ETHNIC IDENTITY: AN EXAMINATION OF HISPANIC
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillments of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Minerva Correa, B.A.

Denton, Texas

May, 1996
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I interviewed twenty-four International students from the following countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Puerto Rico and Spain. Hereafter I shall refer to the respondents as Hispanic International students.

My primary interest was to learn the way in which Hispanic International students defined themselves in view of ethnic definitions imposed on them by the administrative system in the U.S. First, Hispanic International students defined themselves primarily by their nationality. The second finding dealt with the usage of language. The Hispanic International students spoke Spanish with relatives and friends. They spoke English when a non-Spanish speaker joined the conversation. The third finding was related to the problems and adaptations encountered by Hispanic International students.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of International students has centered on the adjustment and adaptation process they undergo in the host society. Due to the current world processes that have made it possible for an increasing movement of people and the quick interchange of ideas across nations, issues of ethnic identity and ethnicity have gained importance. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is currently being negotiated.¹ The repercussions of this goal go beyond the shared benefits of a common market system. For purposes of this study, NAFTA is symbolic for the larger changes occurring in the global order. These changes have resulted in the interchange of students and scholars on an international level. One witnesses the pattern where American students study abroad and, in turn, students from NAFTA is a pact between Canada, the United States, and Mexico to create a mutually beneficial system of commerce with lower trade tariffs for the members and higher tariffs for non-member countries. This agreement seeks to replicate the European Community trade block. This agreement while financially beneficial had the unexpected effect of fostering reactions of protectionism. The immigrants in Europe are viewed as 'resident others' and delegated to second class citizens which raises the possibility that the identity if the European Community might become based on an elitist foundation (Welsh, 1994). The racial and ethnic conflicts arising at this level have led to an increasing interest on race and ethnic relations at the global level.

¹ NAFTA is a pact between Canada, the United States, and Mexico to create a mutually beneficial system of commerce with lower trade tariffs for the members and higher tariffs for non-member countries. This agreement seeks to replicate the European Community trade block. This agreement while financially beneficial had the unexpected effect of fostering reactions of protectionism. The immigrants in Europe are viewed as 'resident others' and delegated to second class citizens which raises the possibility that the identity if the European Community might become based on an elitist foundation (Welsh, 1994). The racial and ethnic conflicts arising at this level have led to an increasing interest on race and ethnic relations at the global level.
all parts of the world come to the United States. I have interviewed twenty-four respondents attending a university in the North Texas region.

The purpose of this study is to examine the following research questions: 1) While residing in the United States, have you ever been identified by others as a member of an U.S. racial or ethnic minority group? Race and ethnic identities within U.S. society do not fit those of foreign students. These data suggest that some modifications are necessary in terms of Yinger's (1994) framework with respect to ethnic identity. As the study progressed it was clear that the majority of the respondents were not aware of any dramatic redefinition of their ethnicity as members of an U.S. racial or ethnic group. 2) However, the respondents were sensitive to the kinds of adaptations they made to the racial and ethnic patterns within U.S. society. As we shall read in Chapter IV, the respondents emphasized their national identity (e.g., Honduran, Puerto Rican, Colombian, etc.) rather than taking on the categories of U.S. racial and ethnic groups. I was interested in how Hispanic International students defined their ethnic identity in terms of racial categories by which they become defined administratively (in official governmental data and reports) and through the interaction with others while residing in the United States. 3) Since their ethnic categories did not fit the ethnic labels set forth by the administrative system
in the United States they encountered some problems while residing in the United States as International students.

The respondents in this study comprised a very diverse group. They came to the United States as students from Central and South America. More specifically, they came from Honduras, Mexico, Columbia, Puerto Rico, Panama, Costa Rica, Peru, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Spain. I included one respondent who was born in Brazil (which, in reality, is not included in the Hispanic groups in the U.S. Census).

However, Marin and Marin (1991) argue that the definition of the general term "Hispanic" as an ethnic label presents problems for those individuals who trace their family background to, for example, Brazil, the Guyanas, Portugal, Cape Verde or the Philippines. As for Brazil and Portugal specifically, these authors state:

In the case of Brazil and Portugal it could be argued that while Spanish culture or origin are absent, the two Iberian countries have shared not only substantial cultural traditions but historically have shared governments, commerce, and derivations of the language (p. 21).

As for the social science literature on foreign-born population groups, one body of literature focuses on the work force and the inequalities that arise on the basis of racial and ethnic divisions. Some of this literature discusses market stratification which leads to the
internationalization of minorities. According to Enloe (1986) any state needs a division of labor on which it can rely for insuring productivity that the state can at least partially harness for its own maintenance and expansion. The division of labor is commonly organized not only on the basis of class but to some extent on racial and ethnic divisions as well.

Another body of literature focuses on the temporary worker programs used in the United States. Probably the most well-known temporary worker program in the United States is the Bracero Program (1945) in which Mexican agricultural workers were allowed to reside and work in the United States on a temporary basis. When their labor was no longer needed the program was terminated and the workers were sent back to Mexico. Some citizens as well as authorities confused the ethnicity of Mexican Americans with Mexican nationals or they simply did not view these two groups as having an ethnic identity that was distinct from one another. These persons failed to recognize that even though Mexicans and Mexican Americans share a common history, their socialization experiences are very different. By way of illustration, Gimenez states (1993 p. 42):

The denial of identity based on national origin to foreign workers from the periphery reflects the powerlessness of their countries of origin in the hierarchy of states.
Not only is the country of origin in a lower status but their ethnic identification places these two separate groups at a disadvantaged position.

With the growing population trend forecast for the total Hispanic population it becomes even more important to study ethnic identity within Hispanic subgroups. In the year 2005 Hispanics will become the largest minority group in the U.S. This fact is significant politically, socially, and culturally (Totti, 1987). The impact of immigrants (particularly for those groups who trace their family history to one of the Spanish-speaking Latin American nations or to Spain) is important because the new immigrants add to the numbers of the United States racial and ethnic minorities. While these groups may not have an allegiance to the causes espoused by U.S. minorities, the potential for political change remains. The importance of research on ethnicity is underscored by Tambiah's (1988) statement:

...in the modern context and in many third world societies, is the mounting awareness that ethnic affiliation and ethnic identity are overriding other

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2 According to the 1990 Census, there are 22.3 million Hispanics residing in the United States.

3 A number of social scientists argue that the term "Latino" is the best label to describe Hispanics (for further discussion see Hayes-Bautista and Chapa (1987). The majority of the respondents in this study responded to "Hispanic" when I asked, "By what term do you identify yourself? Mexican American, Latin American, Latino(a), Hispanic, Mexican, or Other."
social cleavages and superseding other bases of
differentiation to become the master principle and the
major identity for purposes of sociopolitical action
(p. 336).

It is, therefore, important to study the way Hispanic
International students identify themselves. International
students may prove to be an influential link between
countries. In addition, at the end of their educational
training, they will represent a class of professionals with
the ability to function in more than one society. As such
they will have the capability to become active participants
in the macro-economic movement for one America. It becomes
imperative that social scientists access the established
categories for identifying Hispanics both from the United
States and incoming immigrants. In my judgement there is a
gap in the literature regarding the ethnic identity of
International students.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the social science literature pertaining to, for example, terms such as "Hispanic," identity, self-identification, and new ethnicity. I shall focus on ethnic identity and the issues associated with it. This will provide background data to understanding the problems International students experience when identifying themselves in ethnic terms commonly used in the United States.

An important part of any research project is the respondents' characteristics such as socioeconomic status, level of education, age, gender etc. Nonetheless, when a study deals with an ethnic minority group, characteristics such as language, ethnic identity, and culture become very important. Typically, the researcher will ask the respondents how they identify their ethnicity. The researcher will use the ethnic term most frequently used when the respondents engage in self-identification.

In this study I was interested in examining the ethnic identity of Hispanic International students. I was

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4 The designation Hispanic International students was made because the respondents often used it to identify themselves. The label "Hispanic" was not an internalized part of their self-concept but it was used for bureaucratic purposes.
specifically intent on studying if International students from Spanish-speaking countries had ever been identified by others as members of a U.S. racial or ethnic minority group. Hispanic

In the 1980s several studies have pointed to the confusion of ethnicity. More specifically, the definition of the term "Hispanic" has not been an easy task. It is for this reason that I provide a brief summary of how the term Hispanic is defined by official statistics. Marin and Marin (1991) offer the following explanation of the term Hispanic:

'Hispanic' as an ethnic label is the product of a decision by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1978 to operationalize the label as 'A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race' (Federal Register, 1978, p. 19269). The word is supposed to be a derivation of the Latin word for Spain (Hispania) that at times has also been used to describe the whole Iberian peninsula (Spain, Portugal, and Andorra). The Royal Academy of the Spanish Language further defines those individuals born south of the Rio Grande as 'Hispanoamericanos' lending support to the appropriateness of the use of 'Hispanic' to refer to individuals who trace their ancestral background to one of those countries in the Americas (p. 20).

Marin and Marin (1991) continue to discuss that the
emergence of the label "Hispanic" has created confusion in the application of the OMB criteria as well as arguments against its usage (see also Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987). Portes (1990) contends that until recently such a name for the groups represented under the Hispanic label did not exist and that its creation was essentially for the convenience of administrative agencies and for scholarly research. Tienda and Ortiz (1986) explain the rejection of ethnic categories by a number of Hispanics in the 1980 Census stating:

The extent of reporting nationality-specific items suggest to us that these individuals were likely to be Hispanics with ambivalent ethnic identities who misreported their origin either because they objected to the lack of response choices on the full-enumeration item (e.g., no Venezuelan, Argentine, etc., choice), or who deliberately denied their Hispanic origins (p. 11).

An alternative explanation is offered by Martin, Demaio, and Campanelli (1990) who altered the sequence of the race and Hispanic identifier questions. This did not affect the responses of foreign-born Hispanics but did make a difference for U.S. Hispanics. Thus, a distinct difference emerges in the way foreign Hispanic and U.S. Hispanics conceptualize race and by extension how they conceptualize ethnicity. This view, may in part, explain why some Hispanics identified themselves as 'Other' in the 1990
Census. More specifically, Rodriguez states that the 'Other' response reflects a widespread view among Hispanics that race is a cultural, social, and political concept. Thus, a distinct difference emerges in the way foreign Hispanic and U.S. Hispanics conceptualize race and by extension how they conceptualize ethnicity.

The minoritization of immigrants from periphery countries is exacerbated in part by the current practices of ethnic identification and accounting for affirmative action purposes which renders the brain drain invisible. The erroneous perception of immigrants being predominantly uneducated persists. As Weintraub and Ross (1982) state "The temporary foreign worker is generally placed among the unskilled. Not all are, but the Mexicans, most Caribbeans, and Central Americans usually are" (p. 56). The foreign professional and technical workers disappear into the statistics designed to show progress in "minority recruitment" (Gimenez, 1988). According to Rao (1979) discussions on the brain drain usually include two different groups of persons, i.e. (1) professionals who migrate from developing countries to developed countries for work and (2) students who go from developing countries for educational and training purposes but later decide to live and work there on a long term basis.

