DOMINICAN-BORN MOTHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY EXPERIENCE IN THEIR U.S.-BORN DOMINICAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A dissertation presented by

Julio E. Sabater, Jr., MS

Submitted to
The Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In the field of
School and Counseling Psychology

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
June, 2012
# Table of Contents

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** 4  
**ABSTRACT** 6  
**CHAPTER ONE: Introduction** 8  
Statement of the problem 8  
Why study Dominicans? 10  
Overview of the Dominican Republic 10  
Dominican in the U.S. 11  
Dominican in Rhode Island 12  
Background of the problem 13  
Purpose of this study 14  
Theoretical Frameworks for this study 14  
Significance of the study 16  
Nature of the study 17  
Major research question 17  
Definition of terms 18  
Validity and reliability 18  
**CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review** 19  
Demographics, history, and culture 19  
Brief historical review of ethnic identity 19  
Definitions of ethnic identity 20  
Ecological/feminist ecological models and ethnic identity 21  
Related terms of ethnic identity 23  
Identity theories 32  
Ethnic identity theories 34  
Ethnic identity measures 42  
Summary 44  
**CHAPTER THREE: Methodology** 46  
A qualitative study 46  
Research design and methods 47  
Role of the researcher 47  
Participants 49  
Data collection procedures 49  
Data recording procedures 49  
Data analysis procedures 52  
Strategies for validity for validating findings 52  
**CHAPTER FOUR: Results** 55  
Data collection process 55  
The participants 56  
Descriptions of the participants 57  
Major themes 63  
Socio-political confrontations 65  
Socio-cultural reactions 71  
Socio-emotional issues 77  
Successes 80  
Challenges 82
Ethnic Identity

Influential factors in the process
  Individual-system factors
  Micro-system factors
  Macro-system factors
  Exo-system factors
Emergent themes
Dominican-born mothers’ recommendations and feedback
Researcher’s experience

CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion
Research question and connections
Discussion of findings and emergent themes
Implications
  Research
  Training of providers
  Clinical practice
  Policies
  Schools in Providence
  The Latino community in the city of Providence
Limitations of the study
Methodology
Researcher’s role
Strengths of the study
Future directions

REFERENCES

APPENDICES
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board
Appendix B: Flyers
Appendix C: Screening Questions
Appendix D: Informed Consent Form
Appendix E: Interview Questions
Appendix F: Brief Personal Questionnaire
Appendix G: Focus Group Script
Appendix H: Ethnic Identity Development: Perceptions of Experience Model

INDEX OF TABLES
Table 2.1 Study variables
Table 4.1 Summary of the successes
Table 4.2 Summary of the challenges
Table 4.3 Summary of the emergent themes
Table 5.1 Brief review of implications of the study
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“And it came to pass”

At the outset, I take this opportunity to thank God for making this epic materialization a reality and to all who stood by me, especially the sixteen participants who graciously shared their lived experiences with me, during this process called a Dissertation.

To my committee: William Sanchez, Mary Ballou, and Chieh Li, I give my utmost gratitude for taking their priceless time to share their knowledge and wisdom with me. For being responsible for those moments of growth and enlightening, for all those memories, I thank them. For their patience and continued support and comfort, I thank them. I would like to principally thank Willie, for being my mentor and my exemplary role model by imparting his passion and commitment to social justice and activism. I greatly appreciate the times our conversations would turn into teachings and “consejos” resulting in many personal transformations and growth. I am also appreciative of Mary, whose voice in defense of those who are silenced and oppressed has been a defining and central force in the conceptualization for this study and standpoints in my life. I would like to give my sincere thanks to Chieh for not giving up on me and for genuinely awaiting the germination of the seed which she had planted serving as a fundamental hallmark to my professional development in the field of psychology.

I am thankful to my friends who in more than one way motivated me to accomplish this process. To my good friends Valdi, Bassey, Michael, Luisito, Juan, David, and Kelvin I give thanks. I thank Magda for adopting me and sharing her charisma and insight which helped me greatly in my academic, personal, and social aspects of my life. Jenny R.T., Clara and Martha, I thank them for helping me to recruit participants for this study. I would also like to give special thanks to Hugo, my comrade in the battle to counter oppression and injustice in the field of
education and psychology. To Jose, Carmen, and the members of my congregation “Tabernaculo El Nuevo Pacto,” I also give special thanks to Kazi and Lina for their unconditional support and inspiration, and to all my friends at the Providence Center for believing in me. I also thank the Navarro’s family for their prayers. I also give thanks to my new family of friends at Community Healthlink for also serving as inspiration for me: April, Yari, Rachel, Shoshana, Jola, Rebecca, Lydia, Maricarmen, and my supervisors Susan, Danielle, Beth, Michelle, and Anthony. To all of those whose names I did not mention, I also give thanks.

I am appreciative for my family members. In particular, I express my gratitude to Abuela Teresa and Abuela Milagros for their clever words of encouragement. To my sister Marla and niece Yanice and nephew Joey for listening to the purpose of my study, I thank them. I give my most sincere thanks and appreciation to my parents for being there for me since the beginning of my life. For their continued support, assistance, and understanding I will be forever grateful. I thank my father for setting a committed example of responsibility, provision, and education. I thank my mother for her kindness, caring words of motivation, and for inspiring me to have faith in all. I also thank her for helping in collecting, transcribing, and translating components of the data.

