Leading the 21st Century Demographic: Multi Context Theory and Latina/o Leadership

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Abstract
Public and higher education alike have much to gain from serving the largest and fastest growing demographic in the United States. The Latina/o population in the U.S. is young and fervent and will continue to influence political, financial and educational communities, both geographically and socioeconomically. In this theoretical analysis and case examples, the authors apply Robert Ibarra's (2001) perspective on the development of Multicontextuality with Latina/os in educational spaces, focusing on leadership and examining the cultural wealth and contributions Latina/o leaders and educators bring to educational systems and communities. We argue for the development of future Latina/o leaders by examining the multicontextuality of Latina/o educational leaders in the P-20 pipeline as an untapped resource where they exhibit unique and diverse sets of abilities to respond to the trends in economic, civic, and personal spheres. Proficiency in multicontextual leadership advances the democratic, transformational, and distributive with ultimately a transformative leadership discourse in higher education, advancing the development of Latina/o's throughout the educational pipeline.

Multicontextuality and the 21st Century Demographic: Latina/o Leadership in Higher Education

Introduction

        Leadership is a complex process contingent on interpersonal relationships, contexts, skills, implications, behaviors and above all applying the central concept of power in order to influence others into action. Given our history, early forms of leadership appeared to be human nature. More recently, there has been a push for understanding the science of leadership guided by researchers, authors and trainers who perpetuate a viewpoint in line with traditional paradigms of leadership. Research in education, business, health and our military persist in searching for the best methods of leadership; it is a continuously extensive process, and often largely based on concepts informed by dominant culture and ideology. However, technological and global workforce competition has placed new demands on leaders around the world, further diversifying the discourse on cultural competence in leadership spaces and the multi-cultural conversations striving to meet these demands.

        Globalization then appears to be representative of a massive change in human activity on a scale which is unprecedented in human history (Giddens, 2000). Given this, globalization could be about sameness and uniformity (Corson, 2000). Just as convincingly, globalization could be about hybridity, multiple literacies and combining all that is 'good' in human endeavor (Ryan & Rossi, 2006). The United States of America, the societal *melting pot* experiment or rather a plethora of cultural, racial, linguistic identities, is faced with a growing Latino demographic, a response to globalization and a direct challenge to the countries' cultural consciousness and competence.

        The increasing political, educational, financial and media conversations surrounding the fastest growing demographic in the country makes the intersection of Latinos and leadership a critical discourse, particularly in education. The 2010 Census affirmed Latinos surpassed Blacks as the nation's largest minority (Motel & Patton, 2012). Among the 50.7 million Latinos in the United States, nearly two-thirds (65%), or 33 million, self-identify as being of Mexican origin, according to tabulations of the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) by the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the Pew Research Center (Motel & Patton). In our rapidly diversifying and globalizing efforts, national and cultural differences must be considered when weighing the applicability of leadership approaches and competences in cross-cultural context (DeGrosky, n.d.). In American higher education, accessibility, online learning, and competition for students has changed conversations and contexts for diversity conversations in our colleges and universities. It is essential today more than even for higher education leadership, which provides the vision for policies and programs for their educational communities to foster inclusive spaces in higher education leadership circles and graduate programs.

        Graduate programs continue to be 'gateways' to tenure-track faculty positions, leadership and executive positions and the professoriate in higher education. The teaching and fostering of multiple literacies, multicultural education and embracing various transformative contexts in higher education leadership provides a space for adaptive organizational leadership, a response to globalization and a platform for transformational and distributive processes crucial to higher education leadership. Embracing progressive leadership conversations throughout institutions of higher education demonstrates genuine efforts to embrace a system that transforms traditional academic structures into people-oriented organization and grips the advantages of multicultural paradigms and multi-context environments.

The reality of multiple literacies and the importance of context, which permeates higher education moves beyond the idea to unifying multiple identities. These concepts are elusive for many institutions as they cling to top down transactional models of leading. The practical impact of moving toward a transformational paradigm is recognition and value for each identity within the institution and a vision of not only the present but the future. That future includes Latino communities. To fully understand a Latino centric epistemology is to understand the Puerto Rican presence in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, to understand the Cuban influence in Florida, to understand the Mexican heritage found across the Southwest and embrace the extensive ethnic Latino groups across the United States. The various ethnicities and cultures which make up the Latino spectrum across the U.S. make increased communication and cooperation between employees, programming, retention, and leadership efforts in higher education crucial to meeting the needs of this centuries growing demographic. Transformational and distributed leadership then becomes dependent on the multiple contexts existing and bridging the institution to the Latina/o community. The purpose of this paper is to 1) reinvigorate the conversation of multiple contexts and multicontextuality within Latino centric leadership conversations in higher education, 2) foster empirical inquiries concerning Latinos, higher education leadership and Multicontextual theories and 3) argue for the continued need for transformational and transformative leadership in higher education, and finally 4) we provide four brief oral histories of pioneering Latina/o faculty from the field of educational leadership and their demonstrate multicontextuality in the field.