Identity

Who are we? The issue of defining who we are arises
for everyone at one time or another and is one of the most problematic areas of study. Identity is one of the most difficult challenges to which social science is called to respond (Liebkind, 1989). In fact most studies dealing with the issues of ethnicity and identity mention the difficulty in the task and the wealth of concepts that have been created in order to fully explain and comprehend the subject matter. Some of the disciplines that have addressed identity and ethnicity are sociology, psychology, social psychology and anthropology. For instance, in the field of sociology identity is defined as "a set of meanings applied to the self in a social role or situation defining what it means to be who one is" (Burke and Tully, 1977). In the field of psychology identity is defined as ego identity by Erickson (1950), who was the first to propose the concept in this area of study. Each field has developed its own emphasis in meanings for the terminology used in discussing identity. Sociology focuses on the relationship between groups and how identity is a product of that interaction. The emphasis in psychology is on the cognitive processes involved in identity. Both sociology and psychology use the terms self, self concept, selves, and the developmental components of the self theorized by eminent scholars. The works of George Herbert Mead, William James, Sigmund Freud, and Jean Piaget are used in both sociology and psychology.

Identity theory views identity as a continuous process
rather than as a state or trait of an individual which can act as a coping and problem solving mechanism for dealing with anxiety and stress (Burke, 1991). From the symbolic interaction perspective, people may have as many identities as roles played in different sets of social situations and relationships. Along the same lines Yinger (1994) posits that each person has several identities including ethnic identity all of which are not fixed and which identity is dominant or more salient at a certain time depends in part on other people, on individual choice, and on the circumstances of the moment.

Two types of identity which are of particular importance are social identity and ethnic identity. The concept of social identity refers to how others identify the person in terms of broad social categories such as age, occupation, or ethnicity (Dashefsky and Shapiro, 1979; Williams, 1990). A person's social identity is at any given time a function of his or her validated social position (Sarbin, and Scheibe, 1983). For most people personal identity and social identity are equivalent (Allen, Welder, and Atkinson, 1983). Social identity is that part of the self concept derived from the individual's group memberships and interpersonal relationships and social position and status (Breakwell, 1983). Social identities or social roles provide templates for self-conception: providing a structure and an evaluation of that structure (Breakwell,
Thus, self-conception is a cognitive phenomenon which consists of the set of attitudes an individual holds about him or herself (Dashefsky and Shapiro, 1979).

Nationality and Ethnicity

Nationality is a sense of belonging. Nationality also refers to a group of people that are characterized and by a cultural pattern that consists of certain definite features (Fairchild, 1947). Furthermore, language occupies a pivotal position in nationality because it is a crucial factor in culture. A common language provides people with a sense of social solidarity. Moon (1993, p. 67) states that "the idea of 'nation'... unites people horizontally and defines them as having a common identity."

The sociological concept of ethnic identity is sometimes used interchangeably with the term ethnicity. The connotations associated with ethnic identity vary widely. As Chun states, "at one extreme it is a demographic ascriptive category, a classificatory label; at the other extreme it refers to the core of personality" (Chun, 1983, p. 192). Similarly Yinger (1994) observes that the definition of ethnic groups range in various usages from small relatively isolated primordial kin-culture groups all the way to large categories of people defined as alike on the basis of shared characteristics.

There has been a debate over the nature of ethnic identity. Some social scientists view ethnic identity as
constant or having continuity (Burke and Reitzes, 1981).

Stryker (1987) contends that identities can be dynamic (for further discussions see, Serpe, 1987). The experiences of immigrants becoming ethnics in the host society can attest to the processual view of ethnicity.

Ethnicity is not a simple phenomenon; it is not easy to define in terms that are applicable in the same way to everyone (Novak, 1980). More specifically, "Ethnicity is a baffling reality—morally ambivalent, paradoxical in experience, elusive in concept" (Novak, 1980). From the sociological perspective we must consider the social network which defines one's ethnic group (Reminick, 1983). An ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and by others, to have a common origin and culture and who take part in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant factors (Yinger, 1994). Ethnic identification occurs when the group in question is one with whom the individual believes he has a common ancestry based on shared individual characteristics and/or shared sociocultural experiences (Dashefsy and Shapiro, 1979). McLemore (1994, p. 11) notes that "the practice of distinguishing between people's heritages in primarily physical (racial or sociocultural) ethnic terms is widely accepted." However he adds the important caveat that the boundaries between the two categories are not as delineated and clear as most people would assume and that
they in fact overlap.

Ethnic-minority group refers to Blacks (African Americans), Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans instead of any specific Caucasian, who are often referred to as white ethnics (Dinnerstein; Nichols; and Reimers, 1990). However, it is important to recognize the phenomena by which a person gives up the commitments, attachments, and symbols that at least in part, help define the self in order to fully understand the dynamics of ethnic identity (Reminick, 1983). Thus, self conception is a cognitive phenomenon which consists of the set of attitudes an individual holds about him or herself (Dashefsky and Shapiro, 1979).

Just as there is considerable overlap among disciplines regarding identity, there is also overlap in the use of the terms "race" and "ethnicity." Race is biological while ethnicity is cultural in nature. "Regardless of a priori theoretical distinctions between ethnicity and race, in practice they are so highly related that in most instances, to speak of ethnicity is to speak of race" (Jiobi, 1990 p. 15). After World War II, race was used to differentiate groups within the broader society and the categories used were Caucasian, Negroid, or Mongoloid (Sowell, 1994). It is currently impossible to think of race at least in the purely biological form since there has been intermarriages between groups. However, racial categories still serve the purpose of categorizing people and deciding the allocation of
resources. With regard to the sociohistorical development of race relations theories Omni and Winant (1994) have grouped paradigms of race into three categories. The three categories are 1) ethnicity, 2) class, and 3) nation. Ethnicity theory has gone through several stages. It rose during the 1920s as a challenge to the prominent Social Darwinistic views of ethnicity. During the 1930s it became a liberal common sense approach to race. At this time the assimilationist and cultural pluralism concepts were developed. Post 1965 ethnicity theory became the defense of the neoconservative movement. The class paradigm of race emphasized the socio-economic divisions through distinct racial and ethnic characteristics.

New Ethnicity

The resurgence of ethnic identity is cast into the term "new ethnicity" however this movement fails to take into account the ethnic diversity that is prevalent in contemporary society. Novak (1980) defines the new ethnicity as "a movement of self-knowledge on the part of members of the third and fourth generation of southern and eastern European immigrants in the United States" (p. 16). This movement has gained attention in large part because Americans of European descent were advocates of the 'melting pot' perspective and they themselves lent credence to it. This ethnogenesis is not isolated to Americans of European descent. There has been a pronounced and sudden increase in
tendencies by people in many countries and in many circumstances to insist on the significance of their group distinctiveness and identity and on new rights that derive from this group character (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975). The resurgence of ethnic identification has taken place in the political arena and has been more effective than other group identifications (Bell, 1975).

The new ethnicity movement began after World War I in the United States and had its global equivalent in the rise of anticolonial nationalism which reached its peak in the 1960s (Buell, 1994). According to Herbert Gans (1979), later generations of white ethnics may have a symbolic identification and ethnicity can be exercised by the individual at his or her discretion. Ethnic status today can be conspicuously devoid of solid cultural content (Fitzgerald, 1991).

Waters (1990) draws heavily from Gans work in her book, Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America. With regard to ethnic identity she proposes that Americans of eastern and southern Europe descent presently have the freedom to choose their ethnic identities. This is expressed through symbolic ethnicity. Waters states:

...the individuals who enjoy a symbolic ethnicity for themselves do no always recognize the options they enjoy or the ways in which their own concepts of ethnicity and uses of those concepts deny choice to
Waters acknowledges that symbolic ethnicity may only work for certain ancestries and that the experience of racial minorities may be quite different as they can be identified by their skin color. Waters fails to acknowledge that racial minorities have cultures of their own which are distinctive from those of European ancestry.

Another social scientist researching the ethnic identity of Americans of European descent is Alba. In his book, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (1990), he states that there is a new ethnic group emerging based on ancestry from anywhere in Europe. Furthermore, he states that "ethnicity can continue to play an important role only insofar as people choose to act in ethnic ways."

**Internationalization**

The arena of social interaction has been expanded from the local personal to the global impersonal arena. Meyrowitz (1986) refers to this as the blurring of boundaries between the physical and social place which results in a "placeless culture." This in a way is related to a concern that the advent of mass societies is leading to a loss of identity (Burke, 1991). "Ethnicity often involves color, class and culture. Today we tend to give most of the weight to culture" (Fitzgerald, p. 199). The media has expanded the horizons of peoples knowledge of other cultures. The internationalization of minorities is not a
new phenomena just one that is increasingly receiving attention. Enloe (1986) states that what is new with this phenomenon is the intensification of internationalization and the increasing scope as well as the tightening of global integration.

A different but related work is that of Martha Gimenez (1988) who defines the internationalization of minorities as the automatic incorporation of immigrants from the periphery into already existing minority groups. Gimenez work is based on the racial categories used by the U.S. Census Bureau in explaining the internationalization of minorities. Gimenez draws upon the work of Immanuel Wallerstein on the world systems theory which makes the case that the development of capitalism as a world system entails the existence of a world scale labor force and reserve army of labor and also the hierarchical ranking of the world’s population according to racial and ethnic categories. Enloe (1986) posits that the interrelationship between class and ethnic stratification in a given society is increasingly affected by international dynamics.

Even if immigrants from the periphery and their descendants were not legally defined and counted as minorities, their presence would still have important effects upon the boundaries, stratification, and structure of opportunities of U.S. minority groups, because of the prevalence of racist stereotypes and
labor allocation practices that "assimilate" them into local minority groups structurally and ideologically. But the fact they are also counted as such for affirmative action intensifies their presence upon U.S. minorities (Gimenez, 1988, p. 49).

This statement reflect the preferential treatment afforded to European immigrants and the biased view of Latin Americans. Central and South Americans and Other Hispanic are not considered minorities because there is no evidence that they identify themselves as being members of a given minority ethnic group (Bean and Tienda, 1990).

