, and career goals within a cultural-based framework that is similar between the advisor and the student and then forging a professional agenda from

these discussions is how students learned to negotiate the formal endemic processes of moving successfully through graduate school. People who can relay the truth about how the system may impede or augment movement in graduate school is one key to understanding how students succeeded. Many obstacles can be avoided by steady advice, and knowledge about program or institutional strengths and weaknesses can be imparted to guide students along. Similarly, avoiding classes or people within the institution who make graduate school unnecessarily difficult is important. All of the interviewees stated they needed to avoid, and all together, maintain a very superficial relationship with certain people directly related to their academic objectives because their personal philosophy about education was vastly different than the student. They were told to interact with these professionals only if it was absolutely necessary. On occasion, certain professors had to be approached, but students were warned to do so only when crucial information about coursework, grant and scholarship information departmental procedures and policies, or questions about the process of getting through the program arose. Personal feelings and intellectual interests were not discussed with these professionals. Thus, with the guidance of proper personal advising, maintaining a distance from certain people saved time, energy, and emotional stress was kept low. Finally, making the necessary social connections to people within the school system who can offer insight in to the next stage of graduate work is absolutely necessary. Personal advising at this point guided the student to others who can move the student along on their path. This occurred after the first two years, when the student has become familiar with the personal processes of avoiding intellectual confrontation with some and negotiation of personal needs with others. This becomes less necessary as the

student progresses, because they have learned to maneuver through the challenges. At this point, intellectual guidance becomes crucial and between the second and third year of graduate study is when proper intellectual guidance becomes more necessary and the point at which the second domain of this theme overrides the first.

A broad type of intellectual development is the second dimension of this theme. It is predicated on finding someone who can help craft the type of intellectualism students need to move forward to graduation. The intellectual component to this theme includes helping students shape, inform and hone their intellectual interests while simultaneously, teaching students to understand that schools and universities have biases and issues of their own, that make them limited institutions in their own right. The key to understanding how students find appropriate intellectual advising squarely lies in an intellectual match between student and professor where their relationship is not merely personal and familial, but intensely academic and respectful, where the professor doles out cultural insights and criticisms of current research openly while remaining critically aware of the potential miscues of the students and of their expanding and future aspirations. These intellectual guides point the student to appropriate books, journals; internet databases, people, and critical historical moments that increase the student's knowledge and power of themselves and of the genuine events that exist that define the student within many interpretation of histories, personal and American, that gives them a sense of place, pride, culture, and sense of worth. It allows them to deeply understand their ethnicity in rich juxtaposition to the formation of other ethnicities that abound in the world. At this point, if the student comprehends the information, it mixes with an existing Eurocentric foundation and morphs in to novel formulations of pedagogy. In this

way, new knowledge can take hold and the student begins to understand the misinformation of ethnic facts and ideology and its dissemination that has the student confused about themselves and why their existing pedagogy must be modified. Properly done, intellectual guidance can result in astounding realizations about the past, the present and can then drive and motivate students to ask questions about themselves and others which results in the development of research agendas and new forms of intellectualism. Now that the student is entrenched in graduate school life and knows how to maneuver through the muck, the interviewees stated that after absorption of these intellectual processes, what they then considered as necessary and important factors in the broadening of their intellectualism was to travel. They traveled to Mexico and Europe for advanced study, spent summers with faculty and peers in Central America teaching, attended intensive dissertation and writing workshops in other states, and worked alongside Latino faculty developing ethnically oriented classroom curriculum. These experiences had not been considered prior to their entrance to doctoral study. It seems that reading and evaluating ethnic pedagogy changed the way these students viewed themselves in relation to their personal goals and certainly forged the intellectual direction that many eventually followed.

Theme Four: (L) Lots of Time

The time dimension cannot be overstated. In graduate school time was described as being comprised of personal and professional balance. Time to accomplish goals and objectives was especially necessary. The interviewees detail multifarious experiences within many domains. Certainly, there exist genuine differences in the types of programs and schools they attended and in their personality and intellectual styles. But, what

cannot be ignored are the typical experiences they had. Even though all of the interviewees completed their major coursework within the traditionally allotted 3-4 year time span, and had arrived at an ABD (all but dissertation) status within five years. Four of the 6 interviewee's spent 8 years completing their doctorate. What is crucial is why in most cases, it took so many additional years to complete the doctorate. Furthermore, while the women interviewees required an average of 8.5 years to complete their doctorates the men finished on average in 7 years. The interviewees stated they had participated in many things besides their academic work. Some of these included traveling for political and intellectual reasons, vacationing to their countries of ethnic origin, teaching at schools and community colleges, visiting other universities to seek intellectual advising, and many became heavily involved with local politics and acted as agents of social change.