The Importance of Context, or Multiple Contexts.
        A major problem for achieving diversity across academic institutions today lies in the origin of academic cultures (Ibarra, 2006). The context of higher education in the U.S. is locked into a centuries old German research model imported from Europe and clamped on a British colonial college system (Ibarra, 2006). American colleges and universities were modeled after English institutions Oxford and Cambridge, with Harvard becoming the American prototype. These schooling environments were historically exclusive, focused on Christianity, functioned on the prevailing hierarchal theories, and fought to preserve existing traditions and ideologies and not reform them. Historically, centuries of higher education have made less use of similar experiences, have communicated top down through spoken and written word and have promoted the academic model of a Low Context culture. The prevalence of a particular, ideally a Low Context academic environment tends to exclude all the other learning settings, and thus defines the cultural and academic context of higher education today (Ibarra, 2006). The outcome of this predominant model not only perpetuates a Euro-centric learning community, but as Ibarra argues, also institutes a hidden dimension of cultural context that has been invisible and ignored until now.
        The work of transformative leadership in higher education must move beyond current transactional top down models which perpetuate one-dimensional, isolationist and compliance approaches still functioning in academia. A one-size fits all model has not and will not improve the path through the educational pipelines for Latina/os in higher education. The work of critically conscious leaders must instead focus on changing the cultures of current organizations to accommodate new kinds of populations that are attracted to applied or community-oriented education (Ibarra, 2006). Educational systems at all levels must include elements of a high context culture, where the spoken and unspoken and power of cultural wealth provide better communication tools to improve the leadership and educational opportunities for the Latina/o

demographic in this country. We must support the premise that people's skills, insights, ideas, energy, and commitment are an organization's most critical resources (Bolman & Deal, 2000). We must therefore continue to improve our institutions of higher education to avoid being the alienating, culturally inept, dehumanizing and frustrating spaces that have traditionally marginalized the talents of Latina/o students, leaders and faculty. A model for embracing the complex spaces of the multiple contexts of higher education is critically needed today more than ever.

According to Ibarra (1999) the theory of Multicontextuality was partially constructed using research from intercultural communication anthropologist Edward T Hall. In his 1976 book *Beyond Culture,* Hall identified patterns within cultures and these patterns frame the context of interactions and relationships. These patterns were studied across the globe and categorized based upon the importance of the patterns. Cultures towards the high end of the continuum tended to look at the big picture and look for meaning, whereas cultures on the low end focused on facts and words. His studies showed that High Context Cultures, (HC), were mostly women and ethnic minorities whereas Low Context Cultures (LC), tended to be male and of Northern European descent. Ibarra (2006) further clarifies this point illuminating prevailing models of graduate education are Germanic in nature and fit a low context culture, which causes conflict for students and faculty of high context cultures. Clare (2009) acknowledges the steps to truly changing the context of multiculturality in institutions of higher learning and moving away from the Germanic background places recognition of the limitations of the current systems. The first step is to increase multiculturalism and recognize the underrepresentation of minorities is not due to their inability to succeed but in the mismatch between the system and the learners. Clare (2009) further argues, once this mismatch is accepted, the second step is expanding the system to incorporate and enable different ways of teaching, providing service and learning to encompass the larger variety of people and identities across different contexts. The differences between outcomes and perceptions are radically different when the researcher or person in authority is of a marginalized or minority group rather than the dominant culture (Clare, 2009).

Multicontextuality addresses the individuals who are a mixture of cultures, languages and contexts. Being able to navigate and function across the continuum of contexts in leadership, higher education and education leads to more success. The ability to alter or set aside cultural values and beliefs are core to the ability to operate with multicontextuality. Furthermore, those with greater multicontextuality search for an academic environment where interpersonal relationships and institutional policies create environments that match their own high cultural contexts (Ibarra, 1999). Dumas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams (2001) assert studies in academic environments that are geared towards creating and retaining truly diverse environments examine not only the diversity of the faculty, but also the retention rates and reasons that diverse faculty leave. Low retention rates may stem from a system where faculty are expected to conform to the status quo (*passing*) rather than introducing or challenging the dominant culture.

Clare (2009) stresses the damage of *passing* within the dominant culture suppresses parts of an individual and as well as it does not present an opportunity for the system to grow and evolve. Ibarra 2001 (as cited by Clare) emphasizes that the ability of the individual to perform successfully within a system without *passing* is the truest form of multicontextuality. It is the ability to function with a strong sense of identity and culture within a system that is not necessarily reflective or accepting of that culture. Despite misconceptions about behavior, and different value systems, those who have multicontextual ability share resiliency and adaptive factors Ibarra (2001) (as cited by Clare). For those not of the dominant culture or language, a

sense of identity and self along and the ability to understand nuances of language and culture leads to difficulties succeeding within higher education. McMillan's (2008) study of ethnic minority students in Scotland revealed similar struggles for international and multilingual students. Nonetheless, those who were able to retain strong ties to their culture of heritage while functioning in the dominant culture and balancing familial demands and perspective were more successful in the higher education settings. Ibarra (as cited by Clare) linked multicontextual ability to thinking and functioning in two different languages, contexts or cognitive styles, and observed how this ability (multicontextuality) played out in social structures.

      Multicontextuality is an important consideration as many initiatives aimed at increasing diversity focus on recruitment rather than changing the structure or dynamic of the institution. However, the topic of diversity regardless of an institution's approach continues to be one of the greatest debates for a nation whose demographics are quickly shifting. One survey, where the majority of students polled reported diversity was positive, revealed an almost even split between those who felt diversity meant including different groups but teaching common American values and styles, versus incorporating other cultures and values into the education (Diversity in Higher Education, n.d.). The issue of creating a diverse institution is heavily influenced by the interpretation and belief systems of the institution itself, but the students and faculty must also come to a common understanding as to what the goal is and how to go about promoting positive and inclusive change. Dumas-Hines et al. (2001) examine institutional changes, which go beyond recruitment and focus on retention such as mentoring, image training, and cultural diversity training. Ibarra (1999) theorized that previous attempts at increasing diversity were a numbers game, rather than looking at how to create learning that fit the needs and cultures of the populations they were trying to recruit or the students they serve.