Immigration

America's classical period of immigration 1880s-1924 and the ideal of assimilation gave rise to were a development and a response to the high imperialist era of the larger world system (Buell, 1994). The classical or colonial period of American migration consisted of European immigrants. The first wave consisted of northern and western Europeans. With the advent of industrialization and cheaper transportation immigration was made possible for the impoverished Europeans from the eastern and southern regions. Large scale migration from Europe ended during the mid 1920s. At this time, legislation was enacted restricting the number of immigrants. The third wave was not comprised of foreign immigrants. The third wave was a large scale migration of Blacks from the south to northern
industrialized areas. There has always been immigration from Mexico to the U.S. which at times fluctuated due to political and economic situations. From 1911 to 1920 Mexican immigration to the United States totaled 219,000 representing 20 percent of all immigrants (Gutierrez, 1987). This migration was motivated by political unrest and the quick succession of several president some of which were due to assassinations (Linares, 1985). In 1965 restrictions on the number of Asians who could enter the U.S. were eased. The fourth wave is traced to this period and consists of Asians and Hispanics. James (1992) states that since 1965, the beginning of the fourth wave, 14 million people, not counting illegal immigrants, have entered the United States and the this migration wave continues. In 1986 Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which increased border enforcement, offered amnesty to migrants already residing in the United States, and established employer sanctions against those who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants. This policy was designed to reduce the undocumented migration (Donato, 1994). A migration hierarchy seems always to have existed with some immigrants being wanted and treated as equals while others are seen as undesirables. Wientraub and Ross (1982) observe this form of preference earlier for northern European immigrants, and today, to give preference to skilled professionals. Many of today's immigrants are trained professionals or skilled
technicians. Their income enables them to settle in middle-
class urban or suburban neighborhoods, not in decaying
sections of cities as did earlier European immigrants
(Parrillo, 1991). The 1980 census enumerated 5.6 million
foreign born persons who have entered the United States
during the decade (Muller and Espenhade, 1985). Most new
immigrants are from Asia and Latin America. Among
immigrants across the nation, 34% are from Asia, 34% are
from Central and South America, 16% from Europe and 10% from
the Caribbean (Muller and Espenshade, 1985, p. 55).

International Students

International students entering the United States come
into a society which has different cultural and
sociohistorical background than their own. They find
themselves in new situations with a multiplicity of possible
interpretations. In order to function they must correctly
decipher the meaning in everyday interactions. This
adjustment or coping process has been the concern of
adaptation studies in the past (Crano and Crano, 1993;
Boekestijn, 1988; Ward and Searle, 1991; and Mallinckrodt
and Leong, 1992). Church (1982) estimated that the
functioning of 15 percent to 25 percent of all International
students may be impaired. It is unlikely that the majority
of foreign workers are aware of their administratively
imposed minority status. As can be expected, the working
class and poor workers, especially the undocumented are more
likely to experience negative effects from minoritization; they and their children are more likely to suffer from discrimination (Gimenez, 1988). According to Breakwell's (1983) *Threatened Identities*, threats to identity can come from any experience at the individual level and also from group memberships which are disparaged. Denigrating the group whose membership an individual values is a threat to the extent that he or she derives his or her identity from it. Yinger (1994) as well as other social scientists have noted that "even when extensive integration and acculturation have softened the ethnic attachment an affective tie may remain strong or be reinforced because it helps to clarify who we are in a time of puzzling uncertainties" (p. 137). As immigrants redefine themselves new categories for social identification develop (Lalonde, Taylor, and Moghaddam 1992). Liebkind (1986) noted that taking on a new identity is a threatening experience, and the sense of belonging to an ethnic community provides the immigrant a sense of security while he or she tries to adapt to the new society.

**Brain Drain**

In the past there has been significant debate as to the validity, comparability, and usefulness of using different terms to study the Hispanic population. According to Rodriguez (1992) forty percent of Hispanics identified themselves racially as other in the 1980 Census and this
number has increased in the 1990 Census. Including foreign students approximately two million immigrants were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities in 1990. While International students have often been studied, Hispanic International students represent a group that has not previously been studied in terms of their ethnic identity. International students do not represent the "brain-drain" phenomena which has received attention in the past; however, they are an important link between societies, cultures, or if one prefers from underdeveloped countries to developed countries. Sowell (1994) contends that many highly trained individuals relocate from their countries to more industrialized countries where their skills and knowledge can find more support and reward. Sowell refers to this as the build up of the technologically elite. The International students represent a subcategory of that group. They are receiving the training that will make them desirable immigrants. As these International students pursue their chosen careers they are not thinking what effects their migration and decision to stay in the U.S. will mean to groups within the U.S. as well as those in their countries. Yet many of the problems they will confront will deal with the unusual task of defining oneself in a foreign land where the concept of identity and ethnic identity differs from theirs. The issue of race and ethnicity will confront them from the first moment they fill
out an admission application to a university until they return to their countries. How will they define themselves? Will they choose the label "Hispanic" or Other? They may assert their own classification or they may learn to give the desired answer.

For Hispanic International students this is further complicated by their perspective on what ethnicity and race mean. Rodriguez (1992) has observed that "...for many Latinos race is subordinate to culture or alternatively, race and culture are fused" (p. 31). Therefore Hispanic International students not only have a different concept of race but have not dealt with the issue of race as it is conceived in the United States. According to Robinson (1993).

One of the myths is that South American societies are mostly, if not entirely colorblind- that after centuries of coexistence a truly hybrid culture has emerged, one that draws from both worlds (p. 58). Totti (1987) contends that there is an emerging Latino ethnic identity that crosses boundaries between the diverse Hispanic subgroups. The advent of this unification will have profound impact in political negotiations as well as the current proposals for a hemispheric trade block.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the research design used in this study. The sample, data collection procedures and analysis of the data will be discussed.

I have carried out the research at a University in the North Texas region. I interviewed twenty-four Hispanic International students. Initially I had planned to interview only graduate students for this study, but I later decided to interview undergraduate students to make the sample larger and more diverse. International students, who were born in Spanish-speaking countries, are included in the university’s classification of Hispanics. Overall, Hispanic students comprise approximately 6 percent of the total student population.

Research Design

This research was based on discovery and not in testing hypotheses. In order to gain a better understanding of ethnic identity among Hispanic International students, I conducted in-depth interviews in order to collect the data. More specifically this research is qualitative in nature, and I relied upon the efforts of Spradley (1979), who has worked within this framework. This methodological approach
enabled me to engage in direct contact with the respondents. I used Rubin's (1976) *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working Class Family* as a model for analyzing the data.

The purpose of this study is to examine the following research questions: 1) "While residing in the United States, have you ever been identified by others as a member of a U.S. racial or ethnic minority group?" As the study progressed it seemed apparent that the majority of the respondents were not aware of any dramatic redefinition of their ethnicity as members of a U.S. racial or ethnic group. 2) However, the respondents were sensitive to the kinds of adaptations they made to the racial and ethnic patterns within U.S. society. As we shall read in Chapter IV, the respondents emphasized their own national identity (e.g., Honduran, Puerto Rican, Colombian, etc.) rather than taking on the categories of U.S. racial and ethnic groups. I was interested in how Hispanic International students defined their ethnic identity in terms of racial categories by which they come to be defined administratively (in official governmental data and reports) and through the interaction with others while residing in the United States. 3) Since their ethnic categories did not fit the ethnic labels set forth by the administrative system in the United States, they encountered some problems while residing in the United States as International students.

I believe that Hispanic International students are
different from other immigrants whose primary goal is to work in the United States. Typically, International students reside in the United States on a temporary basis. Their status at universities is determined by regulations and policies carried out by different administrative offices such as the International Student Office and the International Admissions Office. Their participation in the labor force is limited by their visa category. For example, the visa category, Academic Students (F1) restricts the student to work only within the university and up to twenty hours per week. Students are also able to obtain an H1 visa which is classified as a working visa for temporary workers and trainees of distinguished merit or ability. Most International students may work up to twenty hours per week but some are not allowed to work.

Nature of the Sample

I interviewed twenty-four Hispanic International students who were enrolled at a university in the North Texas region. I collected the data during an eight-month period from April 20, 1995 through December 6, 1995. Initially I set out to interview graduate students in the age group 25 to 35. Prior to the beginning of the study, I had established some contacts at the university who were acquainted with International students. Two contact persons agreed to help me contact potential respondents for this study. However, these contact persons knew very few
graduate students who could participate. Most of the graduate students they had met had already graduated and left the United States or they had transferred to other universities out of the State. With the help of another contact person, I was able to reach a group of International students who were members of a larger social group of Hispanic International students. However, this group was composed of mainly undergraduate students. Thus, I decided to include undergraduate students in order to make my sample more diverse.

Twelve respondents were male and twelve were female. Nineteen respondents were single. Two female respondents and three male respondents were married. The married female respondents did not have children. One was recently married. The other respondents' plans for the future did not include motherhood. All the male respondents that were married had children. One respondent had one son, and another respondent had two children—ages nine and five. The respondent with the most children had three.

Eight respondents were graduate students and sixteen were undergraduate students. The educational classifications of the international students encompassed all levels. Two respondents were doctorate students. Of these two, one of was completing her dissertation. The other respondent was in his second year of graduate school. Seven respondents were in master's programs. Four respondents were seniors. Four
respondents were juniors and six were sophomores. One respondent was a freshmen. One of the respondents shared with me that she was classified as a freshman, when the initial interview took place, because of she filled out the wrong application form. Due to this error, she was classified as working toward a second bachelor's degree. Her paperwork has been corrected and she is now in the master's program.

I interviewed two respondents who had graduated in May 1995. They had agreed to participate in the study before they graduated, but we were unable to schedule their interviews because they were busy studying during their last semester of school work. Thus, they agreed to be interviewed immediately after graduation. One of these respondents remained in the North Texas region while the other moved to San Antonio where she plans to obtain a master's degree in her field of study.

The transitory nature of International students is reflected in the following: One freshman respondent completed the Intensive English Language Institute Program and transferred to another university a few weeks after the interview. The doctoral student completed her dissertation during the summer and went back to her country. She returned in December 1995 for the commencement ceremony. I learned from the respondents that it is not unusual for International students to be socially mobile. For instance,
some of the students transferred to other universities in order to continue their studies, others returned to their country after completing their degrees and others moved to enhance their employment and career opportunities.

The respondents were from the following countries: Three were from Honduras, seven from Mexico, four from Columbia, two from Puerto Rico, two from Panama, one from Costa Rica, one from Peru, one from Brazil, one from Guatemala, one from Nicaragua, and one from Spain. One of the contact persons had referred me to a student whom she thought was Hispanic. During the interview the respondent stated she was Italian. I did not include her in the study because she was not an Hispanic. In addition two of the respondents were born in Texas but were raised in Mexico and strongly identified themselves as Mexican. I included these students in the sample because they represent a subgroup of persons who were born in the United States but were raised in Mexico. However, their loyalty is to the country where they were reared. Although these persons are cognizance of the fact that they enjoy certain privileges as U.S. citizens they still maintain that their identity is tied to another country. Along the same vein, another respondent was born in Puerto Rico and but was reared in Spain. She identified not as a Spaniard but as Catalan, a region of Spain. The initial age group was 25-35. However, the age group for the sample changed with the inclusion of undergraduate students.
Thus, the age group for this study was eighteen to thirty-five. More specifically the ages for the respondents were as follows: Three respondents were 18; one was 20; two were 21; two were 23; three were 24; two were 25; one was 26; one was 27; three were 29; one was 31; two were 32, one was 33; and one was 35. In addition, one respondent, who was forty-five years old, fell outside the age range.