To my two princesses, Julisse and Juliette, I will be eternally grateful for their unconditional love and support and for their motivation in this process. They have served as a guiding wave in this pathway so that I could remain until the end. Finally, and most importantly, I give my thanks to my beautiful, caring, and understanding wife who believed in me and did not leave me even in the toughest moments during this process. It was very supportive for me all those times we co-lead focus groups and interviews together. I thank her for helping transcribe most of the data for this study. I will be forever in debt for trusting in me and for her love.
ABSTRACT

This study explored the ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children as told through the lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers. Following an ecological and feminist ecological perspective, the main goal of this study was to understand how the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children takes place as perceived through the lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers in their negotiations, tensions, and interactions within multiple contexts. Within the realm of a political context, this study also confronted oppressive systems and structures associated with this process. While there may exist similarities among the development of ethnic identity of other non-dominant immigrant groups residing in the U.S. east coast, Dominicans were selected as they were identified as the largest Latino group settled in that region, which is where this study took place. Utilizing a qualitative method, the study provided a forum in which these mothers and the researchers could co-construct the meaning of their perceptions of this phenomenon in their children. In order to achieve that goal, five focus groups and ten individual interviews were conducted in Spanish to record their lived experiences. A female co-leader/interviewer assisted in the inquiring of these Dominican-born mothers’ lived experiences. While the groups and interviews took place at a local library, the recruited participants (n=16) resided in the North, South, and West neighborhoods of the city of Providence. Participants regarded highly their role as Dominican identity-agents to their U.S.-born children. Participants also indicated that as they embark in this journey with their children, the socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues that they have to come to terms with makes this process understandably difficult. The implications of conducting research, training, and clinical practice, and formulating policies are discussed as an
invitation to become active in bringing social justice to this prominent population in the city of Providence. The limitations and strengths of the study, and future directions are also discussed. The rapid growth in the number of U.S.-born Dominican children merits continued research on their ethnic identity development in order to understand this process in more depth and to find ways to assist these mothers and their children. Our commitment to multicultural understanding also requires the general public, and, more specifically, the field of psychology, to become aware of these issues as well.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The population of the United States (U.S.) is rapidly increasing in the number of Latino immigrants and consequently in its number of U.S.-born Latinos as well. Currently, it is estimated that 16.29% of the total population are Latinos and that by the year 2050 Latinos will make up about 31.33% of the total population of the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues and tensions for Latinos (Padilla, 1985; Sanchez & Welsh, 1999) emerge as anti-immigrant, xenophobic conservative opponents do not view this rapid growth as favorable for the U.S. society.

Among the Latino immigrant ethnic groups established in the U.S., Dominicans are the fifth largest and fastest growing group, after Mexican Americans, stateside Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, and Salvadoran Americans (Migration Policy Institute, 2004). Each of these Latino subgroups faces complex social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics. Within this context, Dominican-born mothers are also faced with the challenges of assisting their U.S.-born, elementary school age children with their own tensions related to the development of a Dominican ethnic identity while residing and participating in their receiving community within the U.S. That is, these Dominican-born mothers are required to adapt their cultural transmission practices according to their perceptions of threats or opportunities within this receiving community (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010; Johnson, Jaeger, Randolph, Cauce, & Ward, 2003; Sheinberg, 2003). “As the child moves outside the family, starting with child care and preschool settings, she (Dominican-born mother) confronts both risks and the promise of wider learning opportunities” (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010, p.560). Further, “the dilemma of immigrant parents
(in this case Dominican-born mothers), then, is to equip their children with the tools that permit them to be successful in the dominant culture but to not lose them (that is, to lose them to perceived dangers of American life) in the process…” (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009, p.174).

More specifically, the problem intensifies when these Dominican-born mothers are not able to assist their U.S.-born children in this dynamic process, where, if their children do not develop their own Dominican ethnic identity, it has been hypothesized that they are at risk for experiencing psychological distress while growing up (Phinney, 1989, 1992). Conversely, “it is now known, for instance, that immigrant children’s and adolescents’ tight identity with their ethnic group often contributes to stronger engagement in school” (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010, p. 560). Current U.S. demographics have dramatically changed from a homogenous dominant group to a significant proportion of “minorities.” The U.S. is a country where statistical projections show that there will be more and not less Latinos, including Dominicans.

Furthermore, contemporary research conducted on ethnic identity development, particularly studies performed with non-European immigrant ethnic groups including Latinos, describes this process as multifaceted, multidimensional, and multi-contextual in nature (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009; Marks et al., 2007; Phinney, 1989, 1990, 2003; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Robinson-Wood, 2009; Rodriguez et al., 2009). The rapid growth in the number of U.S.-born Dominican children merits continued research on their ethnic identity development in order to understand this process in more depth and to find ways to assist these children and their Dominican-born mothers. Our commitment to multicultural understanding (American Psychological Association (APA), 2003) also requires that the general public, and, more specifically, the field of psychology, become aware, and supportive, of these issues as well.
Why Study Dominicans

Along the U.S. east coast, Dominicans have been identified as the largest group settled in that region. There are approximately 1.1 million people of Dominican descent, both native and foreign-born (Migration Policy Institute (MPI), 2004, p. 2). In Rhode Island, for example, there are approximately 30,876 Dominicans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The following section provides a brief overview of the Dominican Republic and its history, how Dominicans are identified in the U.S., and provides some information regarding Dominicans’ migratory status. It is important to know about their history as a nation and their status in the U.S., in order to understand the context from which they come from and its influence on their current living environment in the U.S.