      The issue of creating structural diversity on campus has led to changes and shift in student activities and affairs, but the academic models leave little to be desired. McMillan (2008) examined the detrimental effect on the learning needs of student's language and achievement as an unforeseen effect of efforts to eliminate racism. Rather than embracing the differences and using them to develop curriculum and system wide change, it pushed students to fit in with the dominant culture. This skewed concept was shared in one study where the majority of administrators' felt that white students and faculty were treated the same as those of ethnic minorities (Diversity in Higher Education, n.d.). This is part of the underlying problem, all students are expected to fit in the dominant mold without changing styles and systems to reflect the different contexts. While this may promote multicontextuality among individuals who are not part of the dominant culture, it does little to change current transactional, hierarchical institutionalized systems.

      To further argue for the consideration of multicontextuality, one must also examine the historical debate on the use of Affirmative Action, or more recently the research that has taken us to the current debate on its use of race among equally measured criteria. In the defense of affirmative action, research has been used to demonstrate the positive impact of diversity. In *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), increasing diversity on college campuses was decided to be of constitutional interest. Gurin et al. (as cited in *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.,* 2003) defined three types of diversity: (a) structural diversity (the numerical representation of diverse groups), (b) informal interactional diversity (the frequency and quality of intergroup interaction in informal settings), and (c) classroom diversity (learning about diversity in the classroom). The affirmative-action court case *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.* cited Gurin et al. as concluding that classroom diversity, diversity programming, opportunities for interaction, and

learning across diverse groups of students affect learning and democracy and civic outcomes of students. More importantly, opportunities for informal interaction have the greatest educational and democracy outcomes for students, as defined by Gurin et al. In fact, Hurtado (2001) established this important link between diversity and educational purpose for young adults. Given this impact, the authors of this work argue that in order to achieve these desired and ideal learning, democracy and civic outcomes through classroom diversity, diversity programming, opportunities for interactional diversity (formal and informal), and learning across diverse groups, institutions of higher education must have the necessary transformational leadership with multicontextuality as a present capacity.

The Need for Transformational, Distributive and Transformative Leadership Proficiency in Higher Education

Americans, at all levels, have had great faith in the power of education to improve their quality of life (Basham, 2010). Education has been viewed as an escape route from poverty, an antidote to intolerance born of ignorance, a primary source of national prosperity, and the foundation of democracy (Swail, 2003). The emergent consent among educational leaders and policy-makers is current systems and processes of higher education must change dramatically. A different approach is needed to prepare today's leaders to meet tomorrow's challenges (Basham, 2010). The new structure should enhance preparation, allowing for innovation and futuristic thinking in a collaborative setting (Rodriguez, 1999).

Basham (2010) argues higher education is at a crossroads where it must redefine its mission accompanied with measurement standards as to how it is going to meet the needs and obligations to citizens demanding higher education in the 21st century. Higher education in the United States must take into account the impact of globalization/internationalization, the development of information and advance communicative technologies, the change in demographics and the rapid demand in employment, and the critical need for highly qualified educators who have practical experience in their discipline (Basham, 2010). As higher education continues to realize enrollment expansion, educators, state governments, and business should begin working in a partnership atmosphere (Alexander, 2000). This might begin with transformational leaders as presidents of institutions of higher education who comprehend the situation and provide visions of the changes and directions that will be necessary to achieve this atmosphere. A possible environment created by transformational leaders at every level of leadership in the institution, especially by those who can effectively work in multi contextual spaces and bridge low and high context environments.

Transformational leaders who develop and communicate a vision and a sense of strategy are those who "find clear and workable ways to overcome obstacles, are concerned about the qualities of the services their organization provide, and inspire other members to do likewise" (Swail, 2003, p.14). Transformational leaders encourage development and change. They are still a long way from being the leader for every situation and, as a result, few empirically documented case examples of capturing the transformational leaders' acumen exist. However, what we do know about transformational leadership is that it is value driven. The leader sets high standards and purposes for followers, engaging them through inspiration, exemplary practice, collaboration, and trust. Transformational leadership aims at responding to change quickly and bringing out the best in people. Such leadership is change-oriented and central to the development and survival of organizations in times of environmental turmoil, when it is necessary to make strategic changes to deal with both major threats and opportunities.

Transformational leadership derives its power from shared principles, norms, and values. Leaders, who encourage and support transformation, share power, are willing to learn from others, pay specific attention to intellectual stimulation, and equate the individual's need for achievement and growth (Caldwell & Spinks, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1993).

To further illustrate the sharing of power in leadership, Spillane (2006) states three essential core elements of Distributive Leadership Theory: 1). Leadership practice is the paramount concern. 2). Leadership practice is derived of interactions of followers, leaders, and their situation in which each constituent is vital for leadership practice. 3). The leadership role and practice is defined by the situation. Therefore, the leadership practice and role may vary and change over time. The person's expertise and not only his or her official title within the institutional community determine the leadership role and practice.

Contemporary educational scholars argue that conscious efforts by the U.S. educational systems will fail without the intervention of implementation of strong educational leaders who strive to curtail marginalizing forces and inequalities that have been perpetuated in education (Larson & Ovando, 2001; Shields & Sayani, 2005; Zhou, 2003). This socially just call to action in leadership forms the foundation of transformative leadership theory. As literature continues to emerge on transformative leadership, scholars have been able to operationally define the framework. Current scholars maintain transformative educational leadership involves engaging in self-reflection, systematically analyzing institutional contexts, and then confronting inequalities regarding race, class, gender, language ability, and/or sexual orientation (Brown, 2004; Cooper, 2009; Dantley, 2003; Lopez, 2003; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Quantz, Rogers, & Dantley, 1991; Theoharis, 2007). Upon taking on the charge of transformative leadership, the work toward the social transformation of schooling begins.

Cooper (2009) referred to transformative leadership theory to guide her study. She argues it is vital for students in culturally diverse school settings to be led by educational leaders who are adept in being advocates and well equipped change agents. This type of leader embodies strategies of support with students and partakes in the courage to make work environments and partnerships culturally responsive. Leaders within the transformative theoretical frame are also responsible for discarding ideologies and practices which deliberately prevent the transformation of institutions. The goal for educational leaders in higher education is to embrace student and work demographic changes by embodying and distributing transformative leadership practices.