The majority of the respondents were employed. One respondent worked in a company which provided him with funding assistance as long as he went to college. Four respondents were teaching assistants; one was a teaching fellow. Four respondents were in the university’s work study program. Of these respondents, one was assigned to the library and to a dormitory cafeteria as part of the work study program. Another also worked at a cafeteria and as the photography editor of the university yearbook. Another worked at the Student Union information booth. Still another worked as a grader for the psychology department and has since changed positions. She now works at an office that offers services to disabled persons. Three respondents worked in part-time jobs away from campus. One respondent kept her job in her country and worked there during the summer and the Christmas holidays. During the fall and spring semesters, she worked as a waitress in the university. Another respondent, who was a recent graduate, had two jobs. He worked at as a counselor and at the music
hall. Another respondent was a member of a musical group and worked sporadically. Nine respondents did not work at the time of the interview; however, one respondent was awarded an assistantship the following semester (after the interview). Of these respondents, two were not allowed to work as a proviso of their scholarships from the government. And two respondents, who qualified for financial aid, were not interested in seeking employment.

Because the respondents were of age, consent from their parents was not necessary. However, the respondents were required to sign a consent form which provided them with information about the study and the appropriate telephone numbers to call in case they had any questions or concerns regarding the research. The respondents were assured that all interviews would be kept confidential. Their anonymity insured they had the freedom to speak openly without fear of reprisals.

The Sampling Process

In order to meet International students attending the university, I relied on several points of entry. For example, prior to the interviews, I had asked two faculty members, who had contact with Hispanic International students, to help me identify potential respondents for my study. Also, I joined the largest Hispanic student organization on campus. The president, invited me to make a presentation regarding my study during one of their weekly
meetings. I attended several meetings during the spring and fall 1995 semesters. I also made inquiries into other academic as well as social activity groups whose memberships included Hispanic International students. In addition, I volunteered to be a translator for U.S.- Mexico academic exchange program which was established by a professor on campus. The long-term goals of this project were to develop exchange agreements with Mexican institutions and create: a) distance learning opportunities b) cross-cultural training and research capabilities c) increase inter-institutional enrollment and d) encourage inter-institutional and interdepartmental interaction. The objectives of this program were to explore opportunities for international academic exchange and research as well as stimulate interdisciplinary teaching research and service projects.

During this conference, which was hosted by the university, I met two Hispanic graduate International students. One of these students participated in the study and the other introduced me to potential respondents. Later, I met three other contact persons, who introduced me to potential respondents. Still, I gained access to International students through another source. The International Student Office compiled a list of Hispanic International students whom I could contact. This was done in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Only the names of those students who had signed a release of information form were
listed. In addition, several of the respondents were very helpful in providing me with the names and telephone numbers of their friends. I later contacted them by telephone and I found that they were more willing to be interviewed when their friends had spoken to them about the study.

Even though all of the students were very cooperative, I had some difficulty scheduling the interviews. While I was willing to meet the respondents at their convenience they frequently asked what time would suit me best. We would try to schedule a time that would not interfere with their work and class schedules. The students had full schedules and they would often meet with me on the days when they had two or more hours in-between classes or work. I was sensitive to their busy schedules.

Collection of Data

I entered the field on April 20, 1995 and completed the interviews in December 1995. The data were derived primarily from in-depth interviews. The interviews were supplemented with data collected during limited participant observation and revisits with a few respondents. Revisits were not possible with all respondents due to the transitory nature of the group under study. In addition, some respondents were enrolled at the Intensive English Language Institute and the duration of their stay at the university was only six weeks.

Two respondents whom I had contacted early on and had
agreed to be interviewed, but had not made a time commitment, called me after the formal interviews were completed and apologized for not being able to participate in this study. They simply had very busy schedules.

To reiterate, I used in-depth interviews as my primary procedure for collecting the data. I constructed an interview guide in order to collect data on Hispanic International students enrolled at a university in the North Texas region. I typed the questions on six 3x5 index cards so that the students would not be intimidated by the length of the interview. The interview guide was divided into three parts. The first part consisted of demographic characteristics including sociocultural characteristics and family background (including their parents' educational attainment). The second part included questions pertaining to respondents' educational goals and their transition to the United States. The third section contained questions regarding the respondents' self-identification and identity. The interview guide was a point of departure for probing through follow-up questions and comments regarding the respondents' experiences and their views on ethnic identity and how others defined them.

Scheduling interviews included multiple telephone calls to the majority of the respondents. The interviews were always scheduled at the respondents' convenience. Although they generally inquired what time and location would be best
for me, I emphasized that their preference was most important. The setting for the interviews varied. For example, I interviewed the majority of the respondents at the Student Union. Three respondents invited me to interview them at their place of work. I interviewed other respondents at the library, at restaurants, and at an office.

The interviews were conducted in an informal manner. That is, I attempted to put the respondents at ease during the interviews. I am aware that some respondents may be intimidated or nervous because of the formal terms such as "study" and "interview." It was important to create a comfortable atmosphere in order for the respondent not to feel constrained by the role of interviewer versus interviewee or by the length of the interview. Typically, the interviews were approximately two hours in length. In addition, I did not want the students to assume they were being tested. Nor did I want them to think that there were "right or wrong" answers to the questions. In an effort to make them feel comfortable, I informed them that there were not any right or wrong answers; I wanted them to speak freely about their lived experiences. Furthermore, I explained to the respondents that the questions were used as a guide during the interviews. Often, in qualitative research, one question will elicit a response to other questions in the interview guide and as a result I did not
always have to ask these questions. In addition some questions were contingent on the response of another question so that if the respondent did not answer affirmatively to the preceding question the next question would not be applicable. However, responses to all the questions listed on the interview guide were sought of each respondent.

I asked the respondents' permission to tape record the interviews and to take copious notes. During the interviews the location of the tape recorder did not distract the respondents once they became engaged in answering the questions. However, a few of the respondents did express concern that the tape recorder was not working properly because a small red light would come on and off. I explained to them that the recorder was voice activated. That is, the light would turn on when they spoke and turn off when they paused.

All but three interviews were conducted primarily in English. During two of the interviews the respondents would code switch when they found it difficult to explain a situation in English. One respondent insisted that the entire interview be conducted in Spanish. Inasmuch as I am bilingual, I did not have a problem conducting the interviews in either English or Spanish. I recorded the comments in the language in which the respondent spoke. In the analysis of the data, I have selected quotations that
represent the issue at hand. Thus, if the respondent spoke Spanish, it was written in Spanish and I have translated the comments immediately after the quotation. If they spoke English, it was written in English.

I assured the respondents that I would be the only person to transcribe the tapes as well as analyze the data. The tapes were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. Also, the notes taken during the interview were typed within a reasonable time after the interview. In addition, identifiable characteristics were changed in order to protect the respondents' identities. The interviews were numerically coded. The code sheet was destroyed at the end of the study.

In Chapter IV, I will discuss the major findings that emerged from the data. I have tried to provide the reader with an understanding about the ethnic identity of Hispanic international students as well as the diversity within this group.

Participant Observation and Revisits

I engaged in limited participant observation with a few respondents; they had very busy schedules. However, a few of the respondents invited me to attend the Hispanic students' organization meeting on campus. I was able to observe the respondent's interact with other students in another setting, thus I was able to observe their interaction patterns with others. One of the respondents
invited me to have coffee with three of her friends at the university. One of these persons agreed to participate in the study. The conversation seemed to stem on the classes they were taking at the university. They spoke about getting together more often on a social basis. It was interesting to learn that each of the respondents and friends had different ideas of how to relax and have fun. I went to lunch with another respondent who was concerned about how Americans protect their space. She had difficulty adjusting to the fact that it is not a U.S. custom to hug and kiss each other on the cheek when they greeted friends and relatives. She missed this kind of intimate contact. Thus, she misinterpreted Americans' mannerisms to mean that they did not like her. It was not until she was leaving the U.S. that she engaged in a friendly conversational exchange with her American friends. It was at this point that she realized that they did like her after all.

While conducting the interviews, I found that some respondents were unclear on the meaning of the terms ethnicity and minority groups. Therefore, it was important to revisit the respondents at a latter date in order to discuss this topic in more detail.

I asked all the respondents if I could contact them for further information and they agreed. I called some of the respondents when I needed some clarification on a particular question. But I revisited only with a few of the
respondents. Most revisits were conducted at a lounge area at the Student Union. One revisit was conducted at a respondents major an office.

The duration of the revisits was typically two hours. One of the revisits lasted over three hours. After our visit, I felt guilty that we had visited for such a long period of time because she had not had lunch. Thus, I invited her to lunch and we continued our conversation regarding her family and lived experiences in the United States. All revisits were conducted on the university campus.

The revisits were a valuable source of data collection. The respondents were more relaxed and spoke more freely to me during the revisit. They provided me more detailed description about their everyday life experiences at school and in the United States more generally. This information was used as supplemental data in this study. During the collection of the data three respondents graduated. All three students had suggested that we get together for another visit. However, I was able to revisit with only one of these respondents because two had graduated. They explained that they had been extremely busy with their school work and their jobs before graduation. One of these respondents moved to San Antonio while another is still residing in the North Texas area.

In addition, I was unable to revisit with some of the
respondents because of their social mobility. One respondent received her doctorate and returned to her country. Another respondent transferred to another university in Texas. And another student was leaving within a few days (after the interview) and could not meet with me at another time.

Analysis of the Data

In this section I will discuss the procedure that I used to analyze the data that I collected. In examining various studies that have used qualitative data, I discovered that different methods exist (Spradley, 1979). As I mentioned earlier, I used Rubin’s Worlds of Pain (1976) as a model to analyze the data for this study.

I wanted the respondents to provide me with detailed description of their everyday life experiences relating to their sociocultural backgrounds and identity. Throughout the in-depth interviews, participant observation and revisits I was concerned with protecting the anonymity of the respondents. Therefore, I assured them anonymity and repeated this assurance at the time of the interview.

In order to accomplish this goal of protecting the respondents anonymity I took precaution in analyzing the data. I was able to identify major and minor patterns from the data. I selected quotations that I regarded as typical of a particular issue. Major patterns represented the majority of the respondents responses dealing with a particular topic. Supplemental data represented a minority
of the respondents' responses on an issue. And these patterns are reflected in the presentation of the findings.

Selecting the quotations was not an easy task because I wanted to maintain my commitment to protecting the anonymity of the respondents. In some cases the respondents' comments were typical and I did not believe that they could be identified with any one respondent. But in other instances the responses were so different that I was concerned about others being able to identify the respondent. In order to cope with this problem, I used the "composite case" discussed by Sjoberg and Nett (1968) in *A Methodology for Social Research*. They state:

> The 'composite case approach' is another technique for sustaining anonymity. Here the researcher throws together a number of cases and extracts what amounts to an ideal or constructed type (p. 329).

I selected quotations from two or more respondents who had made similar responses to the issue being discussed. I did not use the composite case approach for all of the quotations in this study.

Also, I informed the respondents that I would use the data collected during participation observation and revisits in this study. This information was used as additional background data. Some of these data have been used directly as well as indirectly. In addition, these data served as a
check upon some of the generalizations that I have made in this study.

