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Identity Orientations of Latinos in the United States: Implications for Leaders and Organizations

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Latinos and Latinas in U.S. organizations are often engaged in conversations in which they feel misunderstood, stereotyped, or categorized in ways that do not reflect the full richness or complexity of their identities. This article reviews a model of Latino identity orientations, particularly as these relate to racial constructs, from the perspective of the workplace, discussing the dilemmas Latinos face in organizational life as well as the challenges of non-Latinos in understanding and collaborating effectively with Latinos. We suggest that our model offers Latino and non-Latino leaders with alternative strategies for communicating and developing as colleagues at work.

A group of Latinos [1] in a large organization are discussing their common experiences. George mentions his frustration at being asked repeatedly, "What are you?" or "Where are you from?" Most heads in the room nod with recognition of the frequency of this experience. George goes on to tell about how the inquirer persists in asking the question over and over again, as if saying "I'm from here" doesn't answer the question. He describes the following exchange as an all too common one:

Q: Where are you from?
A: Here
Q: But where are you from?
A: California
Q: But where are you from?
A: San Diego
Q: But I mean where are you really from?
A: Well, I grew up in Colorado.
Q: Well where are your parents from?
A: New Mexico
Q: But where are they *really* from?
...and on, and on...

[1] We use the term *Latinos* as inclusive of both men and women, following traditional usage in Spanish. Nevertheless, we have some discomfort with the exclusive use of the male-gendered noun or adjective and so sometimes use the longer terms *Latinos/as* or *Latinos and Latinas*. Also, we would like to highlight that the concept of Latinos as a group is particularly meaningful only in reference to people in the United States. In Latin America, people do not think of themselves and are not seen by others as Latino or Latina. When people from Latin America arrive in the U.S, though, they must then deal with being seen as Latinos, a new experience and perspective for many such new immigrants or sojourners.

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The inquirer seems to assume that all Latinos must be born outside the United States, when in reality the majority of Latinos are U.S-born[2] and many can trace their ancestors' presence back to the days before this was the U.S. In our example, George gets the message that his response is not what is expected or valued, leading to frustration on both sides of the conversation.

Many Latinos and Latinas in U.S. organizations, whether similar to or different from George, are often engaged in conversations in which they feel misunderstood, stereotyped, or categorized in ways that do not reflect the full richness or complexity of their identities. These kinds of misunderstandings can be common in organizations and costly to the effectiveness of a workgroup or department. Even in organizations that wish to work positively to include Latinos at different levels of the organization, to address Latino needs, or to work proactively to reach Latino markets, feelings of being misunderstood and inappropriately represented can and do arise among some Latinos and Latinas in the organization. This article provides both Latinos and non-Latinos with one starting point to begin unpacking such situations, rooted in an understanding of the diversity of Latino and Latina identity orientations, particularly with regard to race.

Resentments and misunderstandings are often concealed and are not addressed constructively. This can then reduce the willingness of the participants to collaborate or to address other conflicts directly (e.g., Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). Positive relationships across difference and the ability to dialogue are the cornerstone of a multicultural workforce (e.g., Ely, Meyerson, & Davidson, 2006; Ferdman & Davidson, 2002) and yet are difficult to build without considerable support and sensitivity from leaders in these organizations (Wasserman, Gallegos, & Ferdman, in press). We believe that there are specific skills necessary to communicate effectively across cultures and to lead diverse teams in a manner that allows all voices to be heard and all groups to feel valued. These skills must build on a textured understanding both of one's own identity and of the diversity in the groups with which we interact.

Unfortunately, there has also been a vast amount of media and public attention on the alleged negative impact of Latino immigration on the U.S. economy, with charges that Mexican workers are stealing valuable jobs from "Americans."

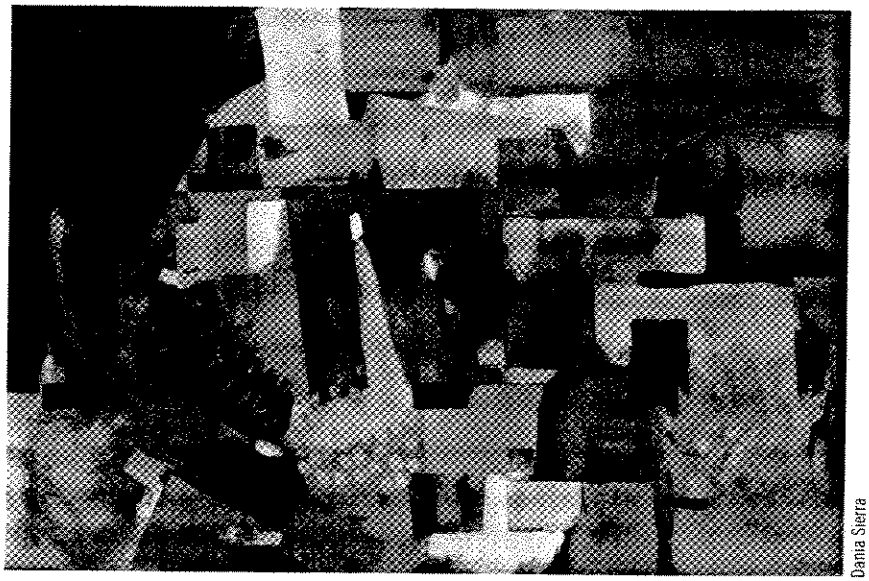
A key aspect of Latino identity that often confounds Latinos and non-Latinos alike has to do with how we relate and apply racial constructs to the members of our group. In the United States, the construct of race has typically been framed in White/Black or White/not-White terms, and has not easily adapted to Latino realities and experience. In our previous work (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001), we explored racial identity development of Latinos and Latinas in the United States, and developed a model of Latino identity orientations to begin to describe the diversity of ways in which Latinos and Latinas deal with race as it is lived and experienced in the U.S. In this article we review that model and its implications for both Latino and non-Latino business leaders and their organizations. We believe that by paying attention to the model and its lessons,