The first call of action for higher education leadership is exposing the compliance and status quo blind spots to understand, view, and counteract current inequities in institutions of higher learning. The second challenge is to curtail the social and cultural abyss of faculty and staff working in isolation, moving to a climate and an institution that fosters collaboration as the basis for progress and equality. This high context cultural work is the call to action for transformative leaders as they validate and draw on knowledge that is critical, multicultural, and interdisciplinary. Transformative leaders recognize and cultivate cultural capital among diverse identities of students, faculty and staff and form alliances with those who hold similar vision of equity and inclusiveness. To that point, Cooper (2009) further argues a cultural worker is also a transformative educational leader who maintains political clarity, demonstrates courage, and takes risks to advance social justice. Accomplishing these objectives is essential to the strategic mission of institutions of higher education as they lead culturally diverse and demographically changing institutions (Cooper).

What is important to note here is all three leadership approaches briefly highlighted here, transformational, distributive, and transformative, all require an ability to respond to multiple

contexts, regardless of how power is applied, distributed, or reframed for equity and social justice. Transformational and distributive leadership practices are the catalyst for transformative leadership and action. However, how does multicontextuality connect to the demand for leadership responsive to multiple contexts in today's evolving institutions of higher education, and more importantly how do Latina/o scholars and leaders fit in this formula?

Theoretical Framework: Multicontextuality

The academic perspective of Multi Context Theory is an amalgamation of cultural contexts and cognitive models (Ibarra, 1999). Ibarra (2001) argues for a critical theory for changing academic culture called *Multicontextuality.* He further argues this viewpoint postulates a growing number of individuals now entering higher education today are mixtures of multiple cognitive and cultural contexts. In contrast, the United States' mainstream culture, including higher education has what may be the most individualistic culture in the world. As a result, many leadership programs, approaches and practices focus on individual leaders and their personality traits, style, behavior and charisma. This influence from dominant academic culture on the preparation, certification and graduation of educational leaders in the P-20 pipeline and the preparation for the professoriate and higher education leadership positions, especially those associated with doctoral education, trace their origins to Low Context cultures (Ibarra, in press).

For instance, German national cultures, according to Edward Hall (1959), are the epitome of Low Context cultures throughout the world. Northern European populations, such as English, German, Swiss, and Scandinavian people exhibited Specific or Low Context tendencies, while Asians, Arabs, Africans, Latin Americans, North American Indian groups and people from other Middle Eastern and Mediterranean based-countries, exhibited Generalized or High Context tendencies (Ibarra, 2006). Research among Latino graduate students and faculty in the 1990′s, found they were neither high nor low context but instead Multicontextual — a learned ability to survive in low context academic environments while maintaining high context characteristics in other aspects of life (Ibarra, 2006). Though academically successful, the consequences of this dual-world existence lead to conflicts, compromises and even underperformance issues in academic life, which Bowen and Bok described in their 1998 book, *The Shape of the River* (Ibarra, 2006). In his own study with Latino graduate students, the entry into the professoriate was described by participants as a metamorphosis into a dominant ethnic group rather than a transition into a profession (Ibarra, 2001).

Robert Ibarra's (2001) work provides a critical contribution to the importance of diversity and context in educational leadership in the P-20 continuum, for institutions of higher education and the professoriate. Ibarra explains that Multicontextuality is an ability to think and function in multiple languages and literacies, contexts or cognitive styles, in order to respond to current trends in economic, civic, and personal spheres. The authors utilize Ibarra's Multicontextuality framework to advance the discourse in the development, promotion and inclusion of Latino/a scholars and leaders in the professoriate and leadership and executive higher education spaces. More specifically, we further utilize Multicontextuality to link the need for a diverse population across the P-20 educational pipeline, in graduate preparation programs and the professoriate by explaining that those with greater efficacy in multi context spaces better navigate the complexities of a diverse society.

The concept, derived from research conducted in the 1960′s (Hall 1984, Ramirez 1991), is based on a set of dynamic principals of cultural context and cognition that can be incorporated into the fabric of our institutions (Ibarra, 2001). A growing number of individuals entering higher

education since WWII, and not just the Millennial generation born after 1980 (Oblinger 2003), bring with them a mix of individualized characteristics described as their *cultural context* that is quite different, and even at odds with the cultural context of academe and college/university life (Ibarra, 2006). These learned preferences influence how they *interact* and *associate* with others, use living *space*, perceive concepts of *time*, process *information*, respond to various teaching and *learning styles*, *perform academically* or in the workplace, and include many other cognitive factors that were imprinted on them from birth to maturity by family and community, and that continue to help shape their world view (Ibarra, 2006).

      In the idea of multicontextuality, context is the "information that surrounds a [cultural process] and is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event (Ibarra, 2001). Ibarra further contends individuals get sorted into populations based on how they perceive and communicate with one another. The relationship is between the information surrounding a particular cultural process with those from high context cultures make meaning and learn using "multiple streams of information which surround an event, situation, or interaction (e.g., words, tones, gestures, body language, status or relationships of speakers)," and those from low context cultures demonstrate the opposite pattern, they tended to "filter out conditions surrounding an event and focus on words and objective facts" (Ibarra, p. 53). Therefore, the link between the definition multicontextuality and Latina/o scholars and leaders in educational spaces is at the crux of our argument throughout this work, especially considering the growing Latina/o demographic.