Overview of the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic is a country located in the Caribbean. The country shares an island with the nation of Haiti. Historically, the entire island was called La Hispaniola, when it was encountered or “discovered” in 1492 by Christopher Columbus. Later on, the island’s name was changed to La Isla de Santo Domingo. After years of colonialism and imperialism at the hands of France, Spain, and the U.S., the island was divided, with the western part of the island being named Haiti, while the eastern part was named the Dominican Republic. “Juan Pablo Duarte led the Dominican Republic to independence. In 1838, he organized a revolutionary group to remove the Haitian government from Santo Domingo. Francisco del Rosario Sánchez and Ramón Mella actually led the final takeover of Santo Domingo on February 27, 1844. The country then became the Dominican Republic” (Haberle, 2003, p. 22). This division took place as a result of the Dominicans obtaining their independence. Currently, there are about 8.5 million people in the Dominican Republic. The official language is Spanish. The country’s main religion is Roman Catholic (Dubois, 2001, p. 4).
Ethnic Identity

Dominicans in the U.S. Historical records indicate that Dominicans have been emigrating from the Dominican Republic since the late 1800s and New York City has served as the major receiving community since the 1930s. During the 1960s, the fall of the Rafael Trujillo military regime resulted in a vast migration of Dominicans to the U.S., mainly to the east coast, including New York City, other parts of New York State, New Jersey, Miami, Providence, other cities in Rhode Island, Lawrence, and Boston. Other parts of the U.S. where Dominicans have immigrated to, but in smaller waves, are Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Houston, Texas; Washington, D.C.; Kansas City, Missouri; and New Orleans, Louisiana.

In describing the Dominican Population in the U.S., the Migration Policy Institute (MPI, 2004, p. 3) defines the term Dominican as including:

A person’s place of birth, origin, or ancestry. This broad definition reflects the composition of the Dominican community, which consists of both immigrants and United States natives who can trace their heritage to the Dominican Republic. The institute also adds that to best reflect the characteristics and distribution of this population in its broadest sense, it furthers defines as part of the Dominican community anyone who: 1) was born in the Dominican Republic; and 2) those who self-reported Dominican as their origin or ancestry. This (also) includes immigrants who were born in other countries, such as Mexico, Cuba, or Haiti. (MPI Report, 2004, p. 7)

In addition, the MPI (2004) also defines the term Dominican foreign born as:

Any immigrant who is of Dominican origin or descent. This includes those who were born in the Dominican Republic as well as those immigrants who were born in other countries. When necessary, terms such as Dominican-born immigrants or immigrants from the Dominican Republic are used to separate Dominican immigrants born in the Dominican Republic from other immigrants of Dominican origin or descent. (MPI Report, 2004, p. 4)

The Dominican immigrant population is made up of three types of migrants: 1) permanent, 2) temporary, and 3) the unauthorized or illegal.

Permanent immigrants are admitted into the United States for permanent settlement. Temporary immigrants are admitted for a specific purpose, such as tourism, business, to study, or for temporary employment. Although temporary immigrants are permitted to stay only for a defined period of time, many often change their status once in the United
States (e.g., by obtaining a “green card,” through marriage, etc.). *Unauthorized immigrants* are those foreign-born persons who entered the United States illegally or who entered legally as temporary immigrants but remained in the United States after their visas had expired. There is a fourth type of migrant: *refugees and those seeking asylum*. However, only a very small number of Dominican foreign born (less than 200 between 1990 and 2000) became legal permanent residents as refugees and asylees. (MPI, 2004, p. 11)

**Dominicans in Rhode Island.** In terms of growth, Rhode Island has the fastest growing Dominican population (as reported at the last census), with a 168 percent increase, followed by Florida with a 167 percent increase (MPI, 2004, p. 11; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). According to Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) Dominican immigrants in Rhode Island arrive voluntarily and most possess an education which was obtained in the Dominican Republic. However, many Dominicans who had attained an education prior to emigrating from the Dominican Republic are still living under the official poverty level, hindering equal access to economic opportunities (Bailey, 2000; Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). That is, their poverty conditions have impeded their upward mobility, even though many possessed a professional education prior to arriving in the U.S.

In Rhode Island, particularly in Providence, the Dominican community is well established as evidenced by the multiple business enterprises, for example, markets or bodegas, Dominican restaurants, and Dominican organizations such as *Quisqueya in Action* and *Club Juan Pablo Duarte* (Garcia Coll & Marks 2009; Itzigsohn, 2009). Latino neighborhoods in Providence are predominately filled with Dominican store owners. For example, in the Latino Community where Dominicans and other ethnic groups live most of the businesses are owned by Dominicans. In their studies, Bailey (2000) and Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) found that Dominicans in Rhode Island tend to enjoy a community that fosters cultural values and practices. These practices, according to these studies, not only reflect their Dominican home context but
also serve as reinforcement for the ethnic identity development of US-born Dominicans. The ability to speak Spanish within the Latino and Dominican communities in Rhode Island also reinforces membership and participation in the ethnic enclaves of these U.S.-born Dominican children (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). Recently, the city elected a U.S. born Dominican mayor for the first time in its history. He won the election with more than 80% of the votes.