[2] According to the U.S. Census in 2000, 59.8% of those who identified as Hispanic or Latino also indicated that they were native born (Ramirez, 2004). An additional 11.2% were foreign-born naturalized citizens. (This calculation does not include the population of Puerto Rico, who constitute another approximately 3.9 million native born Latinos.)

leaders can develop alternative strategies for communicating and developing as leaders at work that are more sensitive to Latino realities and Latino diversity.

Why Explore Latino Identity?

When we first created our Latino Identity Development model (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001), Latinos were only beginning to be widely recognized as a significant presence in the U.S. population, in spite of having been in the shadows for generations. In the past six years there has been a virtual explosion of attention to who Latinos are, what we want, and how we grew in numbers so quickly. Some of this interest has been positive, helping to expand understanding of Latino diversity and past, current, and future contributions to U.S. society and culture. For example, in the public and government arena, the mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, is the first Latino in that post since 1872 and epitomizes the growth of Latino political power in California; at the same time, the governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson, is being considered a viable candidate for President of the United States; in the entertainment industry there has been greater visibility and prominence for people such as George Lopez and Jennifer Lopez. Unfortunately, there has also been a vast amount of media and public attention on the alleged negative impact of Latino immigration on the U.S. economy, with charges that Mexican workers are stealing valuable jobs from "Americans." Within organizations, more Latinos than ever are entering the workforce at entry levels and moving into supervisory and managerial roles. At the higher executive levels, Latinos continue to be under-represented. Some organizations are desperate to gain access to the expanding and lucrative Hispanic market but are slow to recognize the potential of their workforce to connect them to these communities. Latino employees can not only provide insight about their culture and needs, but also offer creative solutions to stubborn business problems in many different aspects of business beyond those related only to the Hispanic[3] market. Other organizations are taking proactive efforts to provide Latinos with opportunities for leadership development that are designed in light of their particular needs and perspectives.



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As consultants and researchers, we have seen some successful efforts and many failed attempts to harness the power of Latinos to contribute to organizational success. To be able to manage in these complex times, leaders must learn about a

[3] We generally prefer to use the term *Latino*, because it tends to broaden the point of reference for the group to Latin America and to its mixture of indigenous, European, and African influences, rather than primarily to Spain or the Spanish language. However, a large part of the population, including many members of the group, prefers and continues to use the term *Hispanic*.

wider range of differences and become more interculturally competent (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). If organizations are going to succeed, now and in the future, they will need more sophisticated mental models and understanding and a better ability to interact and communicate effectively with Latinos, particularly given Latinos' considerable and growing representation in the workforce. This understanding and ability is also important for individuals—both Latino and non-Latino—who want to build their capacity to engage among and with Latinos. Indeed, because the Latino community is itself so diverse, members of all groups must increase their knowledge and skills with regard to the Latino population. This includes those who identify as Latinos, who must develop a sophisticated understanding not only of their own identity, but also of other Latinos' identities.

Our Latino Identity Development model is even more relevant in organizations today than it was a few years ago. The key to fully engaging and benefiting from Latino talent lies in developing a deeper and more textured understanding and appreciation of Latino diversity and experience. In our model, we describe the broad and complex variation among Latinos and Latinas that often challenges leaders and managers in today's environment. We take an approach that is different than the usual way of breaking down the group by demographic indicators; instead, we look for identity patterns that cut across demographic sub-groups. These patterns represent alternative ways of thinking about oneself, one's group, and intergroup relations, particularly with regard to race.

As a group, Latinos defy simplistic categorization, and do not easily fit into the models of race and identity that have historically prevailed in the United States. Indeed, over the decades, the U.S. Census has adopted a variety of approaches to count the number of Hispanics in the United States. Before 1970, the Census did not assess Hispanic origin directly, but did so by counting "persons of Spanish surname" in particular states (in 1950 and 1960), or people for whom Spanish was the "mother tongue" (in 1940); in 1930, *Mexican* was included as a racial category (Cresce & Ramirez, 2003). In the 1970, 1980, and 1990 censuses, respondents were asked–in a slightly different way each time–whether or not they were of "Spanish/Hispanic origin," and in 2000, they were asked, "Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?" The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that on July 1, 2006, the Hispanic population was 44.3 million, or 14.8 percent of the total U.S. population (plus another 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico, most of whom are U.S. citizens and identify as Hispanic/Latino on the Census).

Latinos do not easily fit into the U.S. system of racial classification, and vary widely in how they respond to the race question on the Census.