Nationwide Implication of Multicontextuality: The Latina/o Demographic and Higher Education

      A postsecondary degree is widely accepted as a basic goal in education, and the U.S. labor market reinforces that expectation with substantial financial rewards (Fry, 2002). Latinos continue to underperform against every other population group when it comes to the attainment of a college degree. The numbers continue to dwindle as we compare graduate and professional degree attainment of Latina/os against U.S. populations. A Pew Hispanic Center report clearly shows that large numbers of Latina/os are enrolled in postsecondary education and too few graduate; in fact demonstrating a greater share of Latina/os are attending college classes than non-Hispanic whites (Fry, 2002). Fry further argues institutions of higher education continue to have gate keeper courses and systems in place to keep most pursuing paths associated with lower chances of attaining a bachelor's degree. The findings of reports like these and many others clearly show large numbers of Latina/os finishing secondary schooling, extend their post secondary efforts to community colleges and universities and but fail to earn a degree in these Low Context institutional environments.

      The Pew Hispanic Center report, *Latinos in Higher Education: Many Enroll, Too Few Graduate* (Fry, 2002), demonstrates significant gains can be made with policy initiatives targeted at Latinos who graduated from high school, who applied for and were granted admission to a two- or four-year college and who enrolled. A great deal can be gained and accomplished by assisting young Latina/os across the country to navigate the multi contexts of higher education, secure the credentials needed to prosper in this country and keep large numbers from failing to survive in current post secondary institutions. Some of the report's key findings include:

- There is a substantial enrollment gap between Latinos and all other groups among 18- to 24-year-olds—the traditional age group for college attendance and the cohort that reaps the greatest economic benefit from a college degree. Only 35 percent of Latino high

school graduates in that age group are enrolled in college compared to 46 percent of whites.

- Latinos are far more likely to be enrolled in two-year colleges than any other group. About 40 percent of Latino 18- to 24-year-old college students attend two year institutions compared to about 25 percent of white and black students in that age group age group.
- Latinos are more likely to be part-time students. Nearly 85 percent of white 18- to 24-year-old college students are enrolled full-time compared to 75 percent of Latino students in that age group.
- Latinos very clearly lag behind in the pursuit of graduate and professional degrees. Among 25- to 34-year-old high school graduates, nearly 3.8 percent of whites are enrolled in graduate school. Only 1.9 percent of similarly aged Latino high school graduates are pursuing post-baccalaureate studies.
- Native-born Latino high school graduates are enrolling in college at a higher rate than their foreign-born counterparts, and that is especially true of the second generation, the U.S.-born children of immigrants. About 42 percent of second generation Latinos in the 18-to-24 age range are attending college, which is almost the same as the rate for whites, 46 percent. The figure is lower both for the first generation, 26 percent, and for all those with U.S.-born parents—the third generation and higher—36 percent.

The success of Latino/as in higher education and their courage to navigate and thrive in low context higher education environments should no longer be an issue of blame on an entire demographic. The salient ideas of deficit thinking continue to permeate colleges and universities. Valencia (2010) specifically argues that deficit thinking blames the student, who is actually the 'victim' in this instance rather than looking at ways in which schools (institutions of higher education) and education policies systematically impede the learning and success of poor students and students of color. Valencia examines three current deficit-based approaches to student academic failure – the genetic pathology model, the culture of poverty model and the "at-risk" model, in which poor and ethnic minority students are pathologized and marginalized. The work of transformational leadership in higher education beckons the critiques and alternative exploration for the academic failure of so many of the nation's students and their transition and retention into post secondary education. Institutions of higher education must continue to be cross examined and embark on promising, research-based anti-deficit programming while becoming even more aggressive in the transformative actions of their institutions.

Implication of Multicontextuality and The Future of Latina/o Faculty
The number of Latina/o faculty across the United States is dismal. Hispanics represented 4% of faculty (instruction and research) and 3% of instruction and research assistants in 2005 (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007, Table 236). Additionally, Latino males represented the majority of Hispanic faculty (instruction and research) at 53% but represented 44% of Hispanics in executive/administrative/managerial positions (Snyder et al.). The *Conditions of Latinos in Education: 2008 Factbook* published by Excelencia in Education, report almost half (49%) of Hispanic faculty were employed full-time, compared to 53% of white faculty, 46% of black faculty, and 68% of Asian/Pacific Islander faculty (Santiago, 2008). Most Hispanic faculty are at public institutions of higher education. In 2005, 38% of Hispanic faculty are employed at public four-year institutions, 33% were at public two-year institutions, 26% were employed at private

four-year institutions and 2% were employed at private two-year institutions (Snyder et al., Table 236).

Latina/o students continue to seek post secondary opportunities. Still, too many do not persist and reach graduation. For those who do make it, the graduate and professional degrees remain out of reach as compared to other populations. These contrasting images between the faculty and student demographics portend an inevitable truth that, while the higher education student population is dramatically changing, the faculty members of color still are not representative of the incoming cohort of students of color, especially the Latino student population (Ponjuan, 2011). As current Latino faculty, the isolation, issues of workload, cultural challenges and oppression and failed attempts to retain Latinos in the professoriate are lived experiences and realities of own journey.

In his work on recruiting and retaining Latino faculty, Ponjuan (2011) provides ten recommendations and potential efforts to improve retention and recruitment and serve as a catalyst for additional discussions: 1) Improve Latina/o doctoral student socialization, 2) educate faculty search committees, 3) develop Latina/o faculty learning communities, 4) create post-doctoral development programs, 5) develop policies for pre-tenure faculty doctoral supervision work, 6) implement pre-tenure faculty tenure policies, 7) redefine pre-tenure faculty members' mentoring policies, 8) improve pre-tenure faculty work roles, 9) prioritize the allocation of department resources for pre-tenure faculty, and 10) improve faculty department climate. This warrant for change and call to action by Ponjuan, continues to challenge higher education and institutional leaders to diversity the professoriate to adequately reflect our racially and ethnically diverse society. We present four brief oral histories of pioneer Latina/o Educational Leadership faculty who navigated multi contexts in times of cultural apathy, to cement the argument and need for Latina/os in higher education.