**Background of the Problem**

The challenges that Dominican-born mothers face in the process of fostering the ethnic identity development of their U.S.-born children as residents in the U.S. are not new to this or any other culturally diverse group in the United States. As stated above, Dominicans have been migrating in large numbers from the Dominican Republic since the 1960s (Bailey, 2000; Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). This ethnic identity development phenomenon is a new experience for the newly arrived Dominican-born women when they become mothers in the U.S. That is, Dominican-born mothers may not face the challenges as residents in their country of origin because their Dominican-born children do not have the influences of a dominant, alien culture that at times both supports and also negates critical elements of their ethnic identity. In the face of real or perceived hostility towards culturally and linguistically different groups, some immigrants (or in this study’s case the U.S.-born Dominican children) may downplay or reject their own ethnic identity while others may assert their pride in their cultural group and emphasize solidarity as a way of dealing with negative attitudes within the dominant society (Phinney et al., 2001). This solidarity found in Phinney’s study is similar to Padilla’s explication of *Latino ethnic consciousness* where two different Spanish speaking groups, Mexican-American and Puerto Ricans, united in order to confront injustice and discrimination within the labor force in Chicago (Padilla, 1985).
Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the challenges and negotiations that Dominican-born mothers go through in their journeys to assist their U.S.-born children develop their ethnic identity. The hope was to provide a voice to a traditionally silenced and oppressed group among the mainstream culture (Sanchez & Welsh, 1999). The goal was to engage Dominican-born mothers and actively listen to their lived experiences within this dynamic process that impacts the development of their children as well as their personal negotiations and tensions with the socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues involved in this process as residents in the U.S. The study provided a forum in which these mothers and the researcher co-constructed the meaning of these mothers’ perceptions on their experiences about this phenomenon in their children. The study explored the complex balance of power that exists in the process. It also attempted, by listening to these mothers, to demonstrate a contrasting manner of constructing reality, one that is based on sharing the power inherent in who defines reality. The study illuminated how these mothers’ attempt to uphold their Dominican culture, not only as a cultural phenomenon, but as a political act of resistance (Cross, 1991, 1994; Padilla, 1985; Sanchez & Welsh, 1999). These Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions of the developmental complications regarding their role with U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children’s ethnic identity development were also explored in this study.

Theoretical Frameworks for this Study

In order to provide a voice for Dominican-born mothers regarding their perceptions of the development of their children’s ethnic identity, this study was conceptualized in theoretical frameworks that give voice to oppressed groups. Specifically, this study drew its central
conceptualization, for attempting to expose and identify ways to understand the experiences of Dominican-born mothers in their journeys with their U.S.-born children as they develop their ethnic identity, within the Feminist Ecological Model (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002).

Through a perspective that incorporates a traditional ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and a feminist ecological model (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002) ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican children was described as a phenomenon that forms through multiple interactions within diverse and mutually influencing contexts (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). “The ecological perspective proposes that in some circumstances, context can totally redefine socialization practices and child and family outcomes” (Stormshak & Dishion, 2002, p. 202). That is, according to these ecological perspectives, children’s development is viewed within the context of the systems of relationships that forms their environment. “The idea that cultural and community settings qualify the impact of socialization practices, is the defining distinction of the ecological perspective” (Stormshak & Dishion, 2002, p. 202).

More specifically, these ecological viewpoints start with the individual and move from the Micro-System (Family – number of children, nuclear or extended family, education of the parents, religion, cultural background, and other variables), to the Macro-System (cultural repertoire of beliefs systems – political and governmental systems and agendas, community-based cultural values and norms, societal and community needs and priorities, ethnicity, language of origin, beliefs, and attitudes), and finally to the Exo-System (External – school activities, organizations, facilities, professional and advocacy groups, university and private educational facilities, community health and welfare services, social and mental services, and religious community and neighborhoods) as contexts which influence the construction of phenomena, in this case, ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican children.
The lived experiences of these Dominican-born mothers will not only help us gain a deeper understanding of the ethnic identity development of their U.S.-born children, but will also inform us on better ways to help with the developmental needs of this group. Indirectly, the study will also speak to ethnic identity development in the mothers as their proximal interactions (e.g., cultural practices, traditions, teaching of language, gender roles, etc.) with their children within the home context influence the children’s identity (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009; Lippa, 2005), including their ethnic identity. However, and in line with the conceptual framework of this study, there are multiple factors which in addition to the mothers’ ascriptions and commitment to their own ethnic identity unarguably influence their children’s development of ethnic identity.

Significance of the Study

This study will provide existing ethnic identity research with insights and understanding through describing the lived experiences as the Dominican-born mothers tell their stories. It will build on Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) investigations of development of ethnic identity in context. This study will give a voice to these Dominican-born mothers through their stories as they share their perceptions of ethnic identity development of their U.S.-born children. The mothers’ successes and challenges in this task can help the field of psychology by adding to the existing ethnic identity research so as to continue to reduce oppression among Dominican-born mothers and other oppressed groups as well. These lived experiences can serve to inform practitioners working with Dominican-born mothers on how to better understand and assist them in supporting the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of their children. In essence, if these mothers feel empowered and supported in this process, their children will be more likely to have a positive attitude in their development of their Dominican ethnic identity (Garcia Coll &
Marks, 2009) and better opportunities to become productive citizens. By empowering these
Dominican-born mothers in this process, they may also be more prepared to help other
Dominican-born mothers and children as well as individuals from other culturally diverse groups
who may be living similar experiences.

*Nature of the Study*

This study was conducted within a qualitative format. In order to listen to these
Dominican-born mothers’ perspective on their U.S.-born Dominican children’s ethnic identity
development, five focus groups and ten individual interviews were conducted. The focus groups
were conducted prior to the interviews. The individual interviews were performed to provide the
opportunity for the participants of the focus groups to elaborate on their lived experiences. The
focus group consisted of two to three Dominican mothers who were born in the Dominican
Republic and whose children were born in the U.S. In the last phase of the study, three individual
interviews were conducted for participants who were not capable of attending any of the focus
groups. Both the individual interviews and the focus groups were conducted in Spanish by the
researcher and a female co-leader/interviewer. The researcher and female co-leader/interviewer
played the same role in gathering the information. This shared role helped reinforce one of the
goals of this study of creating balance in power with these mothers and provided a more
comfortable setting for them.