The concept of race is particularly challenging when applied to Latinos in the U.S., who, according to the Census, "can be of any race." Latinos do not easily fit into the U.S. system of racial classification, and vary widely in how they respond to the race question on the Census. In 2000, 47.9% of Hispanics indicated they were White, 2.0% said they were Black, 1.2% said they were American Indian, 0.3% said they were Asian, and 42.2% indicated they were of "some other race." These patterns vary depending on national origin, state of residence, and a variety of other demographic characteristics (see, e.g., Tafoya, 2004). For many Latinos, their identity as such incorporates racial elements, while for many others, race is a different type of identity not addressed by their identification as Latino or Hispanic. In either case, U.S. racial constructions have not easily fit the polychromatic (multicolor) reality of Latinos, who tend to see race in a more continuous and less dichotomous or either/or manner than has been typical in the U.S. Indeed, as Denton and Massey (1989) point out, for Puerto Ricans and other Latinos of Caribbean origin, "race is perceived as a spectrum running from White to Black, with many people falling in between" (p. 791). Similarly, Mexicans and Mexican Americans perceive a spectrum ranging from White to Indian.

Some scholars and researchers have expanded their efforts to generate models to describe the ever-increasing racial and ethnic diversity of U.S. society. Racial identity development theory originally focused on African American/Black and White identity development. Now, there are identity models that include Asian Americans, Native Americans, multiracial people and other groups (see, e.g., Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001). Because, Latinos do not easily fit into the dominant system of racial categories in the United States, understanding Latino/a racial identity can in some ways challenge the existing racial order itself. The term Latino/a comprises many subgroups—typically identified in terms of national origin—and each representing significant diversity in experiences, socioeconomic status, language use, and many other social and demographic variables. Another important distinction among many Latinos is whether or not they are immigrants. For relatively new arrivals from Latin America and the Caribbean, especially those coming as adults, the shift from being a member of the majority to a new experience of minority status is a powerful and challenging one. Latinos also span the range of "color" classifications, as they

Table 1: Latino and Latina Racial Identity Orientations

Orientation	Lens	Identify as/prefer	Latinos are seen	Whites are seen	Framing of Race
Undifferentiated/Denial	Closed	People	"Who are Latinos?"	Supposedly color-blind (accept dominant norms)	Denial, irrelevant, invisible
White-identified	Tinted	Whites	Negatively	Very positively	White/Black, either/or, one-drop or "mejorar la raza" (i.e., improve the race)
Latino as Other	External	Not White	Generically, fuzzily	Negatively	White/not White
Sub-group identified	Narrow	Own sub-group	My group OK, others maybe	Not central (could be barriers or blockers)	Not clear or central; secondary to nationality, ethnicity, culture
Latino-identified (Racial/Raza)	Broad	Latinos	Very positively	Distinct; could be barriers or allies	Latino/not Latino
Latino-integrated	Wide	Individuals in a group context	Positively	Complex	Dynamic, contextual, socially constructed

Note. Adapted from "Latinos and Racial Identity Development" by B. M. Ferdman & P. I. Gallegos, 2001, in C. L. Wijeyesinghe & B. W. Jackson III (Eds.), New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology, New York: New York University Press. Copyright 2001 by Bernardo M. Ferdman and Plácida I. Gallegos. Reprinted with permission.

can trace their heritage to indigenous peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Europe, making it difficult to describe the racial identity of Latinos and Latinas in conventional ways.

Varieties of Latino Identity

Our model offers a way of describing various identity orientations of Latinos and Latinas, particularly with regard to race and racial constructs. By exploring and understanding Latino and Latina identity, it is possible to learn more about identity development in general, because many racial and ethnic groups have a similarly complex identity. In contrast with some other identity models, however, we do not present Latino/a racial identity development in a linear manner; we do not expect or predict clear-cut predictable steps leading from one identity orientation to another. We embrace the use of the "lens" metaphor to summarize how individuals view their ethnicity, wider issues, and other racial/ethnic groups. As individuals change their social circumstances—move to different neighborhoods, attend college, enter the workforce, encounter discrimination, and have other experiences—their orientation is likely to be challenged and modified; however, some may remain in one orientation throughout their entire lives. Table 1 provides a quick overview of the model. In the following sections we summarize what we see as the essential elements of each orientation and offer examples of the behaviors and perspectives that might be manifested by someone holding each worldview.

Undifferentiated Orientation

Latinos who view their identity from this perspective prefer to identify as "just people" with a relatively closed lens in comparison to other orientations. They tend to describe themselves as "color-blind" and accept dominant societal norms without much question, attributing any barriers to inclusion to individual behavior rather than intergroup dynamics or institutionalized racism. Other developmental models (e.g., Bennett & Bennett, 2004) would define this orientation as one of denial of cultural difference and a form of ethnocentrism.

There were sometimes conflicts between ethnic groups and he found that his connection to White Anglos caused him to be criticized by other Latinos and accused of abandoning his people. He resented these criticisms and felt unfairly judged by minority group members.