Latina/o Pioneering Scholars, Multicontextuality and Cases of Latina/o Leadership

As newly minted Latino assistant professors in the field of educational leadership, the authors sought senior Latina/o faculty to inspire and guide their professional and personal metamorphosis into the professoriate. This endeavor became a national search for mentors, finding professors and leaders who have successfully identified and maneuvered the various contexts of higher education and survived the academy. This action also came from the need to claim a space of identity, justice, activism, and leadership in our fields as emerging Latino scholars. Our goal is to learn from Latina/o scholars as we navigate the multicontextual landmines and cultural academic spaces in the academy. The search for Latina/o legacy in our field, in the professoriate and in higher education leadership institutions and organizations began with the search for a cultural connection, the search for the academic *familia*. Through a national collective and Latina/o network, we spoke to graduate students, researchers, administrators, faculty and scholars. They acknowledged and quoted *dichos*, paid homage, identified and embraced the teachings of how to navigate the academy from the few senior Latina/o mentors in the field who carved a path for us to follow.

Research for this undocumented legacy came in forms of theoretical and methodological dialogue, narratives, and further inquiry as we sought counsel (advice) and looked to the intellectual, cultural and historical contributions of pioneer Latina/o educational leadership faculty. Through the collected oral histories, our leadership bibliographies and critical theories were brought to life. As new faculty it was clearly evident that historical timelines were unveiling the impetus for policies, sociocultural resistance and the woven theme of a need for

Latina/os in higher educational spaces was a dominant thread. C*on mucho respeto* we harvested the voices and oral histories of four pioneering Latina/o educational leadership scholars whose presence and work has transformed our field of K-12 educational leadership and validated our own cultural wealth in the multicontextual spaces of higher education we continue to navigate.

The detailed and enlightening descriptions of *familia, educación, salud* and *trayectoria* uncovered a deeper understanding of these pioneers in the field. These oral histories command their own literary space as future narratives. We share these brief overviews of Latino/a professors, three retired and one still active, and in their own words they breathe life into multicontextuality and their efforts to navigate higher education. They serve as inspiration to continue redefining the Latina/o leadership conversation across the P-20 continuum, cement the need for Latina/o faculty in the professoriate and help us to refine academe and the complex contexts it provides.

Maria Luisa (Malu) González

Malu González, was 2000-2001 President of the University Council for Education Administration and first Latina President, was a Regents Professor during her tenure at New Mexico State University, and most recently was the Associate Dean of the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso prior to her very recent retirement. More importantly, Malu González continues to both mentor young Latina/o scholars in educational leadership and contributes her leadership to the direction of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), a consortium of about 100 universities and their programs in educational leadership. Her success as a bilingual educator and administrator, first Latina professor in educational leadership at NMSU then would become a Regents Professor, national scholar and leader, clearly are examples of her multicontextuality, meaning successfully navigating through higher education, the field itself as a significant leader to the growth of UCEA, while making significant contributions the development of young Latina/o scholars through her success as a Latina scholar and leader.

> *Both my parents were very active in issues of social justice without calling it that, we always called it no era justo (it's not just). My dad was a founding member of a part of socialized medicine in Mexico, and I always heard about the pleitos (fights) with the sindicato, with the unions there and my mom always taking on different causes, showing me the paper even as a young kid. That is something that always stood in my mind, and I think social justice comes from a feeling of guilt, and it is not catholic guilt. I hope. Well we were happy at that time because it was snowing and kids get excited because it snows, so my mom turned to us and said ok, this is very joyous to you all, but are you thinking of all the kids and the people that are living in the streets right now who don't have anything, who are going to freeze tonight, that did it, it just stopped. We said let's take our toys, she said that is never enough. It was this whole dilemma, and how much is enough, and the idea was you can never do enough, and it was not born out of a deep religion. I was helping my parents, the other part I didn't tell you was I was going to go to Stanford for law school, that's what I wanted to do, but my dad got sick. My life changed. I wanted to study, specialize in children's rights, that's what I wanted; I said the next best thing would be a doctorate… So they said we've got this small stipend, 200 dollars a month to get your doctorate out of a grant to train you as a researcher, evaluator. So the next phase of my life starts, we work in patterns and I see those patterns going around and around. There are three Hispanic women, because at that point my*

advisor was a very forward thinking person. We were the only three Latina's in the graduate program. For me it was a doctorate, for them it was a masters. I remember a woman coming to us, a White woman, saying "I don't need these handouts", you ignore it. Again that pattern comes back, the undeserving minorities. When I was admitted, again there was another pattern, the professors were all White men, they weren't very supportive, with the exception of my advisor. And one of them was really tough, and he was department chair at the time, I think he basically said, "you are not doctoral quality", and I just started laughing, and I said "I guess you weren't either when you started". These kinds of messages are very direct and angry. So I proved him wrong and finished in three years.

Flora Ida Ortiz

Flora Ida Ortiz was professor of Institutional Leadership Policy Studies at the University of California-Riverside from 1972 to 2004. Flora Ida Ortiz made significant research contributions in school careers, women and persons from minority groups in school administration, socialization processes, school superintendence, educational facilities construction, and qualitative research methods, and more importantly was this first Latina scholar in the field of educational administration. More importantly, Flora Ida Ortiz was one of the first scholars applying organizational theory to educational settings. Being the first Latina in educational leadership and her overall success as a scholar, while navigating the race and gender politics through organizations that were dominated by White males from the 1970's through the turn of the century demonstrates her multicontextuality. In fact, she is one of the first four women scholars in educational administration in the United States and Canada, among them was Paula Silver, Doris Ryan, and Terry Sario. Flora Ida Ortiz was born in Truchas, NM, but then later moved to Chimayo where her father relocated his bar. Because of his position, her father would become politically involved with U.S. Senator Dennis Chaves, the first Hispanic U.S. Senator, and eventually U.S. Senator Joe Montoya as well.