*Major Research Question*

How does the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican
elementary school age children take place as perceived through the lived experiences of their
Dominican-born mothers?
Definition of Terms

Dominican-born mothers: Mothers who were born in the Dominican Republic and are of Dominican descent.

U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children: Children of Dominican descent, who were born in the U.S., were attending or attended elementary school, between the ages of 5-12 years old, and whose mothers were Dominican and born in the Dominican Republic.

Validity and Reliability

As a qualitative study, the validity of the results was grounded in the concept of faithfulness to the Dominican-born mothers’ stories. It is the Dominican-born mothers who will be expressing and sharing their lived experiences. Therefore, validity, in this study, depended solidly on the information to be provided by the participants.

The authenticity, trustworthiness, and credibility of this study were assessed by taking a procedural perspective as proposed by Creswell (1998). Six of Creswell’s eight strategies will be selected in this study: 1) triangulation; 2) member-checking; 3) rich, thick description of findings; 4) clarification of bias; 5) negative and discrepant information presentation; and 6) peer debriefing (Creswell, 2003, p. 196).

The reliability of this study was accomplished through the checking for consistent patterns of theme development. That is, no standard test or measure was used in this study. The concept of reliability in this study took on a different meaning as it related to the concept of lived experiences and co-construction of the Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions of their U.S.-born children’s identity. The individual interviews functioned as a way to corroborate the consistency of the information collected in the focus groups.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature related to the history, definitions, relation to ecological and feminist ecological models, related terms, research, and measures within the area of ethnic identity development. Demographics regarding the Dominican population in the Dominican Republic, the U.S., and Rhode Island will be presented prior to the literature review.

Demographics, History, and Culture: The People From and of the Dominican Republic

As mentioned earlier, the Dominican group is the fifth largest group of fastest growth in the U.S. (Migration Policy Institute, 2004, p. 11; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The major diaspora from the Dominican Republic started in the 1960s with the end of the Trujillo dictatorship. Simultaneously, in the U.S., the Civil Rights movement may have also contributed to the massive exodus of Dominicans from their country and establishing residence in the U.S. This movement may have opened doors and policies that would allow other countries as well to enter the U.S. “In 1990, the size of the Dominican population (in the U.S.) was 586,700. By 2000, the Dominican population had increased to over 1.1 million. Between 1990 and 2000, the Dominican population grew by 89 percent” (Migration Policy Institute, 2004, p. 3). Most of the recent increase of the immigrant and native born Dominican population in the U.S. continues to take place on the U.S. east coast, particularly in Providence, Rhode Island.

Brief Historical Review of Ethnic Identity

The origins of ethnic identity can be dated back to Biblical times and the strong sense of the Hebrew people to belong to their group (Exodus 34:11-16). They were called sons of Abraham and the people of God. In the Old Testament, the Law of Moses prohibited the Hebrews or Israeli from mixing or mating with other racial or ethnic groups. According to the
Bible, anyone found disobeying that established law and attempting to compromise the purity of God’s people would have been stoned to death. Hence, ethnic identity was imposed early on to the Israeli children through their mothers (Wright, 1981). Israeli mothers had the role of passing on their ethnic identity including practices, traditions, religion, and language to their children (Wright, 1981). Today, the Israeli people continue to be a strong and respected ethnic group. Given its establishment within the world, Israeli ethnic identity now is generally seen favorably and as a status of power.

During the 1960s and 70s, the Civil Rights movement brought change to the way dominant groups would label non-dominant groups. This movement provided a stronger sense of belonging to their group, for African-American residents in the U.S. After the Civil Rights movement, African-Americans created their own identification labels. That is, instead of allowing the dominant group to call them Negros, African-Americans used the term Black to identify their ethnic identity. It was both an act of resistance and a movement towards empowerment through social activism (Sanchez & Welsh, 1999). It also opened doors for views on racial identity development to move from a “Black self-hatred model” to one that was based on a learning to negotiate biculturally between Black and White societies (Cross, 1991). This movement also stressed the confrontation of systemic oppression in our society. Ethnic identity research (Phinney, 1989, 1991, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Umana-Taylor, 2003; Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bamacá-Gómez, 2004; Umana-Taylor & Shin, 2007) also benefited from this movement.

Definitions of Ethnic Identity

Ethnic Identity has been conceptualized as a strong sense of belonging to a group. However, “the term ‘ethnicity’ (itself) does not have a commonly agreed upon definition” (APA
According to APA (2003) they refer to “ethnicity as the acceptance of the group mores and practices of one's culture of origin and the concomitant sense of belonging” (p. 9). The construct of ethnic identity development is complex and multidimensional in nature (Phinney, 1991). It is not based on a single dimension or a single process that can be easily defined with a beginning and an end. It is a dynamic, lifespan developmental process that involves continuous redefinitions within multiple ecological and historical contexts (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). Thus, “identity is not achieved but is a continuous process, which can range from and shift between rejection of their ethnicity and complete identification with it, independent of attitudes toward mainstream culture” (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009, p. 26).