Raul grew up in a small farming community in the Midwest where his family were the only Latinos in the area. He went to school with non-Hispanic Whites and had minimal contact with Latinos outside of his family. When he went to work in a large manufacturing plant in a nearby city, he encountered other ethnic groups and found it difficult to relate to their experiences. Some of them complain of being treated unfairly, which he sees as their unwillingness to take responsibility for their own circumstances. Having never experienced overt discrimination himself, he doesn't see how others make such attributions and thinks of their complaints as whining and making excuses for their own lack of achievement. His belief is that the playing field is level for all groups and that individual effort is all that matters. He sees no need to particularly connect with other Latinos and is unwilling to participate in organizational activities focused on Latinos as a group. For Raul, "people are people," no matter what their background.

White-Identified Orientation

These individuals see themselves racially as White and as different from and generally superior to people of color (e.g., African Americans). They may be completely assimilated into White culture and disconnected from other Latinos, or they may be connected to a particular Latino subgroup, while denying or not seeing any connection to other subgroups. They tend to view the world through White-tinted lenses, preferring Whites and White culture over Latinos and Latino culture. They view race in bifurcated terms—White or Black— identifying people as one or the other. Bennett and Bennett (2004) describe this stance as one of "reversal," such that the other culture is viewed as superior to one's own and elevated in the mind and behavior of the individual.

Phil grew up in the suburbs of Chicago attending racially mixed schools. As an athlete in high school he found himself associating primarily with non-Hispanic Whites and viewed Latinos as less competitive and academically oriented. He felt greater connection to White Anglo friends and dated primarily non-Hispanic girls. There were sometimes conflicts between ethnic groups and he found that his connection to White Anglos caused him to be criticized by other Latinos and accused of abandoning his people. He resented these criticisms and felt unfairly judged by minority group members. He honestly felt more valued and identified with his White friends who treated him just like one of them. Eventually, Phil found himself in an organization where his identification and comfort level with non-Latino Whites allowed him to build good relationships with them and at the same time sometimes alienated him from other Latinos in his workplace.

Latino as "Other" Orientation

From this orientation, the lens is focused primarily externally on the way the group is viewed by those outside the group, thus seeing oneself primarily as "not White," but without a strong or clearly defined knowledge of or identity with one's own group. Individuals with this orientation may not be familiar with or adhere closely to Latino cultural values or norms, yet do not identify with White cultural values or norms either. They generally identify with people of color in a more generic sense.

Whether or not individuals embrace their identity and culture, they are usually doing the best they can to survive and become successful, given the conditions they encounter.

Marta grew up in Brooklyn, New York, in a neighborhood and in schools with people from many different groups, though almost no Whites. Her maternal grandparents had migrated to New York from Puerto Rico in the early 1940s, her paternal grandfather was from Honduras, with Jamaican ancestry, and her father's mother was Colombian. Marta's parents, both born in New York, often mixed in Spanish words in their English, but never said much about their family backgrounds. Marta always thought there was a difference between Whites and Latinos but did not pay much attention to understanding what those differences were or how they influenced interactions. She was aware, though, that people of color had suffered in the United States, and understood that Whites were the group in power. Issues of difference among people of color were not spoken about with her friends and colleagues, so she never confronted her own specific beliefs or identity. When Marta had experiences that might be discriminatory, she was puzzled about these dynamics, but unable to explain them beyond attributing them to White racism. She likes Latino food, music and style but doesn't see herself as behaving according to traditional Latino values. She

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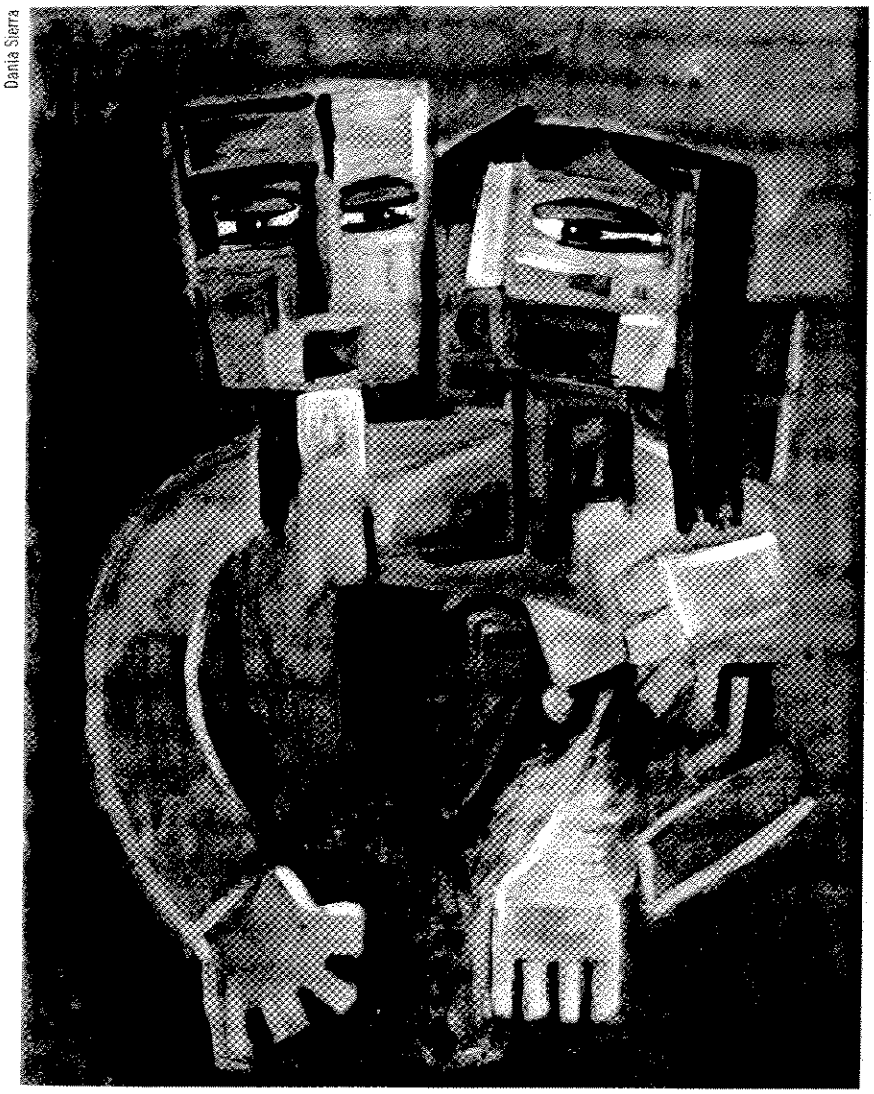