Limitations of the Study

I interviewed 24 Hispanic International students enrolled at a university in the North Texas region. The limitations of this study may be due to the small sample. However, the respondents in this study were born in several countries: Mexico, Central and South America, Puerto Rico, Spain. (I included two persons who were born in the United States but strongly identified with the country where they grew up.) I believe that social scientists can make generalizations that are in keeping with patterns elsewhere with respect to issues discussed in this study regarding Hispanic International students.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Hispanic International students' ethnic identity. The sample consisted of twenty-four Hispanic International students who were enrolled at a university in the North Texas region. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. I gathered additional data through revisits with some of the respondents.

An examination of the social science literature pertaining to International students reveals that Hispanics, in general, have been a neglected group. There is an extensive body of literature dealing with International students from Asia, Africa, and Europe, but not Hispanics. This study presents the manner in which Hispanic International students identify themselves in ethnic terms. In presenting the data, through their voices, the dilemmas they undergo in adapting to the racial and ethnic categories in the United States become evident. In addition, the respondents encountered some problems while residing in the United States as International students because their ethnic categories (i.e., nationality) did not fit the ethnic labels set forth by the administrative system in the United States.

I have drawn heavily upon Lilian Rubin's (1976) World's
of Pain: Life in the working class family as a guide for analyzing the qualitative data. I have carefully selected quotations that I believe represented the issues that were being addressed in this study.

I will proceed by highlighting the major findings in this study. When a study deals with an ethnic-minority group, characteristics such as language, ethnic identity and culture are important sociocultural characteristics. The importance of these characteristics will become evident to the reader throughout this chapter.

Ethnic Identity

The first major finding dealt with the respondents' definition of their ethnic identity. It is important to document that the majority of the respondents considered their families to be middle class and made a distinction as to whether it was lower, middle or upper middle class. Two respondents commented on the current economic upheavals in their countries and said they did not know how much longer they could be considered middle class.

For all of the respondents in this study, the central element to define their ethnicity or group affiliation was their national origin (i.e., nationality). That is, the International students were from Spanish-speaking Latin American nations or Spain, and they regarded their family background or ancestry as crucial for identifying their ethnic identity. More specifically, the respondents
emphasized their own national identity, e.g., Honduran, Puerto Rican, Colombian, etc. Several respondents reported:

I like those questions because only in the States I see that stuff of how to divide African Americans, South Americans, Mexican Americans. At home we are all Hondurans. We really do not make those distinctions.

A respondent made the following statement:

Technically I would be considered Latino but usually people associate that with Spanish speaking and I speak Portuguese so I do not know how to classify myself. I usually say Brazilian. I get frustrated with Latino because it excludes myself and it excludes my country. I do not like Hispanic because it excludes me even more. When I fill out applications I put Other or I put White, or South American because I look Caucasian.

However, when I asked the respondents, "By what term do you identify yourself? Mexican American, Latin American, Latino(a), Hispanic, Mexican, Other," the respondents chose the ethnic labels: Hispanic, Latino, and Latin American.

Two respondents used Latino and Hispanic interchangeably and made no distinctions between them. Several respondents selected the label "Latino" or "Latin American." They reported:

Latino is fine because we all are Latin and not even the ones from Latin American are the only Latins. Latinos are also French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese
because they are all Latin languages. People use it for Latin Americans and I do not mind that. Hispanic, is not that I dislike it; its just that I am not used to it because at home we do not have those connotations. We are all Hondurans or Salvadorian or whatever you call that nation. We are all Honduran that’s all. Okay, I am Hispanic but if my father was German, I would not like to be called German-Honduran or Hispanic-Germanic blood and here they do that no matter what. That is my opinion.

A twenty-seven year old female respondent stated:
Latino, but really for me it is the same. Latino is more popular here because like Latin music, she looks Latin, like Latin’s everything.

A male respondent from Costa Rica made the following comment:
Latin American, it is kind of strange, I consider myself Latin American but I really consider myself more bicultural. Even though I might look like a Latin American, I have Latin features, sometimes I tend to act and think more like an Anglo person. This guy I know who is Salvadorian said I am not really a Latin. Nine respondents selected the label "Hispanic." They said: Hispanic. I am not really sure; I guess because I am not Mexican American. I was not born here and I am not really Mexican because I have lived here for so many
years. I guess I am Tex-Mex.

Five respondents selected the label "Mexican."

Mexican. Hispanic is just for any country or anyone that speaks Spanish. But when I have to fill forms I put Hispanic.

Only one respondent identified himself according to the region--Latin America. He said:

Latin American. Because I have a strong belief in seeing Latin America as a region. First of all I am from my own country. I rather see Latin American as a block and everybody sharing resources and ideas. So, I'd rather be Latin American. Hispanic for me is something that expands more than Latin America. They could be even people from Spain and actually the term comes from there so [it is] not necessarily [defined] by race or by background.

Another respondent was more specific in his identification. He used the region to identify his ethnicity. He stated:

Yucateco. Yo soy Yucateco como los Espanoles, los Catalanes, de Barcelona. Si le preguntas a alguien de Barcelona que es te dicen que son Catalanes. Asi somos nosotros muy arraigados en nuestra tierra. [I am from Yucatan like the Catalan from Barcelon, Spain. If you ask someone there what he will tell you he is Catalan. We are like that. We have a deep attachment to our land.]
The majority of the respondents did not feel that ethnic identity was a big issue in their country. They did not believe ethnic labels affected their everyday lives. They adapted to using the Hispanic label in U.S. because it is the official label of statistical data and reports. They emphasized that they would not have to contend with the issue of "ethnic labeling" once they returned to their countries. However, they all reaffirmed that their collective identity was linked to their personal identity, i.e., nationality.

Majority and Minority

The respondents reported that the terms "majority" and "minority" were not used in their countries; although, when they referred to Indians they agreed this was the minority group. But they still maintained that the label minority is not used. One respondent stated:

There are no ethnic minorities in my country. I had never been called Hispanic or Latin before. It was a shock for me. You take that for granted when you are in Columbia because you are part of a community that is called Latin America but you are never actually called Latin American or you are not called Hispanic. When you come here you have to be in a certain category and they align you by your name. If it’s Hispanic; you are Hispanic. If it’s Irish; you are Irish. In Colombia we do not have that because we do not care about that.
Mistaken Identity

With regard to the redefinition of their ethnicity in the United States, ten respondents reported that they had experienced mistaken identity. However, they were not necessarily mistaken for Hispanic nor Mexican American but for several other members of other ethnic groups. The respondents attributed the redefinition of their ethnicity (or mistaken identity) to their physical appearance and to some extent their accents. One respondent was mistaken for Hindu and Chinese. Some respondents were identified as Mexican nationals as well as other ethnicities. One respondent stated:

People think that I am from Mexico too. They ask me, where are you from are you from Mexico? I know that I look very Latin very Hispanic. I think that most of the people, the Hispanics people, here are from Mexico. So they do not say maybe she is from Puerto Rico or Costa Rica. They know that I am not from the U.S. because of my accent and my appearance. I mean I do not have blond hair and blue eyes.

A respondent described some of his experiences. He stated:

They generally ask what part of Mexico are you from? Then I tell them I am not from Mexico. Because I used to grow a beard, many people used to think I was from Iran or Pakistan. I was in the library and this guy came and started talking to me in Arabic. You know he
was sure, but completely sure, I was from [Saudi] Arabia and then when the conversation ended I told him I was from Colombia. He was embarrassed.

One female respondent who was a graduate student stated:

Somebody asked me from the States if I was a Chicana. They suspected that I am Latin. They think it is obvious. Then I tell them that I am from Guatemala and they are surprised. They think I was from the United States meaning that I am Mexican American or that I was born here. I guess it's just because I think it's because I pronounce the language pretty good so they believe that I was born and raised here.

Another respondent made the following comment:

The only thing they mistake me for is Russian because of my name or Italian because of my accent. Like I said they do not even know where Honduras is so how could they mistake me for a country somewhere around there. Other than Mexico, I do not think they are aware of any other country in Latin America.

A male respondent who was a senior stated:

They always relate Hispanic to Mexico. There are so many, you know, people that speak Spanish and all of us are Hispanics and not all of us are Mexican. There are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, you know there is a wide variety.
Hispanic Heterogeneity

As discussed above the label "Hispanic" refers to several subgroups of individuals who share similarities such as the Spanish language as well as other characteristics. However, there also exists many differences among the various subgroups that are classified under the broad label of "Hispanic." A case in point is Latin America. There are similarities as well as differences within and among the individuals born in one of the 20 nations that make up Spanish-speaking Latin America. We can identify particular national characters for the various Latin American countries as well as nation-specific attitudes (see Marin and Marin, 1991). The respondents in this study were sensitive to the heterogeneity among Hispanics. And these respondents alluded to the complexity of ethnic identification in the following comments:

I think I have been mistaken for Mexican which is normal and does not bother me at all. I been mistaken to be Chinese and even somebody sat by me and started talking Mandarin to me and I said I am not Chinese. Maybe it was because my grandfather was from mainland China. My father is like any Chinese guy you see in the street. I do not get that a lot but it happens. One Indian student thought I was from India even when I spoke. When I speak I have an accent. I will never get rid of it because that is the way it is. His
explanation was that they have eight hundred dialects in India and one common English language. He did not know if I came from a part of India with one of those eight hundred dialects. They mistake me by the way I look and the way I speak. I say that in Texas I suppose it is common to associate me with Mexico.

A few of the respondents shared their frustration when they were identified as an Hispanic because they believed that Americans placed too much emphasis on Hispanics being from Mexico. Thus, the term "Hispanic" has different meanings for social scientists as well as the populace. These respondents argued:

It really irks me to be called Mexican. I am not prejudiced against Mexico. It really irritates me. Are Mexicans the only Hispanics in the world? I mean if someone speaks French, you must be from France. No, people from Belgium and other countries speak French. It's like an American thing. I am asked, 'are you American?' 'Yes I am American, I am from Central America.' They say, 'no you're not.' I guess its not their fault. Even if they said, 'are you from Ecuador? I would say, 'no you are close.' I think its because of my name and my brown skin. I look like a Hispanic. Actually forty-five percent of the time they say ask are you Mexican? and the other forty-five they say ask are you Italian? I am not surprised at that because my
father did come from Italy.

Another respondent said that some people used her physical characteristics to identify her ethnicity. For example:

They think I am African American and White. Because I have curly hair, people think I am like Black or that I am mixed. They ask me, 'why do I have curly hair?' and they do not believe me when I say, 'I am Mexican.'