Precisely because the interviewees had many unfamiliar, unexpected and unencumbered situations they required more time to complete their degrees. Finding direction and purpose in graduate school takes time. Understanding how advanced graduate study operates and why it is so became an epiphany for some. It took them many more years to realize their intellectual gifts, or their place within the ubiquitous world of academe. Underlying the reasons it took so long include, the time it took to find Latino mentors and peers, time to find a topic of interest in which to do ethnic dissertation research, time necessary to forge cultural and ethnic understanding, and the time that was necessary to pool intellectual resources together in which to carve out a niche for themselves that was for the most part not readily accepted by the programs in which they were immersed. Forging cultural organizations from scratch, developing

social relations with similar others, finding like minded peers and mentors, learning two types of intellectualism--one ethnic and the other Euro-centric, and crafting an interesting research agenda are processes that most other students will not transverse. For most students, these intellectual connections to other people in varied departments or within the community had been created for them through prior research by previous students, so they don't spend inordinate amounts of time looking for research sites, social connections, or creating them from scratch. For Latinos, particular ways of thinking and existing are inextricably related to the type of research one chooses, so the proposed research clientele, must first be respected and understood. This suggests they will have to forage on their own to succeed in understanding how they think and act in two worlds, one ethnic and personal in relation to the research, and the other institutional and impersonal in relation to how research protocols are accomplished. How they proceed engaging in their own brand of research, and then developing an acceptable intellectual agenda following strict protocols are difficult to justify, and not simply understood. Once this was accomplished, finding faculty support guiding the student through the task of data collection, analyzation, and writing up the dissertation posed complicated intellectual obstacles. At this point, students encountered barriers from faculty supporting the intellectual relevance of their findings and interpretations of the data. This suggests that ethnic knowledge bases are still not accepted or understood within many institutions. In most cases, professionals across academic disciplines had to be approached and then relationships had to be forged with them so as to build the intellectual alliances required to include them in final research committees.

Latinos must meet two sets of requirements in most domains whereas other students usually do not. This is why it took more time than average for the interviewees to graduate. They have to learn and learn to act according to the protocols of the mainstream organization and then learn how their cultural existence influences them to the degree that it impacts on the type of experiences they have in graduate school. For the most part on their own time and dime, Latinos must read and understand various intellectual paradigms, convince others of its relevance, forge alliances with and then ferret out many professionals so they can find people to work with, and generally craft personally rewarding and intellectually fulfilling and meaningful experiences from a prefabricated rubric that is not set up for Latinos to experience success.

Theme Five: (E) Enough Finances

Securing enough financing during graduate school to accomplish both personal and professional objectives was a common theme among the interviewees. The expense of financing school coupled with the particular interests of the student as it is influenced by their intellectual quest, is costly in both time and money. Properly elucidating an intellectual niche within an underdeveloped field creates a lot of expenses. Things like traveling abroad for research purposes, purchasing specialized cultural literature, attending ethnic conferences, producing ones' own brand of knowledge, and maintaining the expense of married family life for two of the interviewees while still in school without the aid of extended family support were significant expenditures that were incurred. Purchasing specialized books and surveys and hiring Spanish language professionals to assist with data collection is expensive. These items and experts serve as resources that most libraries or departments contain within their institution. Since these

students' interests were atypical, their programs and departmental libraries viewed these resources as being only tangentially related to most students' program requirements and did not own them. Students paid for them out of their own pockets. These expenses are significant. On the contrary, mainstream students whose research agenda is not ethnic; do not have to be concerned with finding the tools and resources necessary to engage in their type of intellectualism. Libraries are full of these other types of resources. Latino students usually arrive to graduate school from lower economic backgrounds and the help they receive from their families is minimal. The cost of daily living and of graduate school itself, coupled with these intellectual costs suggests they will need more resources than most other students to succeed in graduate school. Depending on the institution certain types of financing were readily available. Things like teaching assistantships, fellowships, scholarships and financial aide certainly helped but did not cover the full range of their intellectual quests as it did for other students.