also prefers to spend time with friends and co-workers who are not White, including Latinos, African Americans, and Asians. When Marta is asked by others about her specific background and culture, she is at a loss for what to say and wonders about the expectation that she can or should be able to explain her group to others from different backgrounds. "I know we're different, it's just hard for me to describe how..."

Sub-Group Identified Orientation

With their narrower lens, people with this orientation think of themselves primarily in terms of their own distinct ethnic or national-origin subgroup. They view their group (e.g., Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans) as distinct from non-Hispanic Whites (whom they might often call "Americans"), but they do not necessarily identify with other Latinos or people of color, except for practical reasons (such as to gain more political power). They tend to see their own subgroup in a positive light but may view other groups, including other Latino subgroups, as deficient or inferior. They might generally see Whites either as barriers to full inclusion or as peripheral and unimportant to their own day-to-day experiences. For those with this orientation, race is not a primary organizing concept for their identity – rather, nationality, ethnicity, and culture play a larger role.

Luis was born in Puerto Rico and only came to the States in his early twenties, to attend college in New York City. He fully immersed himself in Puerto Rican culture, values and behavior with little interest in or involvement with other groups. Most of his friends were other Puerto Ricans who shared his passion for their beloved island—Borinquen, as they tended to call it—and worked at maintaining their cultural ways of being. Though Luis interacted with people from other groups—including other Latinos—effectively at work, his main source of connection and identification was with others who shared his Puerto Rican background. In the workplace, Luis preferred the company of other Puerto Ricans and tried to minimize his interactions with people who

did not share his history and culture. Luis did participate in the activities of the Hispanic employee network in his organization, taking primary responsibility for organizing the Puerto Rican caucus and linking it to the larger group.

Latino-Identified Orientation

Through this lens, Latino identity is viewed in a relatively broad way, placing culture, history, and other ethnic markers in a prominent place. People who hold this orientation tend to view Latinos as a whole as constituting a distinct racial category across all subgroups, while maintaining a distinctly Latino and dynamic view of race. In this sense, they see their connections to other Latinos and Latinas as transcending particular cultural markers, and can be advocates for Latino issues in a broad, pan-ethnic sense, at the same time that they see Whites as constituting a separate racial category. They maintain a fairly open view of other groups and perceive Whites as potential allies or barriers, depending on their behavior.

Growing up in Los Angeles, Julia was exposed early in life to the wide range of Latinos and other groups. Her father was from Mexico City and her mother grew up in El Salvador. She came to understand that Latinos were different depending on where they were from and how they grew up and was able to adapt to differences between the groups. At the same time, she saw mostly similarities between different types of Latinos, including their passionate style of expression, strong family orientation, and pride in their countries of origin. Julia's job requires considerable domestic and international travel, which has exposed her to many different types of people, including the range of people throughout Latin America, with whom she feels a vital and primary connection that transcends cultural differences. Julia has also had broad experiences and built relationships with other groups, including White colleagues and mentors who have helped her career. She is proud of being a Latina and brings her differences to the forefront as she learns and engages with others about their differences. In this sense, she has been a strong advocate for Latino-focused leadership development and for Latino recruitment initiatives in her organization.

Latino-Integrated Orientation

This perspective allows individuals to understand and deal with the full complexity of Latino identity. They see Latino identity as wholly integrated with their other social identities—such as those based on gender, class, religion, profession, and other dimensions—and they view themselves, other Latinos, non-Hispanic Whites, and the members of other groups with the widest possible lens, recognizing and accepting the complexities of their own and others' individual and cultural orientations (see, e.g., Holvino, 2006). Those with this orientation challenge prevailing constructions of race, and they can at once identify strongly with other Latinos while working to address within-group challenges such as sexism, classism, or homophobia.