Ecological/Feminist Ecological Models and Ethnic Identity Development

Through an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and a feminist ecological model (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002) ethnic identity can be conceptualized as a construct that evolves as a result of multiple interactions with various contexts of the individual. In these views, not only internal forces influence ethnic identity, but external forces as well. The ecological model sees ethnic identity more as a result of continuous interactions within various settings and environments and the feminist ecological viewpoint postulates ethnic identity as a coordinate present in all the spheres described in the ecological model. That is, along with sex-gender, age, and class, race-ethnicity is considered as a line that cuts across the multiple levels of the model. According to the feminist ecological model, these coordinates are signifiers at all levels. “Their interactivity with all levels of the model is constant, particularly in terms of their impact on the individual’s experiences with an interpretation of daily life” (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002, p. 131). Race-ethnicity in this model is seen as playing an essential role in the
design of global and intermediate social and structural environments. In essence, this model posits ethnic identity as developing in individuals through relationships and how those relationships impact people in the process.

Moreover, a feminist ecological perspective is not only appropriate but a necessity when studying processes with women, children, and non-dominant groups as these populations have been traditionally silenced and oppressed in a positivistic, male dominant society. An ecological model is essential in understanding the complexity of ethnic identity formation. Thus, while an ecological viewpoint gives light to how ethnic identity dynamically evolves within multiple layers in U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children, a feminist ecological model gives the opportunity for these Dominican-born mothers to speak about its complexity, and confronts the social and political implications in the process. Moreover, both models will help in informing and organizing the dynamics of the process within the global and local environments of these Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions about their children’s ethnic identity development. Both theoretical viewpoints will also help in considering the constancy of ethnic identity as it cuts across all spheres of life as a Dominican-born mother residing in the U.S. The integration of all components involved and their influences from multiple contexts will also be examined using an ecological and a feminist ecological perspective.

Conceptually, the notion that ethnic identity is constant or present in all individuals’ interactions with multiple environments is assumed to be a defining component of these models. However, while ethnic identity is viewed as a constant element within the individual (in this case the U.S.-born Dominican children and their Dominican-born mothers), its presentation within each sphere depends ultimately on the meaning and definition given at that particular time and
space of that interaction. Thus, the process and development of ethnic identity is dynamic, contextual, and dependent on each individual lived experience.

*Related Terms to Ethnic Identity*

Pertinent to this study is the discussion of terms related to ethnic identity. Racial identity, cultural identity, feminist identity, gender identity, gay identity, and acculturation will be presented here briefly.

Racial identity is a construct that has been associated with ethnic identity. “Racial designation or category and ethnicity per se are confusing issues in the United States” (Helms, 1990, p. 3). Cross (1991) and Helms (1990, 1993) have been cited as paving the way for racial identity research.

Cross (1991) challenged the traditional idea that African-American identity is developed as a result of self-hatred towards their racial group. Instead, Cross (1991) argues in favor of the notion that an individual’s personal and collective selfhoods operate independent of each other. He coins the term *nigrescence* as transformations in Black identity and argues that not all African-Americans go through the same process of finding a psychological strategy to deal with exploitation and oppression issues faced by Black individuals in the U.S. While Cross’s ideology is framed within the political context (i.e., Black social movement of the 1970s and the 1980s), it is conceptualized on a personal and individual level. In his later revisions of his ideology, Cross (1994) presents a transformation from Negro to Black where the individual starts with identification with the white society; has an oppressive experience which makes him or her aware of their denial; and moves him or her to explore the meaning of being black and the positive benefits of their black race. A final distinction of his model is that the individual
develops a secure sense and pride in being black which allows him or her to interact well with other non-Black racial groups (Cross, 1994).

Helms (1990, 1993) developed a racial identity model in which individuals organize racial information about “themselves, other people, and institutions” (Helms, 1993, p. 19). Helms postulated a four stage model which contained a Preencounter Stage (the individual either passively embraces the white world or actively devalues his or her own); Encounter Stage (as a result of an event the individual realizes that he or she cannot become part of the “White World” (Helms, 1993, p. 25); Immersion/Emersion Stage (the individual recognizes the need for his or her formation of a black identity, and he or she explores the benefits of the black culture). Lastly, in describing Helms’ (1990) racial identity model, Thompson & Carter (1997) state that the final status of racial identity development is never achieved, but instead, as individuals go through the different statuses it affords them strategies to deal with racism and oppression just as Cross (1994) proposed.

Cultural identity is also a term usually associated with ethnic identity. Sue and Sue (1990) have provided a five-stage model to describe “Racial/Cultural Identity Development” (R/CID). Similar to Cross (1994) and Helms (1990), the general idea of this model is to explain the process by which non-dominant group individuals encounter oppression in order to understand themselves and undergo transformation in their perception of their own culture as well as other cultures. The first level of the R/CID is called the “conformity” stage. This stage is where non-dominant group members adopt the values, beliefs, and perspectives of the dominant culture. The second or “dissonance” stage is where a specific event confronts the individual’s beliefs and values with inconsistent information. As a result of this event, the individual begins to question and challenge the values and beliefs held in the conformity stage. In the “resistance
and immersion” stage, the individual immerses him or herself in the minority culture and possesses negative attitudes toward the dominant culture. During the “introspection” stage the individuals focus on understanding themselves and their own cultural group. Finally, in the fifth or “integrative awareness” stage the individual exhibits a sense of stability and appreciates components of his or her own culture and other cultures as well.