I went to the University of Denver, I got a bachelor of music degree. I came back to teach music in the little villages (Northern New Mexico). My first job was up in Chama, which is a northern village and I was the music department—from Kindergarten through—and everything… The superintendent of Santa Fe County was a woman, Nora Chavez. She also belonged to the Chavez family, Senator Chavez, the politician. She was the superintendent and when she heard about me, she called me to find out; she wanted music in her schools. The county had all these little schools, these public schools. She said, "I'll offer you a job, but it is not professionally right for me to yank you out of Chama, finish Chama for the year and then you can come and teach for me". So that's what I did. I taught that first year in Chama, then I came and taught. I had a 100-mile radius teaching music. Through all the little villages, I traveled all over the county, all over Santa Fe County, and I got to see how people did things in their schools. I got to see the differences in the principals. I got to see what you can do with children. I got to see the schools that had materials and the schools that did not. So, I think that provided a lot of insight into the organizations, of how organizations work and I also learned how to deal with people, because you just drop in and you have to make it work. Then my schools consolidated, and became the Santa Fe City Schools. I continued with the Santa Fe City Schools… The superintendent said I needed a certificate, an administrative certificate if I was going to continue teaching music like I was in the county, going from

school to school, then I would be a supervisor. That is how I went to go get my masters degree at UNM... So, I got my masters degree and when I was getting my masters degree, it so happened that UNM got a group of professors from all over the nation… I was in the last year of my master's degree, and one of the professors was Tom Wiley... He called me into his office one day and said "Young lady, I think you should consider getting a PhD. You should be doing other things", and he talked a bit. I said well, "I'll think about it". For two years I thought about whether I should get a Ph.D. I was supporting myself, I couldn't expect my parents or anybody to help me. This isn't done at all. So I thought about it for two years, I saved money and everything, I considered and I continued. Then one morning, I got up, and I thought to myself, you're never going to have this opportunity again. If I don't take his advice and his offer, this isn't going to happen again. What can I lose? I can ask for a sabbatical leave, and try it. If I don't make it, I'll just come back and do what I'm doing. So I'm just going to go and tell him that I am going to apply for the Ph.D. in Educational Administration. I figured I would have to finish in two years, I couldn't afford it, I knew some other students that had tried it and year after year after year. I said 'I can't afford to do that'. I figured that I had to finish in two years, so I told them that, if I succeeded I had to finish in two years. They said it was up to me to do it. So I was accepted, and that's all I did… I can say that for those two years I was a full time student. That's all I did and I finished in two years, and I did very well.

Raymond V. Padilla

Raymond V. Padilla retired as professor in bilingual education and educational policy from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and previously as Chicano Studies and Bilingual Education professor at Arizona State University. It is Raymond Padilla's groundbreaking research in the development of national bilingual education policies and his education policy advocacy for Latinos that makes Raymond Padilla a noted scholar in the field of educational leadership and policy. Raymond Padilla was born in Mexico but grew up as a migrant worker in the United States, moving from Austin, to Big Wells, Texas, and Michigan. Eventually Raymond Padilla would receive his Master's and Doctorate degrees from the University of California at Berkley.

I started working in the fields in Big Wells, pulling onions, spinach and all the stuff that's in there. I was working in the filed, actually until I was a junior in college. I was still working on picking cherries. So I went from, literally, from the fields of Michigan to the university. I went to a little place, to a school, it's still there, called Oakland University in Rochester Michigan which is part of Michigan State. I was drafted into the army in 1966. Went to Vietnam, did that thing, spent two years, after my two years in the army, I went back to school, I had completed two years of college. I went back to school, but I went to Michigan instead of Oakland, I had outgrown Oakland. And I wanted a bigger place… There were 6 Chicanos at Michigan when I was there in '68-70. We formed a group, do you know who Bernardo Uresti? Have you ever heard of him? He used to be a city councilmen in San Antonio, way back in the 70s. Anyway, Bernardo Uresti was one of those social work students getting his doctorate, or masters. Bernardo and I co-founded what we call Chicano's at Michigan, first Chicano Student organization there. That activism and so on, raised my awareness of what was going on, and when the BAM (Black Action Movement) strike occurred I joined it as a Chicano… I'm telling you that

because BAM made ten demands... Because I joined the group, and I was actually on the steering committee, BAM ran the whole thing, but they added one demand, and it was to hire a Chicano recruiter. To the ten, so it was eleven… So it was settled, I graduated and everything, and I laugh, that's when I tried to become a bellhop, I was dead broke. I went back to Chicago trying to survive. Well the university made good on its agreement and they posted a job for a Chicano recruiter. God bless, something good came out of it... I was desperate, couldn't get a job, had no skills, but a Magna Cum Laude degree from Michigan. Mind blowing! Bernardo says Ray, why don't you apply for that job. I said Benny, I wasn't marching, cause I marched on the admissions office with BAM and we shut down the admissions office and the director, I was front and center. I said first of all Benny, they are not gonna give it to me. Secondly, I have no desire for people to say, that the reason Padilla was out there marching is that he wanted that job. That's not what I was after. We need more Chicano's in the universities, 6 is not enough. We are never going to make it if we aren't university educated. That's an insight I got when I was 26 years old. That's when I made a commitment to changing the universities. I said I don't want to be with that burden, that's not what I want. He said RAY, NO, You need to take that Job, because otherwise, they are going to give that job to somebody who didn't lift a finger, and their gonna get the job and who knows what kind of work they are going to do. And it makes no sense. I was so desperate. I would not have paid attention to it, but I was so desperate that I decided to apply. Well, maybe it makes sense, ok, so Benny's pushing me. I did apply. I had a trump card. I graduated from Fremont High School. My parents in 1961 stayed in Michigan for a variety of reasons. In western Michigan, rural, I graduated. I did 10th 11th and 12th in Michigan. I graduated valedictorian from Freemont High school in 1964. It's a small town. The only claim to fame is that's where Gerber baby foods were located. That's Freemont, all the fruits, that's why we were there, all the fruits and vegetables we would pick went to Gerber's. So it's a little town dominated by Gerber's, and everybody knew me. But there was a lady there who was at the time in the Michigan Board of Regents, and she knew me... And I asked her to write me a letter of recommendation for this job. And she said "oh great", she said, Cause I was the valedictorian, and they were proud of me. Chicanito migrant worker, there were two Mexican families. They were proud of me and they liked me. She wrote this very nice letter, handwritten letter. That handwritten letter she wrote as a member of the Board of Regents went to the people making the decision, well they gave me the job.