Fernando's father was an Air Force officer and so Fernando's family lived in many cities throughout his childhood and teen years. Growing up, Fernando was exposed to Latinos, Whites, Blacks, Asians and other groups and learned that no one group was all bad or all good. He developed the skills of engaging with individuals and getting to know them, including understanding their cultural identities and making decisions about how to treat them based on their character and individuality. Fernando appreciates the differences among the groups and is very interested in learning more about how their experiences have contributed to their identities. Fernando shares his own experiences openly but recognizes that his Latino identity is one of many contributors to how he sees the world and so he is careful not to impose his way of being on others. He makes choices about how to interact in any given situation, sometimes acting explicitly out of a Latino-identified position and other times choosing to behave differently. Fernando feels clear about his own identity and is always interested in expanding his understanding of his own culture and how it shifts over time based on life experiences. He sees cultural identity as one part of who he is and is interested in being seen as multidimensional

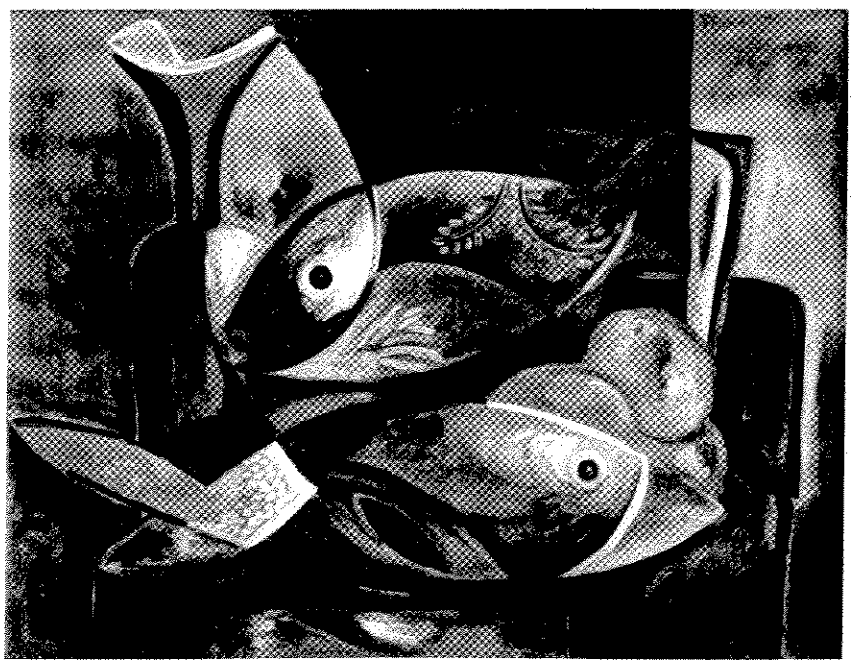
with contributions and interactions of multiple identities such as man, American, father, Buddhist, manager, etc. Fernando avoids being stereotyped and works to remove his own blinders and prejudices about other groups. He balances his attention to differences with recognition of the commonalities across individuals and values both.

Organizational Implications of Latino Identity Development Model

In presenting and encouraging use of this model, our intent is to offer organizations and individuals deeper understanding of the complexity of Latino identities. We believe this kind of insight can be particularly helpful to leaders—Latino and non-Latino alike—who wish to recognize the varieties of Latino experience and perspectives, to better engage Latino employees and stakeholders, and to improve the situation of Latinos and Latinas in U.S. organizations. We have worked with a variety of leaders in organizations who are proactively seeking to address issues that they see facing Latinos in their workplace. These leaders are often puzzled as to why all Latinos in the organization do not immediately join these efforts, or express a preference for different types of initiatives than those proposed or championed by the leaders. We are often asked questions such as: "What's the best way to reach out to all Latinos?" "How can we encourage more people to join the Hispanic employee resource group or the Latino managers' association?" "What's the best way to communicate with other Latinos so that they will engage with our efforts?" "Why don't more people respond to our special call for Latino leadership development?"

Our model suggests that there is no single answer to these or similar questions, and that any initiatives that, implicitly or explicitly, assume homogeneity among Latinos are likely to falter. Indeed, the principal message is that Latinos will participate in, lead, and respond to organizational initiatives targeted at them differently depending on their identity orientation. Some will feel unfairly and inappropriately singled out and, at the other end of the spectrum, others might believe the initiatives do not go sufficiently far or deep.

We do not recommend using our model for quick categorization of individuals based on assessing their orientations. Rather, our hope is that readers will be able to develop better hypotheses about individual, group, and organizational dynamics based on enhanced sensitivity to the possible variations among Latinos. Each of the identity orientations we describe has its own integrity and has emerged as one way of adapting to environmental and historical situations. Latinos and Latinas in the United States are often confronted with negative perceptions of their group and have developed complex and sophisticated strategies for dealing with the barriers posed by these views.



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Whether or not individuals embrace their identity and culture, they are usually doing the best they can to survive and become successful, given the conditions they encounter. Thus, each identity orientation can and should be validated and respected as a possible response to individual life circumstances. Our perspective is that each orientation has its costs and benefits which, when properly understood and utilized, can lead to valuable contributions from Latinos to organizational success. In Latino leadership development work, we have learned that we need to engage with each individual where he or she is at the time, even as we challenge each person to expand his or her perspectives and move beyond comfort zones. By understanding individuals through the framework of our model of identity orientations, we can respect individual differences, and also begin to uncover systematic patterns that can affect Latinos as a group. By presenting aspects of the model to Latinos and Latinas, we can encourage more understanding and acceptance of within-group differences, and ultimately, better collaboration across these differences.