Language Usage

The second finding was related to the usage of the Spanish language. In order to understand ethnic identity, one must grasp the importance of language usage when studying a population group whose first language (i.e., mother tongue) is, for example, Spanish. Language usage is determined by several spheres (e.g., private domain and the public domain). The respondents kept the spheres separate with regard to language usage. For example, Spanish was used in more "gemeinschaft" surroundings such as in the home with parents and other family members, and in their friendship circles with close friends. English was used in more "gesellschaft" situations dealing with government and employment bureaucracies and schools. The respondents' first language, Spanish, could not be used, for example, with office personnel, professors and with acquaintances and classmates who were non-Spanish speakers (see e.g., Grebler, Moore and Guzman, 1970).
All of the respondents reported that Spanish was their first language. In addition, they emphasized that they felt more comfortable in speaking Spanish than in English with their relatives and friends. Typically, the language at home and with friends was Spanish. However, Spanish or English or both languages were used at home, if family members and friends spoke English. One respondent said:

Spanish at home—which is Guatemala. And English here [in the United States]. I do not have any Spanish-speaking friends here.

Another respondent reported:

I speak Spanish with my relatives. With my husband, we speak both because he has learned Spanish. I feel more comfortable with Spanish because it is my first language. At school it depends on whoever I see. If I see someone who speaks Spanish, I will use Spanish. If I see someone who speaks, English I will speak English. I speak Spanish with my parents because they speak very little English and most of my family is in Mexico.

However, with friends and acquaintances, the respondents shifted to English when a non-Spanish speaker joined their group. The majority of the respondents were sensitive to others and spoke English when people who did not speak Spanish were present. The respondents considered the shift from Spanish to English as a solution to the
definition of the immediate situation. That is, if the group milieu changed, it required that they add English to the conversation in order for the non-Spanish speakers to take part in the conversation. The shift from Spanish to English was not considered to be a part of a acculturation process as the result of living in the U.S. as students, but rather it was a courtesy on the respondents’ part. They also used English as a bridge to communicate with each other when some of their friends were from other countries. One respondent stated:

I speak Spanish at home with my wife and with close friends, but here at school I mainly speak English because there are no other Hispanics in this department.

In contrast, another respondent stated:

I will change from one [language] to the other because my friends are bilingual also.

Several respondents reported that they spoke English because it is the language the majority speaks. One respondent reported:

I speak English because eighty percent of the people here speak English. I have met many people who are Hispanic students. We talk Spanish but with other classmates who do not speak Spanish we talk English.

A male respondent explained:

Depende de con quien este. Si estoy con los latinos
hablo Espanol y si estoy con los Americanos hablo Ingles. Si me topo con mi amigo Pedro hablamos Espanol no hablamos en Ingles. [It depends on who I am with. If I am with Latins I speak Spanish and if I am with Americans I speak English. If I run into my friend Pedro we speak Spanish.]

Another respondent reasoned:

[I speak] Mainly Spanish because I do not have relatives in the U.S. I speak both languages--sometimes English and sometimes Spanish because I have met many people who are Hispanic students. We talk Spanish but with other classmates who do not speak Spanish we talk English.

A respondent made the following comment:

On campus I speak English with everybody except if I see my sister then I talk in Spanish. I tend to speak Spanish with Hispanic students, if I see them. But, sometimes there will be other people around and they will feel uncomfortable if we speak Spanish.

Another respondent made a similar observation. She stated:

My husband speaks English but we usually speak Spanish. All my relatives speak Spanish. It depends on the people who are around me; it’s usually English. Like right now it’s English because most of my colleagues in the lab don’t speak Spanish. I have a friend from Spain working in the lab and I speak to her in Spanish.
So it depends. I spend most of the time with her so if you had asked me at that time I would have said Spanish. Right now it’s English. There are some friends that I have that are Mexican American who have been living in the United States for a long time and sometimes they feel more comfortable speaking in English so I speak English with them.

Also, two respondents said that they spoke Spanish in order to guard their privacy. For example:

When my grandmother was alive we spoke Spanish. We spoke in Spanish about private matters all the time.

Problems and Adaptations

The third finding in this study deals with some of the problems that International students encounter while residing in the United States. These problems are related to the ethnic categories set forth by (and imposed upon) the administrative system of various bureaucracies such as universities in the United States. More specifically, the ethnic category, i.e. nationality, adhered to by International students did not fit the racial and ethnic categories used in the United States.

As discussed above, the Hispanic International students in this study spoke Spanish, their mother tongue, in the private sphere as well as in the public sphere in their countries of origin. However, in the United States, the personnel of many official offices are not bilingual, thus
the students are forced to speak "English only" in "official" situations. In such situations, the university, for example, is often perceived as a foreign element (for further discussion see Grebler, Moore and Guzman, 1970). Thus, Hispanic International students must speak English in order to communicate with the personnel in various offices. Even though these students have passed the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TEOFL), they still experience problems with some aspects of the English language.

When I asked the questions: How are your student expenses paid? Do you have any scholarships, grants, or do your parents defray your educational expenses? it became apparent that the respondents strongly believed that the tuition for International students was much too expensive. All of the respondents expressed this concern and they were trying to find ways in which they could be eligible for in-state tuition.

The majority of the respondents reported that their parents provided them with a monthly allowance which supplemented their financial aid. However, a number of the respondents expressed concern about becoming a burden on their parents, thus they sought other avenues to obtain financial assistance for all of their expenses.

All of the respondents in this study were trying to identify resources in order to pay for their educational expenses. Some respondents were more aggressive than others
in locating funding sources. For example, some students applied for assistantships and teaching fellowships in different departments. Two respondents were able to obtain a small grant awarded by the university, however, this grant was very competitive. They had to apply for renewal each semester. Two respondents had full-scholarships. One of these respondent's scholarship had a time limit of three years. One respondent had short-term loans and scheduled repayments in small amounts. The respondents expressed that they were still struggling to survive. A few respondents stated:

I have a scholarship and I work as a teaching assistant. That is all. My parents are paying for my car. My work automatically pays my tuition.

A female respondent from Central America reported:

My parents cannot help me out. I have a complete scholarship and I cannot work because of the visa status. But I do study in the university and I have to work in order to pay my tuition.

Another respondent replied:

My dad is the main support. He helped me for the first year and with my scholarship I paid my tuition, but I still had to work.

Two respondents commented on their efforts to seek other alternative sources to finance their tuition. They said:

We [two siblings] applied for the Texas Educational
Grant and we got it last semester. We applied for it right now for the summer and spring. This way we can pay in-state tuition.

A respondent stated:

I worked and saved. I worked during the summer. My parents helped me out some. They paid my tuition and most of my living expenses. I had an apartment up here.

All of the respondents actively sought financial aid from their departments, the International Student Office, and the financial aid office. The majority also received a monthly newsletter which informed them of the scholarships available.

The respondents recognized that out-of-state tuition was high but they indicated that the tuition for International students was even higher. They provided examples of the different tuition rates in order to emphasize that the high-tuition rate for International students is a problem for many students. For example, the admission application fee alone is twenty-five dollars for U.S. citizens and double for International students.

A couple of respondents also indicated that the admissions process for International students was very complex at the university. They had a problem because they misunderstood the bureaucratic language. They said:

I had a problem actually it was before I started classes. I feel the people at the university gave me
the wrong information. I know it is different. They give you a paper and they expect you to read and it's exactly that. I need to explain to make sense. I went to the counseling department to get information about the master's program. First thing I get is what I need. They said I needed eighteen hours senior and junior level in certain areas. So what do I do. I registered myself for a second bachelor's degree. So when I am deciding what classes to take I go again to the counseling department and they say I did not have to take those undergraduate courses because I have a degree. I could start my master's right away. But it is written on a paper in order to get a masters you need to have so many hours. Nobody told me. I could have started my masters right away. So the big problem before I started school was the information the process. Another friend of mine she did not know there was an admission application and then registration. She almost missed the deadline because in our country everything is registration. I know you can read but even if you read it is confusing and nobody explains that. I asked a question I felt like I needed and I got a catalog. Admissions then registration, nobody explains that. What is the difference?

Another respondent made a similar observation about the difficulty with the way information is processed. She
stated:

It's just a bigger hassle to get your application. The first time I was sent just a regular application then I had to call them to send me an International application. After that, they could not get my residency status right. So I had to come here with my green card.

A respondent who was a junior commented not only on the difficulty of finding the correct information but on the treatment of International students by personnel at the registrar's office. He stated:

I went to the administration office--to the registrars and you could tell by the looks of this lady and by the way she would answer me, I do not want to say she discriminated against me but it seemed that way. I asked her how much I had to pay this semester and she twitched her eyes, her face. I do not know but to me she is supposed to help students and she should be nice. She was like I do not know and I asked her to check and she said she could not do it.

One respondent complained that she was unable to use her credit card to register because it was from another country. She said:

It is a problem for International students when you have to pay through the phone with a credit card. My card was from Honduras. It was accepted everywhere
except on the telephone because the system would not accept it. And what can you do? I did not have a car to go to the bank to get the money right away. There is nothing wrong with the card its just the system and it is not the first time this has happened. That telephone system does not take my card.

The respondents recognized there were problems, but the benefits of getting a U.S. education outweighed the inconveniences. They became adapt at checking and rechecking all their paperwork to make sure that everything was properly filed. They also made personal contacts with the personnel at the International student office which helped them.

Even though these three respondents strongly identified with their country’s nationality, they realized that they had citizenship rights and which accorded them with privileges such as in-state tuition. One respondent said:

When they ask me, 'where are you from?' I say that I am from Monterrey. When they specifically ask me, 'where were you born?' I say, 'here in the United States.' But since I was a little baby I lived in Monterrey.

Another respondent stated:

I was born in Puerto Rico that is where I lived until I was fifteen then we moved to Spain. I come from Spain, I speak Catalan with my family.

Culture
The respondents viewed the lack of information about cultures in different countries as a problem. For instance, an Anglo did not think that her country had electricity, TV, stereos, etc.--the good things in life. The respondents in this study argued that Americans believe other countries are considered to be developing countries. They lacked of knowledge about geography: They did not know where the countries were located. One respondent said:

You know when they ask me where I am from and when I say Honduras they do not know where it is. That is terrible because we are not that far from the States. I mean I do not know the African continent very well but I could at least tell you the country. I could tell you maybe not by borderline not if it is in the middle or the north or the south but at least the continent. Here I say Honduras and they think I am talking about Hungary!

A respondent shared his amazement of the manner in which Anglos taught geography. He stated:

People ask me, 'where is Colombia?' I say how is it possible that you do not know where Colombia is, it is the same continent even though in this country they teach that there is North American Continent and South American Continent. No where in the world do they teach that there are two continents, America is one continent. Only in America they teach that there are
two continents. Isn't that incredible? So for me it is amazing that people do not know what other countries there are in the same Continent. That's the way it is; I do not feel responsible.

A male respondent made a similar comment. He stated:

There are people that do not even know the states in this country. I remember I had an ex-girlfriend and I had to tell her the states in this country; you know I had to tell her and I am a foreigner! I could not believe it but that happened.