Of importance to ethnic identity research is the discussion on feminist identity development. Feminist identity development model (FIDM) was introduced by Downing and Roush (1985). “In response to the second wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Downing and Roush (1985) developed a five-stage conceptual model to describe the developmental process feminists experienced as they moved towards feminist self-identification” (Erchull et al., 2009, p. 832). “Passive acceptance” is the first stage of the FIDM. This stage is characterized by a passive acceptance of traditional sex roles and discrimination. It is in this stage where women are still holding on to the belief that traditional roles are of advantage (and natural). In addition, men are considered as having a superior status. The “revelation stage” or the second stage is mainly characterized by the presence of a series of crises which result in questioning of the self and roles with subsequent anger and guilt feelings. Men are perceived as negative in this stage. The “embeddeness-emanation” stage is characterized by women making connections with other select women, and affirming and developing a stronger, new identity. It is postulated in this stage that women develop relativistic thinking where they become cautious in their interactions with men. The “synthesis” stage is where women develop an authentic and positive feminist identity. Sex-role transcendence occurs and evaluation of men on an individual basis takes place. Finally, stage five or “active commitment” stage is where women consolidate their feminist identity with commitment to meaningful action to a nonsexist world. In this final
stage, women’s actions are personalized and rational. Here is where women consider men equal but not the same as women (Downing & Roush, 1895; Erchull et al., 2009).

Gender identity theory is another important concept related to ethnic identity. Gender identity or core gender identity can be defined as how a person self-identifies as having a particular gender or lack thereof. “Gender identity is a child’s sense of self as a girl or a boy. Understanding gender constancy and being able to label the self and others in terms of gender are important steps in achieving gender identity. Moreover, gender identity is multidimensional, and its components vary according to gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation” (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010, p. 499). However, gender identity is not rooted on biological sex identification and it is not necessarily based on sexual orientation. Gender identities that are typically labeled are male identity, female identity, both female and male identities, and somewhere in between male and female identities.

A historical review of the concept of gender identity indicates that while the term was originally used by the field of medicine, to assign sex labels to patients after sex reassignment surgery, the term is also found in the field of psychology as core gender identity. Before the 20th century, sex was determined by genitalia until the study of chromosomes and genes was better understood. During the 1950s and 1960s, psychologists began studying gender development in young children, partially in order to understand the origins of homosexuality. In 1958, under the direction of Robert Stoller, the Gender Identity Research Project was established at the University of California Medical Center to study intersexuels and transsexuals (Stoller, 1964; Zucker, 2002). In 1965, John Money worked on development of early theories of gender identity through his work at Johns Hopkins Medical School’s Gender Identity Clinic. His theory of
gender identity, suggested that, up to a certain age, gender identity is relatively fluid and subject to constant negotiation (Zucker, 2002).

Gender role theories are also important in gender identity. Social learning theories explain gender roles as primarily being learned by observing and imitating the actions and behaviors of others. This theory postulates that secondarily, gender roles are learned by being directly rewarded and punished for our own actions (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010). Operant conditioning (or learning by rewards and punishment) and observational learning (or watching and noting outcomes as vicarious learning) are concepts associated with social learning theories in terms of gender roles. That is, in social learning theories children attend and model how others, and those who have control over them, behave according to their selected gender (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010).

Gender schema theory is an integration of social learning theory and cognitive development theories to explain the acquisition of gender-related thoughts and behaviors. Children develop schemas of culturally based gender information and use them to understand self and the world around them. A gender schema is a mental framework for processing information on perceived male and female characteristics. If the culture emphasizes differences between male and female roles, then the children will also process information regarding gender roles according to those gender associations (Lippa, 2005). Children may also come to evaluate themselves in terms of how they personally match themselves to the schema that they have developed. As a result, gender-typing is learned. That is, as children grow they learn the cultural meaning of what it is to be male or female (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Lippa, 2005).

In Self-Presentation Theory, gender behavior is flexible and changing and does not represent anything real in people. As a social constructionist view, people construct their gender
during interaction. In other words, gender roles are a construction of multiple interactions with others as well as the meaning they award to that particular experience (Lippa, 2005).

Gay identity development will also be presented as a related term to ethnic identity. A well known model for gay identity was developed by Vivian Cass (1979) to assess the growth, development, and awareness of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000). This model is composed of six stages as part of the process conceptualizing a gay identity. “Identity confusion” is the first stage and where individuals start increasing their awareness of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of a homosexual nature. If individuals are able to resolve their previous incompatible thoughts about homosexuality and their perceptions, either identity foreclosure (repression of their thoughts about homosexuality) or movement to the next stage takes place (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

In the “identity comparison” stage, individuals commence to seek information and contact with gay others. As they start to form increase congruence with their self-perceptions about homosexuality they begin to have conflict with others (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

“Identity tolerance” is the third stage of this model. Individuals hold a strong self-image as homosexuals and they increase their contact with the gay community. In this stage individuals develop a sense of empowerment about their homosexuality (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

In the “identity acceptance” stage individuals either resolve their conflict with non-gays as passing as a straight person or disclosing to significant others who are not homosexuals. For those individuals who decide to continue without disclosure of their homosexuality, they may
continue in this stage and be able to manage it effectively (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

The “identity pride” stage is characterized by individuals’ acquisition of a “dichotomized homosexual (valued) and heterosexual (devalued) worldview” (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000, p. 129). In this stage, the individuals experience great anger towards the heterosexual community.

Finally, the last stage of this model is the “identity synthesis” stage where individuals see sexuality as one part of their identity. Conflict in this stage is manageable and individuals can live experiencing positive reactions towards heterosexuals and similarities and dissimilarities among heterosexuals and homosexuals as well (Robinson-Wood & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

The Importance of Acculturation

The important concept of acculturation has also been related to ethnic identity research. The most accepted definition, as provided by Berry (2005) views acculturation as the process of change that occurs when groups with different cultural traditions come in contact with each other. Acculturation research has employed various theoretical frameworks ranging from anthropological (pre nineteenth century) and social conceptualizations to psychological perspectives (post nineteenth century).