Ultimately, we believe that the most constructive outcome of this approach can be improved cross-cultural collaboration and the development of better collegial relationships between Latinos and members of other groups and among Latinos. Here, we provide leaders with recommendations for accomplishing these outcomes in three principal categories: 1) skillful and dialogic communication across differences, 2) careful attention to team and workgroup demographics, and 3) learning about differences. In each of these areas, we suggest that both Latinos and non-Latinos can benefit from incorporating these particular practices and behaviors, inspired by considering the range of Latino identity orientations. We conclude with recommendations for organizational-level strategies to maximize Latino and Latina inclusion.

Skillful and Dialogic Communication

The reality of both within- and between-group differences (see, e.g., Ferdman, 1995) means that both Latinos and non-Latinos must continually develop skills for effective engagement and dialogue with others both inside and outside our own group. Even when we share an ethnic label or background with others, we cannot assume that they will see the world like we do. Depending on geography and nationality, both Latinos and non-Latinos have had limited exposure to the full range of Latino diversity. For example, Mexican Americans in the Southwest may have had limited contact with Puerto Ricans. Texas, New Mexico, New York, Florida, and California all have different mixes of Latinos, in each case distinct and complex. When we add age, gender, generation, sexual orientation, immigration status, nativity, and other identities to the mix the picture quickly becomes even more complex. Thus, assuming homogeneity about Latinos or different cultural groups can be problematic for Latinos and non-Latinos alike. The following are suggestions Latino and non-Latino leaders can use to enhance their communication skills and intercultural competence:

- Share about yourself first before expecting others to open up or take the risk of sharing details about their background, culture, or life experiences.
- Do not assume either similarity or difference. Allow for these to emerge in the context of dialogue, as you express genuine curiosity.
- When bringing up a topic, acknowledge your interest in learning more as well as your uncertainty about the topic; sincerity and transparency of intent go a long way toward building trust.
- Ask better questions–develop inquiry skills that allow others to tell their stories; invite them to share their experiences and perspectives, from their point of view, rather than forcing them into your own categories, frameworks, and expectations.
- Support, model, and reward risk taking; communicate clearly and directly that you value new ideas and that alternative ideas are welcome; make it clear that conformity is not necessary for inclusion.
- Provide frequent, specific, and supportive ongoing information and feedback about performance.

Careful Attention to Team and Workgroup Demographics

Although important as a first step in recognizing diversity, knowing the broad demographic categorization of the members of a group is not sufficient. Leaders should develop more sophisticated and nuanced approaches that incorporate cultural knowledge and apply it in a flexible and open way, one that allows for contradictory evidence and modification of conclusions based on new information. The variety among Latinos will continue to confound attempts at quick or easy generalizations. For example, many Latinos in the U.S. are bilingual Spanish speakers, but there are also large numbers who are monolingual English speakers, monolingual Spanish speakers, or English speakers who can understand Spanish without being able to speak it. At the population level, it may be valid to expect that Latinos tend to be bilingual Spanish/English speakers, as long as we do not assume that any particular Latino can speak both languages fluently. Further complicating interactions among Latinos and of Latinos with non-Latinos is the variation among Latinos in the type of Spanish spoken. Regional differences are prominent, for example, such that Central Americans, South Americans, Tejanos, Floridians, New Mexicans, and Californians each have different accents and vocabulary that should be acknowledged and taken into account. Assuming because all speak Spanish that therefore the Spanish they speak is the same can lead to missed opportunities for meaningful dialogue within and between groups.

Additional recommendations regarding how to attend to group diversity are as follows:

- Seek opportunities to mentor others and to be mentored — both within-group (by other Latinos) as well as across groups.
- Accept different work styles, communication styles, and relationship styles – allow for different ways of problem solving, leading, and getting work done.
- Recognize existing and implicit norms – continually examine and revise these to assure fit across cultures and sub-cultures and to minimize cultural bias.
- Provide tools and build skills to help diverse teams address conflict, value differences, and communicate clearly.
- Intentionally involve a wide range of people and include diverse perspectives–always look out for what might be missing and who else you may need to hear from, and consider possible blinders or unquestioned assumptions.

Learning about Differences

Organizations and their leaders should resist simplifications about any particular group or sub-group, and should constantly strive to learn more about the particular manifestations of diversity that come from the specific groups and their members that are present in the organization (as well as what this means for how more can be done to incorporate even greater diversity). With regard to Latinos, the challenge is to address the issues facing the group overall, while at the same time understanding and accepting within-group differences.

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For example, many Latino managers and workers face particular dilemmas when they find that the values taught in their homes contradict what is expected in their workplace. One such value is humility, which is often prized and reinforced by Latino cultures; yet, in most business settings, people are told or otherwise learn that they are expected to "toot their own horn" and tell others directly about their strengths and accomplishments. Many Latinos have found it difficult to walk the line between producing the behavior expected in a competitive business setting while maintaining their precious cultural values. This is the essence of living a bicultural life—learning to live effectively in two worlds and knowing how to adapt to each in a coherent way. Yet, in spite of this reality that we have heard

about from many Latinos, we have also met Latinos and others who do not experience this, and others who mentor Latinos by suggesting that they simply assimilate to the dominant style. Certainly, whether or not this approach will work will depend on the individual's identity orientation at the time. We offer the following learning suggestions for leaders who wish to better understand and address Latino diversity:

- Take responsibility for your own learning, rather than depending on a particular individual or single source. There are many readily available sources of knowledge about Latinos and Latinas, including community events, books, movies, dialogue, and visiting different neighborhoods and countries.
- Recognize and explore your own identities and cultural orientations to be aware of when they complement or contradict the values and orientations of other groups and individuals.
- Expect to have your current assumptions challenged and invite these interactions as valuable moments that can lead to transformational learning and new insights.
- Be bold in addressing blatant and subtle acts of exclusion -- use these as opportunities for organizational learning rather than compliance or punishment (see Wasserman et al., in press).
- Differentiate between stereotypes and real cultural differences and characteristics.