A female respondent made the following comment:

It's mostly many American people. They do not know where Honduras is. They ask me, 'is it an island?' Many Americans think Honduras is a wild country, like we do not have education, like we do not have progress. Honduras is a poor country but we have so many advances, you know. I can tell from the questions that they ask like "Oh, that is the clothes you wear all the time? I remember I showed someone a postcard from Honduras and the person said, "Oh, you have lights!"

It was a postcard showing the landscape at night.

Culture

Several respondents made the observation that Anglos are not familiar with other cultures. This was a problem when incorrect assumptions were made about their countries and culture. A respondent said:
Well, the problem that American citizens have is that they do not learn that much about other cultures and geography. So all that they have seen is Mexican Americans and so when they saw me they thought I was Mexican American.

Another respondent was exasperated by the misconceptions. She reported:

Sometimes they ask me, 'do you eat Mexican food in Peru?' Because that is the only thing they know, so everybody else that is Hispanic eats Mexican food and we do not have Mexican food. We do not even have fajitas or tacos or tortillas. So I have to tell them, 'no we do not have this' [food]. I am from Peru! Or sometimes they ask me, 'is Mexican and Spanish the same language?' I tell them Spanish is the language; Mexican is the nationality.

Several respondents were dismayed at the misconceptions and lack of information about their countries available to Anglos. They turned this experience into a positive one by informing Anglos and others about their countries and cultures. One respondent put this eloquently. She stated:

Well, I think the importance of the ethnicity increases when you are in another country. You know, for example, when I was in Honduras I did not think about my ethnicity about my culture. When I came to the U.S. I felt more Honduran and I felt that I have to share
with other people about [or] my country-- like to be an ambassador. When I was in Honduras I did not think about ethnicity or about my culture, it's here when I feel responsible to share things about my culture and to show people that I feel proud of my ethnicity. I feel proud of my nationality, my culture, and to be Hispanic.

Twenty-two respondents did not object to Americans shortening their names. They did not make any special changes for Americans rather they used the name abbreviations and nicknames given to them by their families. These respondents believed that Anglos preferred to call them by a nickname because they could not pronounce their names. This was one way Anglos adapted to the situation.

However, two respondents were adamant about the proper use of their names. They did not want to be labeled with nicknames. Furthermore, they wanted their names to be pronounced correctly. One respondent expressed his opinion regarding Americans using nicknames. He said:

No, I do not encourage them. I strongly hate that because your name is your name. Why should you shorten your name? I know that is an American choice. I think I was in my second year here and one guy started calling me Bob. And I did not turn around because first of all I did not even realize that he was addressing me and I just continued working. And I
said, 'why do you call me Bob, my name is Roberto.'
Many people ask me if there is a shortened version and I generally tell them 'no.' My name is Roberto.

Another respondent was adamant about her name being pronounced correctly. She stated:

No, they have to say Margarita right. I was in the Who's Who in American Universities and they asked me to give my name so that the people who are announcing can say the name. And so I asked my American friends to pronounce it. I hate [the way] this guy [pronounced my name]. I want you to write down my name, you know, the English translation of the sound of Margarita and the guy was pretty good he said, 'Margarita huh!'

One of the respondents felt insulted when others believed she had changed her name in the U.S. because it did not reflect a typical Spanish name. She commented, not everyone is named "Jose." She said:

No nicknames. I just say Melissa. They sometimes ask, 'is that your real name or did you change it to an American name.' I said, 'no that is my name, my mother chose Melissa.' We have many Melissas at home just like Marías, Juanitas, we also have Jenifers, Stephanies. We have all types of names.

The respondents allowed friends to address them by their nicknames but the use of nicknames was not granted to everybody. The respondents who wanted their names correctly
pronounced viewed this as a matter of respect. They learned English and pronounced the names of others correctly and they demanded the same courtesy.

Fifteen respondents reported that they experienced loneliness. They found they could adapt with loneliness in various ways: Some got closer to their religion; others wrote letters to their homes frequently or telephoned home frequently; and engaged in social activities with Hispanic friends.

One respondent said:

I try to overcome that and I went to the church. I pray. I find comfort in my religion. Sometimes I walk. I go out and walk but I try not to be in the dormitory because when I was in the dormitory I felt worse. It is like I could not see living in the dormitory like living in a house. There's no kitchen, living room; it's like too small for me. Obviously I miss my family too.

A male respondent who was a doctoral student stated:

Sometimes I try to relax, talk to my wife or talk to a friend, or engage in conversation; just move my center of attention to something else. Sometimes I just come here and I work at the computer.

A female respondent who was twenty-five years old made the following statement:

I cry. I would make phone calls whenever I could afford it and see pictures of my family but that was
all.
The respondents made various social contacts through church attendance and with time they formed friendships with other Hispanic and International students from other countries. As one respondent stated:

You feel identified with people that are from other countries. I mean that if I meet somebody that is from Japan for example, I know that this person is not from the United States and I know how this person can how this person can feel, strange sometimes. So it is like we share many feelings because we are foreigners here even if we are not from the same country.

With regard to levels of intimacy with friends, several respondents stated that relationships are more intimate with Hispanic friends than with Anglos. Anglos were perceived to be formal, distant, less friendly, and less cordial when they met them away from the university setting. Some respondents realized the interaction between Anglos and Hispanics differed. As an example, one respondent illustrated this difference. He reported:

I pass them and I say 'hi' and they never greet me. How is it possible that something like that can happen? I mean it happens all the time but once in a while there’s actually people who are nice and talk to you or make friends with you. I study in Colombia, in the university, and maybe we meet [students] in class two
or three times and then you find that person in the street and you start talking to the guy all excited. Here is like you can know a person for two years and that person will never say hello to you. It is terrible, incredible that it happens but it has happened to me many times. For us it is kind of frustrating, you know, you kind of want to go home. People here are like totally independent.

Some of the respondents expressed that the social activities between Hispanics and Anglos were quite varied. When it is an Hispanic social function they dance, for example, salsa and watch movies; whereas some Anglos tend to stand around talking and engaged in social drinking. One respondent contrasted the way Americans and Latins socialize. He said:

Party, party, party but in the Latin way. For us parties is not just drinking, sitting around, and making silly jokes and playing checkers like an American party. We dance. How can you have a party without a dance? When we get together, we sometimes engage in sports events.

A female respondent who was a graduate student reported:

We eat out, we go to church, to movies, sometimes we play tennis or miniature golf. I do not know how to play but I am learning. In my country rich people play those sports.
Some respondents realized that Anglos' mannerisms were not cold and distant but they had different ways of relating to one another. It was a difference between two cultures. Still, other respondents considered Anglos to be distant and cold. This did not significantly impact their relationships because the International students had friends in different social groups such as Anglo, Hispanic, and International students.

Some of the respondents were able to adapt to the host society more readily than others because of their lived experiences. Four respondents, who defined themselves as upper-middle class, attended bilingual classes in the secondary schools. They learned to speak English as teenagers. All of the respondents emphasized that before International students can take university courses they must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). One respondent said:

I took two classes in English. One of those was an intensive workshop in English and they prepared us for the TOEFL. I really enjoyed it because it was not only for the TOEFL. They teach us how to do different types of essays. We don't learn this in Mexico because that is not how they write. It was a three-month workshop and I took it six months before I came. That helped a lot; I learned many things.

Similarly, a female respondent stated that she had some
knowledge of U.S. society because she had attended a bilingual school in her country. She said:

A lot of people go there and you always hear about the States through friends. And my school was a bilingual school. The teachers were Americans so I had an idea [about the English language and U.S. lifestyles].

With regard to identity, several subgroups emerged. For some of the respondents' ethnicity or nationality was more important, and for others class differences were more important. One of the respondents was born in the United States but was reared and attended school in Mexico. She completed her primary education in Mexico. She learned to speak English when she was a teenager. She is adamant about identifying herself as a Mexican. She maintains strong familial and social ties in Mexico even though she feels very comfortable living in a bicultural environment. However, her brother does not feel comfortable living in the United States and longs to return to Mexico permanently.

I interviewed another person who was born in the United States but was reared in Mexico. He did not come to the U.S. until he was in his late teens. His ethnic identity is strongly tied to Mexico. For example:

I am Mexican, that is where I grew up. I am a Hispanic but I am more from Mexico; for me that is more specific. My parents used to work at the border and I was born in McAllen, Texas. I am not considered an
International student but I still have to go to the intensive English classes because I did not speak English.

Some respondents adapted to the host society because of their parents' level of education: Two mothers had bachelor's degrees and were teachers. Three mothers had vocational training and had worked as secretaries. One had attended college but not finished. Four had completed high school. One finished junior high school but not high school. Three had attended junior high but had not finished. Six mothers completed primary schooling, (equivalent to grades 1-6 in the U.S.). Four had some primary education but were unable to continue school.

Typically, the mothers were housewives. Only three mothers were working. One was head of a department at a bank. Another owned a restaurant and another had a variety of low-paying jobs. She worked as a sewing machine operator, sold tupperware, and Mary Kay products. Even though some had vocational training, the majority of mothers were not currently working.

The identity of the family was strongly attached to the father and his occupation. Six fathers had attended college and graduated. Of these fathers, one was a surgeon. Another was a physician. One was a dentist. Three had bachelor's degrees. One was an accountant and the other two were business consultants. Two fathers had completed high school.
and two had some high school. Two had completed junior high school. Six had completed elementary school and six had some primary schooling. The fathers' occupations varied: import/export business; foreman of a construction company, business managers; school inspector; owner of business.

Some respondents had travelled extensively in their country. They seemed to be more experienced travellers than Anglos. One respondent stated that she loved to travel and did so whenever possible. She stated:

I have visited some places. I spent six weeks in Massachusetts two summers ago. I went to this workshop on microbiology but I had to be there six weeks. And I was there by myself. I enjoyed that. After I finished the workshop I went to Georgetown, New Haven. I went to New York and all those places. Then we have taken trips to New Orleans, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Las Vegas. We love traveling; we just enjoy it.

Two respondents had traveled in Europe. One person spent several years in Europe. That was her first experience as an International student. She said:

I learned French in Paris I lived there for three years. I like to travel.

Two respondents expressed a strong sense of responsibility. For example, these respondents wanted to return to their country to improve the living conditions and quality of life for not only for their relatives and friends.
but for the community at large. They were concerned with homelessness (especially homeless children) and the literacy rates of the vast majority of the citizens. When asked if he would remain in the United States after graduation, one respondent stated:

No. I cannot and I do not want to. I believe that I have a mission that I have to accomplish. I am a teacher; I am a professor; I believe in education. I can improve my country somewhere in some way at least a little bit. I do not have to be a genius I can do it just by supporting others working. If I stay here I would improve my special status [i.e.] economic status but in general I will not be helping my country which is why I am here in the first place. I have been on a leave of absence from my job with full payment plus my scholarship. It does not mean that I have a lot of money, it just means that they have to complement it in order for me to be here. So, I owe them my education and I like very much my place. I like the commodities here; the facilities I have for research. I do not have this much equipment or so many things [at home]. But I like where I live.