Pedro Reyes

Pedro Reyes, was 1992-1993 President of the University Council for Educational Administration and first Latino President, is currently the Interim Executive Vice-Chancellor of the University of Texas System, and Ashbel Smith Professor of Education Endowed Chair at the University of Texas at Austin. Pedro Reyes is additionally recognized for his research on High Performing Hispanic Schools in Texas and the success of Latino educators that has given Pedro Reyes national recognition as a scholar.

Let me go back to my roots; my roots had a lot to do with who I am. My father was an agricultural worker, a farm worker. They always encouraged us to go on, and study, to go to school. My parents did not have much formal education although they had a life education that was incredible. I got to see a lot of that. By seeing that I also learned from them quite a bit, how to work and how to move, and how to do different things, and so

most of the time I was not necessarily told. I wasn't told. Examples were the primary way of communicating with us. Lead by example, what we do have in our education. I remember that we used to go up north and do the work. Sometimes we would go to West Texas, sometimes we would go to Wisconsin, and every now and then to Colorado, but mostly to the Midwest and come back. So I got to learn a lot in those times. I got to experience schools over there, and schools here in Texas, the different treatment, and so you learn. You begin to build a sense of an understanding, not only an understanding, but learning how to deal with different situations. When they say, you are not supposed to be here because it is for X folks or you go into classrooms and they just don't do anything with you, they just babysit you, or they don't know how to deal with you, that's the main thing. So you waste a lot of effort, but I don't think it was wasted. I think it was a learning opportunity for most of us, in the mean time parents were working and doing other things. Again, that was an amazing foundation for me; it gave me that sense of urgency that we needed to do something different. The sense of wanting to improve the life, not just my life, but the life of the family. I learned to work when I was six, seven years of age. In fact, when I would go to school, get out of school at 2, 2:30 or 3, I would work from 3- till 6 pm; at seven years of age. Not hard work, but I was connected to a store, a tienda, a food store. So what I would do is clean stuff, but also try to help weigh things, like beans rice, and sugar. I learned a lot as well there. I was already computing, I was already doing my calculations and stuff. Other kids were just running around, and the pay, the pay was just una bolsa de pan blanco (bread), day-old bolillos, that was the pay. I was happy because I was bringing something to the house. I would bring this big bolsa de pan, and say oh shoot, this is great, I'm a contributor, I am doing something. My parents never said you have to go and work, I just did it. I saw this incredible need…

Concluding Thoughts

While we attempt to provide a deeper understanding for multicontextuality and its implication for Latina/o scholars and leaders in educational spaces, our concluding argument here is to clearly express the vital demand for Latina/o scholars and leaders in higher education, across all disciplines. Not only is multicontextuality the tool for responding to the needs for institutions to respond to our demographic impetus in the United States, but also clearly Latina/o faculty and leaders are poised to best respond to this impetus. Which we additionally argue is not only a benefit to the Latina/o community, but also for the global community in any context, and academic discipline, and across all communities.

In 2001 No Child Left Behind forced the evaluation of programs serving all school populations. Its attempt to *leave no child behind* in public education forced the examination of historically disadvantaged students and their paths in American education. In short, Latina/o students had been left behind for decades and the country's consciousness was unaffected. Leadership approaches in public education had not been challenged, forced to change or adapt until there was a need to meet the accountability placed on schools by government, states, and local communities. American public school students continue to perform average to mediocre in Math and Science compared to students around the world. Public schools continue face scrutiny. To compare higher education institutions to this platform is unfair and many would argue insane, particularly as public schools and institutions of higher education are very different. Nonetheless, what will be the impetus for institutions of higher education to truly transform institutional

systems to meet the needs of the disadvantaged? Will globalization constitute the breaking point for our universities? Will our college students also fail to measure up to global competition? How can we truly continue to lead our nation in global efforts if we leave Latina/o students behind? The work of transformational and transformative leadership is desperately needed in higher education to lead the nation and the Latina/o demographic.

The current P-20 educational pipeline in this country is unacceptable for the Latina/o community, but it has become part of the pseudoscience conversation that marginalization, low expectations, poverty, language and culture are deficits and the current contexts for Latina/os. These historical myths are alive and well. They act as gatekeepers, perpetuate institutional traditions and taint the mindsets of our future leaders about the abilities, cultural capital and assets of Latina/o students and faculty. Universities have charged their institutions with examining the second year experience, inclusive programming, diversity dialogues, and building the leadership capacity of students. These actions are important and a large part of a transformational process. Ibarra notes a growing number of individuals now entering higher education today are mixtures of multiple cognitive and cultural contexts. This epistemology begins to decipher the richness and complexities of Latina/o students and their families in our communities. The working reality for public and private higher education institutions alike is a realization that when it comes to educating Latina/o students across the country, context matters.

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