What to Do: Organizational Strategies for Maximizing Latino and Latina Inclusion

In the previous section, we focused on what individual leaders can do in their roles to optimize Latino and Latina contributions. Attention to organizational effectiveness should incorporate these individual-level actions on the part of leaders and should also address more systemic issues. This is especially important given the likelihood that many organizations still have structural inequalities with unintended impacts that create barriers to the full inclusion of Latinos and Latinas. Below, we provide a list of strategies we recommend to begin to address these broader issues at the organizational level.

In implementing these strategies, organizations should take into account the varying needs and perspectives of Latinos with the different orientations described in our model. For example, those who are Latino-identified may value mentoring other Latinos in the organization and in the outside community, and Latinos who are White-identified may prefer not to be involved in ethnic-related projects. Organizations need to identify strategies that are consistent with their organizational objectives, and recognize that Latinos will react differently depending on their individual identity orientations.

For the sake of clarity, our strategic recommendations are organized into five categories. In reality, these categories relate and overlap with each other.

Organizational culture, policies, and practices.

- Establish a clear business case for valuing differences in general and Latino/a diversity in particular. Communicate across the organization the specific business necessity and rationale for building inclusion, connecting initiatives to concrete business objectives and strategic plans.
- Develop a vision of an inclusive culture that recognizes the added value of both between- and within-group differences.
- Be explicit about organizational norms and behaviors that support an inclusive culture for all employees.
- Review organizational policies and practices to eliminate subtle cultural biases, such as performance management systems that require active self-promotion in ways that may be culturally challenging for some Latinos.

Leadership development and education.

- Recognize and intentionally build organizational knowledge among all managers about the range of Latino/a diversity.
- Develop creative mentoring programs that allow Latinos to mentor and be mentored by other Latinos as well as non-Latinos. Consider using, for example, mentoring circles that pair senior leaders with multiple mentees in small groups

- Provide a range of developmental opportunities and education/training programs that take into account the varying needs of Latinos with different orientations described in our model. Consider, for example, offering Latino-specific leadership development programs.

Latino pipeline.

- Develop and implement innovative approaches for outreach and partnership in the community to bring new talent into the organization, for example, via internships, cooperative learning programs and other such initiatives directed at young Latinos and Latinas.
- Identify high potential Latino leaders representing the variety of identity orientations and provide focused developmental experiences.
- Build diverse leadership at all levels of the organization and assure that Latinos are well represented at each level including upper management levels. Promote Latino role models to demonstrate that success and upward mobility are possible and encouraged.

Accountability.

- Create and implement processes for developing and measuring intercultural competence and inclusion.
- Build coaching capacity among all managers, including skills for identifying and supporting performance excellence for Latinos and non-Latinos.
- Provide incentives for managers and executives to support and contribute to the development of Latino and Latina leaders, to learn about Latino diversity, and to become involved with organizational diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Community and market relations.

- Establish and support internal affinity and employee resource groups that can both foster development of internal resources and serve as bridges and interpreters for the organization's relationship with the external Latino communities.
- Consider individual identity orientations and preferences when assigning Latino employees to projects and teams, especially when cultural and linguistic knowledge is particularly relevant.

Future Directions

As scholar-practitioners, we intend to continue developing the Latino Identity Development Model by identifying factors that contribute to each orientation as well as environmental influences and life experiences that cause a person to shift from one orientation to another. We have yet to explain the resilience of individuals who are able to overcome negative treatment and societal conditions. How is it that some Latinos face tremendous barriers to become successful while others are devastated by the same set of circumstances? Given the inevitable experience of marginalization that Latinos and other groups face, we want to explore support mechanisms that will allow them to better understand and cope with these cross-cultural dilemmas.

It is critical that organizational leaders strategically intervene to create more inclusive organizations that encourage Latino development and achievement. By considering the range of Latino diversity and identity orientations, we believe that more nuanced approaches to this process can be designed and implemented. Indeed, in our own work to develop Latino leaders, we have stressed a focus on self-exploration and dialogue that encourages this approach. By doing this, we have been able to foster greater acceptance and unity among Latinos and Latinas with quite divergent backgrounds and identity orientations; this has, in turn, enhanced their capacity to work together to engage with non-Latino peers and supervisors and to work with their organization to improve the overall situation for Latinos. Highlighting best practices and sharing successful initiatives across companies and industries will allow us to continue creating more cohesive and inclusive settings in which all groups can thrive. ■

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The authors appreciate the comments of Maya Bristow on an earlier draft of the paper. We are also grateful to Ilene Wassserman for extensive conversations that have helped us shape our ideas on dialogue and communication.

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