Implications of This Project

The major implications from this research highlight two things that are inextricably related. The first is a greater understanding of what Latino's are doing with their time in graduate school. It seems they are creating their own meaningful experiences within a system that is not set up to allow this to occur easily, and educator's need to be aware that in doing so, Latino graduate students may take more time than average to complete their doctorates. The other beckons to academics to understand that many Latino's need to structure a different way to think about the graduate school process. Mentally challenging themselves by re-scripting their thinking and their behavior is a time consuming and stressful process. Academics need to develop a greater

tolerance for student's who arrive at their door, simultaneously trying to undermine the effects of colonialism while adhering to its doctrine. The third implication asks that educators reevaluate how long students spend in graduate school. The reasons underlying why most of these interviewees took so much time to graduate was shrouded in forging their own meaningful experiences. Learning how to do that, took many of them many years. Combining this learning process with an understanding of the negotiation process, the give and take of personal and intellectual fulfillment, takes a lot of time. What to give up personally and intellectually and alternatively, what then to put in its place influences the time it takes to graduate. Learning what previously held knowledge to supplant, and remaining simultaneously, in alignment with academic culture, suggests that while they are learning to relieve themselves of stereotypes and falsities of themselves and of their inculcation, they are at the same time, putting themselves in a precarious situation, because they are internalizing different ways of thinking, and new ways of being.

Throughout these findings, ethnicity and culture dictated how the graduate school process was negotiated. Some things in the interviewee's personal life had to be given up and likewise, had to be re-considered. How things were suppose to happen did not always occur. How culture had to be mediated, was in large part a function of the demands of the graduate school process. Family and other personal responsibilities that were once priorities were neglected altogether and what replaced them seem to be academic contemplation, angst and loneliness, finding friends, and trying to forge a niche. Realizing how friends and peers in similar circumstances and how they serve as bridge builders to the new understanding will alleviate problems. Without the creation of

those relationships, receiving a doctorate degree will seem impossible. A more long range policy implication benefiting student's in education is the need to create policy that is meticulously scripted where Latinos benefit from arriving to school with their cultural perspective. It needs to be further emphasized that Latinos in many regards be viewed as being Meso-American. This suggests that their cultural orientation to the formal educative process will be different. We will arrive with a different approach to negotiating our educational endeavors and how we approach understanding them. This perhaps can be understood when we clash with mainstream students and faculty members whose pedagogical base has rarely been challenged. Meso-American thinking to some degree is predicated on undermining the effects of colonialism and western ways of thinking and acting, and their notions of time. The way Latinos approach researching and producing knowledge will then, be different and probably more inclusive of a critical perspective of western methodologies. Our attraction to other ways of creating knowledge is based in this ideology. Considering this perspective, it is understandable why we need more time and different resources to make it through graduate school. The people who can guide Latinos toward these paths need to then be included within academic organizations. This will have a direct impact on how we might feel about ourselves and within the organization. Ultimately, this can influence our success rates. This is directly linked to how educators can then view how to better adjust to our needs. The length of time the interviewees spent in graduate school was not determined by the length of their program plan. Many unforeseen issues along the path to degree attainment circumvented the initial plan. Things like, monetary constraints, doctoral program changes, the loss or outright denial of appropriate mentors and advisors,

marriage and extended family priorities, traveling, and the time associated with finding relevant research interests, were implicated in increasing the amount of time it took to degree completion. How these issues worked out, the process that unfolded as students worked through to resolve these problems is what caused them to spend more time than average completing their degrees. Considering the speed of change within society in general in conjunction with the speed of change of educational institutions and what the interviewees had to transverse, one is left to wonder if current day Latino graduate students are grappling with the same issues that students dealt with long ago. If they are, then this project along with others like it, have demonstrated that a major reason why Latinos don't succeed in graduate school is associated with the slow nature of change in institutional climates. It seems they are not keeping pace with societal change, or have not truly internalized a genuine commitment to push all of their students to graduate. These findings support this proposition. Universities are still not devoted to understanding how to offer Latinos a fair level of educational opportunities. More than anything else this requires an understanding that for Latinos, their time in doctoral school will be spent engaged in a negotiation process, where the individual for the most part is left on their own the majority of time, to ferret out a comfortable and relevant existence, where they can find an ethnically oriented research niche, searching out who they can trust to personally guide them through these confusing and neglectful times, and where to go to forge the all important professional friendships. These findings suggest that these processes did not and still do not exist to a large degree. The interviewees also revealed they had to engage in intellectually re-scripting their personalities to some degree, where other students did not. Even though they are forced to accommodate new ways of

thinking and behaving, they will learn to do so, even though many times it is in direct contrast to how their culture has taught them to view the world. Adjusting to different mind sets with scant formal guidance is time consuming, expensive, and mentally exhausting. Universities that understand and support the idea that Latinos must craft various types of peer and intellectual cohorts to survive, that are unlike institutionally anointed organizations and commit to assisting them in forging relevant experiences are best suited to attract and graduate Latino students from many walks of life.

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