Another respondent made a comment along similar lines. She stated:

Coming here for me was like a dream for many years. I cannot stay here after I graduate. That is one of the
conditions of the scholarship and I do not mind. I want to go back to my country and share what I have learned with my colleagues. I think it's important for me to go back. What I learn will help my country in some small way.

The respondents encountered problems in the areas described above. In large part, they were able to adapt because of their socioeconomic background. The majority of the respondents were middle class, had traveled within and outside their countries, were bilingual, and had a general knowledge about U.S. society. Furthermore, the inconveniences they encountered did not dissuade them from their goal to graduate from a U.S. university. The prestige a U.S. education had in their countries of origin was very important to their future career plans.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This research on Hispanic International students will contribute to the understanding of ethnic identity among students who come to study in the U.S. which is a previously neglected area. They endeavored to use terms that were foreign to them and after listening to their responses I determined that this is an area of ethnic identity that requires further examination.

This study was exploratory in nature. I conducted twenty-four in-depth interviews with Hispanic International students who were enrolled at a university in the North Texas region. Although this is a small sample, I believe social scientist can make generalizations regarding other Hispanic International students attending U.S. universities. The respondents were originally from: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Colombia, Spain, and Puerto Rico. The respondents comprised nine different nationalities.

One of the most important findings in this study was the ethnic identification of Hispanic International students. They invariably made reference to their nationality. First and foremost they defined themselves as members of a country outside the U.S. When asked to
identify by selected ethnic terms that are widely used in the U.S., they reported that this was not a common practice in their countries and it was not an important issue for them.

Terms that distinguished relative power between groups were not used e.g., "majority" and "minority." During the interviews the respondents tried to provide information about their country using terminology more commonly used to analyze U.S. race and ethnic group relations. They applied the term "minority" to indigenous Indian groups and the term majority to those of mestizos or Anglo and European immigrants. Once again they stated that the terms majority and minority were not used in their countries of origin. Everybody was Mexican, Honduran, Peruvian, etc. While this may give the impression of equality this was not the case.

While residing in the U.S. the International students were mistakenly identified by others as members of U.S. racial and ethnic groups. In addition, the Hispanic International students were also identified as immigrants from countries other than their own. This mistaken identity was oftentimes based on stereotypes of phenotypes and on the students' accent. A second finding pertained to the common usage of language according to the different social settings. Spanish, the first language, was used with relatives and friends. Spanish was used with family members as it was the only language some of the relatives spoke.
Furthermore, certain phrases and sentiments could only be fully expressed in Spanish.

Spanish was spoken among friends when they were Hispanic. If a group of Hispanic friends were conversing, they would engage in code switching. This could only be done when it was understood everybody present had the ability to do so. When an Anglo friend joined the conversation the language used would change to English as a common courtesy.

English was used with non-Spanish speakers as well as with administrative personnel. The language being spoken changed if a non-Spanish speaker joined the conversation or the situation. This was done as a courtesy to others. The respondents reported that English was the bureaucratic language and that this created some problems for them. For instance, admissions applications were difficult to fill out.

Spanish was used among non-Spanish speakers only when discussing private matters. This was done specifically to safeguard their privacy and for no other reason.

The third finding dealt with the adaptations Hispanic International students made in order to survive in the host society. For the first time, they encountered ethnic categorization on the admissions' application to the university. They were required to choose the ethnic term used in the U.S. They learned to choose Hispanic although
some continue to assert their own ethnic identity by choosing 'Other' and by specifying their country of origin.

The problems Hispanic International students dealt with included a lack of knowledge about registration forms, inter-relationship cultural differences, loneliness, and Anglos' lack of knowledge about their countries' culture.

The Hispanic International students were unfamiliar with the registration procedures and requirements of the university. As one respondent experienced, the lack of knowledge led her to mistakenly file for admission for a second bachelor's instead of beginning the masters program. One particular student felt that the administrative personnel were not sensitive to her situation and those of International students since they were unfamiliar with the bureaucratic procedures and language. Another student felt, that the person attending the desk at the registrar's office was discriminating against him and that even though she might have had a tough day she should have been more professional.

The Hispanic International students emphasized missing the social contact among friends. They specifically mentioned that greetings were much warmer in their countries. They kissed each other on the cheek when greeting and repeated the gesture when they were leaving. In general they mentioned that relationships among Anglos seemed too distant and cold. The Anglos were considered to
be too independent.

The students also mentioned dealing with loneliness. Those who were lonely attributed it to being away from home, missing their families, and for some it was the stress of a full course schedule. They coped with loneliness by making telephone calls to relatives, although some remarked this was expensive. They also wrote home. Several respondents claimed that religion was a source of strength and that it helped them. Religion not only bolstered their personal strength but it provided them with a means of meeting other people with similar beliefs.

Several Hispanic International students noted that Anglos had an outmoded view of their countries. Anglos thought the Spanish-speaking countries did not have modern conveniences placing them in the setting of rural poverty-stricken countries. In addition, they mentioned that Anglos did not have a good grasp of geography. Many did not know where the International students' countries were located often indicated a remote location of a different country and sometimes a different continent.

The task of adapting was not as difficult for Hispanic International students as it may have been for other immigrant groups. All but four of the Hispanic International students identified themselves as middle class. Four considered themselves upper-middle class. The majority considered themselves to be middle class. Two
considered themselves to be lower-middle class. Two stated that their family was middle class but due to the current economic upheavals in their country they may not be middle class for much longer. Only two respondents considered their family to be in the lower socio-economic class.

The adaptation process was easier for the respondents in the study because the majority of them were middle class. They had access to resources and advantages that other immigrants do not. Some Hispanic International students attended bilingual schools while others took intensive English courses in preparation for their stay in the U.S. Furthermore, two respondents had parents who had been International students in the U.S. Four other respondents had parents who had previously worked in the U.S. The students had knowledge about U.S. society. This knowledge facilitated their adaptation to U.S. society while they were students. However, to know something intellectually is quite different from owning that knowledge through experience.

The Hispanic International students had to deal with being identified by others differently than they identified themselves. Ethnicity was not an important issue in their countries but it became an issue for them once they arrived in the United States. Not only did ethnicity become an issue but the complexity of ethnicity in the U.S. added to their dilemma. Grebler, Moore and Guzman (1970) in their
classical study, *The Mexican American People*, discuss the complexity of defining the term "ethnic identity." They contend the following:

Collective self-designation--the battle of the name--is carried on in the political and official arena. But individual self-designation reflects the wide variety of considerations that plague the definition of ethnic identity. They range from definitions of the self available in ethnic ideology (or political associations) to definitions of the self that become available in the course of routine interaction with others--what Cooley has called 'the looking-glass self.' The sensitivity of self-designation to socioeconomic status factors is shown by the comparatively close relationship between self-designation (Mexican, Mexican American, Latin American) and income level (p. 387).

This study will fill an important gap in the social science literature regarding the ethnic identity of International students who are from Latin American nations. Furthermore, this study illustrates the complexity of ethnic identity. A subgroup of respondents who were U.S. citizens was included. These respondents were reared in Spanish-speaking countries and identified with that country. However, they did not have to contend with lengthy visa applications and were eligible for financial aid not
available to International students. As Jasso and Rosenzweig (1990) contend this subgroup is often overlooked and represents a useful control group as it shares the attitudes of other immigrants.

The Hispanic International students represent a unique immigrant group. These International students will be active participants in the current movement for a hemispheric bloc based on NAFTA. The economic alliance of a hemispheric bloc serves as an arena where ethnicity and social class, two antithetical models, fight for dominance. The Hispanic International students are confronting issues concerning ethnic identity at an individual level. Nevertheless the significance of these issues have implications at the global level.
APPENDIX

Interview Guide

Background Characteristics

1. Sex F______ M______

2. What is your age?

3. By what term do you identify yourself?
   Mexican American____ Latin American____ Latino(a)____
   Hispanic____ Mexican____ Other (specify)________________

4. What languages do you speak?
   4a. What language do you use the most at home and
       while with relatives?
   4b. What language do you use at school when you are
       not in class?

5. What is your marital status?

6. Do you have children? How many?

7. In what nation and state were you born? Where were you reared?

8. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

9. Where do your siblings live?

10. Were any of your brothers or sisters international students?
    10a. If yes, where did they study and what degree did they pursue?
    10b. If no, what made the difference, why did you
become an international student?

11. How much education did your father attain?
12. How much education did your mother attain?
13. What is your father’s occupation?
14. What is your mother’s occupation?
15. What do you consider to be your family’s social class?
16. How are your student expenses paid? Do you have any scholarships, grants, or do your parents defray the expenses?
17. How long have you lived in the United States?
18. How long have you lived in Denton?
19. Do you live off campus or do you live in a residence hall?
20. Do you have a roommate? If yes, is this roommate also from your country?

Transition to the United States

21. What degree are you seeking?
22. What is your expected graduation date?
23. If appropriate. What is your current occupation?
24. What influenced you to come to the United States to pursue your studies?
25. What did you do to prepare yourself to come to the United States?
26. Did someone advice you on what to expect of United States society? from Americans? of the school
environment?

27. Has this advise that been useful?

28. Did the international student orientation provide you with all the information you needed to know about the university? Did you seek information elsewhere? Explain.

29. Was the international student orientation lacking in any information that was important to you?

30. How many times have you gone home since you first came to the United States?

Self Identification and Identity

31. Do you interact with the students in your classes? Explain.

32. Do you have friends who are originally from the United States?

33. Do you ever feel lonely?

34. What do you do when you feel lonely?

35. Are you involved in campus organizations or other student organizations?

36. What kinds of social activities do you attend when you interact with your friends?

37. Are you frequently asked what country you are from?

38. Do you feel that people treat you differently because of your status as an international student?

39. Have you made accommodations for Americans by using a nickname or another name in order to make it easier
for them to address you?

40. Are you a member of an ethnic minority in your country?

41. Is social or ethnic identity important in your country?

42. Are there majority and minority groups in your country?

43. Have you encountered any problems because you are an international student?

44. Have you encountered any misconceptions about international students?

45. Will your experience as an international student affect your future plans? How?

46. Do you plan to remain in the United States after graduation?

47. While in the United States have you ever been mistaken for or identified by others as Mexican American or as a member of another United States racial or ethnic minority group?

48. If appropriate. What are your reactions when and if you are identified as a United States ethnic minority group?

49. If appropriate. Do you have any objections to being identified as a member of a United States racial or ethnic group?

50. If appropriate. How do you feel about being identified as a member of a United States racial or
51. Do you feel there are advantages to being identified as a member of a United States racial or ethnic minority group?

52. Do you feel there are disadvantages to being identified as a member of a United States racial or ethnic minority group?

53. What do you think of the label Hispanic and Latino(a)?

54. If you had to choose between the label Hispanic and Latino(a) which would you prefer?

55. What are your perceptions of Mexican Americans?

56. From what sources have you gathered your information about Mexican Americans?

57. What kind of information do you think is important to tell new incoming international students regarding residency in the United States?

58. If a United States student was going to study in your country, what kind of information would you deem as important to tell that student?
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