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Abstract

This longitudinal study of Latino/a college students considers the influence of Latino/a college student experiences and ethnic identity on holistic development. Findings indicate that although similar characteristics are seen among Latino/a students, the role of recognizing and making meaning of racism is a significant developmental task. This is consistent with other ethnic and racial identity theories, yet this model considers all three dimensions of holistic development: cognitive, identity (intrapersonal), and interpersonal.

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In the recent developmental literature, more researchers have considered the developmental process of college students as a journey toward self-authorship and have advocated for the interconnectivity between the epistemological (cognitive), intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1982; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Pizzolato, 2003; Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004). Although this body of research is influencing how development and learning can occur, it has not included a conversation about how ethnicity may influence this process. With the exception of Pizzolato's (2003) work on high-risk students and Torres and Baxter Magolda (2004), the majority of the research conducted has focused on majority White students. This study sought to investigate the role of ethnic identity on the experiences of college students.

The initial intent of this study was to investigate the experiences of Latino/a college

students and how ethnicity influenced their development. As the longitudinal study evolved different frameworks were considered and investigated. It was during the analysis stage that holistic development became a salient lens to consider. The process used to determine the use of holistic development as a framework is thoroughly described later in the methodology section.

The findings examine the influence of ethnic identity on the journey towards self-authorship of Latino/a college students. The longitudinal nature of this study allowed the development of students to be considered over time and for comparisons of meaning-making behavior to be made over the years. Although this study did not begin with the intent to use holistic development as a lens, the use of this developmental framework requires that a review of the literature be provided for readers to understand the conceptual framework that influenced the research process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept and term holistic development was introduced by Robert Kegan (1994) to illustrate the interconnectivity between cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development. Baxter Magolda (2001) furthered this research through her longitudinal study of predominantly White college students. As she followed 39 of these students into their 30s, Baxter Magolda's analysis of their interviews began to illustrate Kegan's (1994) theory of

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