A review of the history of the concept of acculturation shows writings as early as Plato’s work where he cautions citizens from his time to minimized engagement with citizens of other cultures in order to reduce the risk of learning bad habits (Rudmin, 2003). During the late nineteenth century, James Powell has been given credit for coining the term acculturation, first using it in an 1880 report by the U.S. Bureau of American Ethnography. Through a social
anthropological context, in 1883, Powell defined acculturation as psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation (see Rudmin, 2003a).

Later within the twentieth century, the term was introduced as a psychological construct. Up to this point in its history, the definition of acculturation had referred to cultural groups and their influences on each other rather than focusing on individuals per se. From a psychological perspective, Graves (1967) introduced the term psychological acculturation to describe changes that occur in an individual as a consequence of coming in contact with elements of other cultures such as attitudes, behaviors, values, and self-identity, among others. This distinction between acculturation in groups versus individuals is important as not all individuals will experience the process as their cultural group at large would experience (Berry, 2005).

In terms of acculturation research, Berry’s (1997, 2003) work has been widely cited to describe this process. Berry’s unique distinction, from a traditional model of acculturation (e.g., Gordon, 1964), is the bidimensionality of his conceptual framework. Prior models of acculturation had been conceptualized as a linear or unidimensional process where an individual from a non-dominant cultural group comes in contact with the dominant culture and is fully assimilated to the dominant culture. “The unidimensional model describes this acculturation as the process of moving from one cultural identity (e.g., ethnic identity) to the other (e.g., mainstream cultural identity) over time” (Gordon, 1964; as cited in Kang, 2006, p. 670). In such linear models there is no space for individual differences and their interactions within multiple contexts. In addition, unidimensional models assume that the individual or groups will maximize exposure to the dominant group so as to dispose of their non-dominant culture. That is, in a unidimensional model, two opposite poles are presented where there occurs a linear movement or shift from abandoning the non-dominant culture in order to favor the acquisition of
the new dominant cultural group. This unidimensional perspective also hinders ethnic minorities from developing as bicultural individuals while residents of the American culture.

Berry (1986) postulated a bidimensional acculturation model where there are four possible states in which individuals fall: assimilation, marginalization, separation, and integration. Acquiring a bicultural state is viewed as more adaptive for individuals to attain as they go through their process of acculturation.

The “assimilation” state is where the individual has only interest in maintaining mainstream cultural identity. The emphasis on this stage is on the mainstream group to enforce adoption of their values. Here the individual moves to adopt the mainstream culture as his or her own culture.

The “separation” state is where the individual has only interest in maintaining ethnic cultural identity of origin. The individual rejects the values of the mainstream culture and develops a strong attachment and connection with his or her ethnic group and culture.

The “marginalization” state is where the individual has little interest in maintaining both cultural identities. In this state the individual becomes alienated from participating in either culture.

The “integration” state is where the individual has interest in maintaining both cultural identities. In this state the individual becomes bicultural and is able to function well in both cultures.

In sum, the related terms presented above provide similarities and disparities found when they are compared to ethnic identity. This part of the literature review also provided knowledge and understanding about multiple components that make up individuals’ identity. The next section reviews the literature on identity formation.
Identity Theories

Traditionally, too much emphasis has been placed on defining identity in terms of developmental stage theories (for example, Erickson, 1968; Tafjel, 1981) and consolidated statuses theories (for example, Marcia, 1980; Phinney, 1992) where an individual goes through a series of stages in order to achieve his or her identity. Identity development theories have traditionally been grounded in the notion of conflict resolution, resulting from an identity crisis, as a major developmental challenge during adolescence and young adulthood (Erickson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). This resolution would imply that the individual has achieved a more mature identity. This body of research has highlighted salient components that occur to adolescents as they develop their identity. The concepts of exploration, resolution, and affirmation have been proposed as major components of identity development (Phinney, 1989).

Ego Identity formation theory and its further extensions and Social Identity model will be reviewed next (Erickson, 1968; Marcia, 1980; Tafjel, 1981).

Erikson (1968) based his identity development theory on psychosocial stages and the formation of ego identity. His work was a conceptual, clinically based model that he himself did not empirically test. Specifically, Erikson (1968) described his view of identity development from a lifespan perspective where the individual goes through physical, emotional, and psychological stages of development. Within a psychoanalytic framework, Erikson (1968) postulated that in each of the stages, individuals experience a conflict where either they develop or fail to develop the pertinent developmental quality for that stage. In terms of identity per se, Erikson (1968) focused primarily on the adolescent stage of development. According to Erikson, during adolescence there exists a conflict between identity and confusion. This struggle or conflict is what Erikson called an identity crisis period. If the adolescent resolves the conflict
they develop a sense of who they are. Conversely, if the adolescent does not resolve the conflict they will be insecure and confused about their identity.

This conceptual work proposed by Erickson (1968) while being cited and rooted within research on ethnic identity, was primarily concentrated on describing identity development using a white European population. Specifically, Erickson (1968) based his conceptual conclusions of identity development on white middle class heterosexual males. As a result, non-dominant groups were not included in his postulation making his work cumbersome when trying to “make it fit” to non-dominant and traditionally oppressed groups (for example, Dominicans in this study).

Social Identity, as proposed by Tafjel (1980) is mainly concerned with the psychological and sociological aspects of group behavior. That is, with individuals’ identification with social groups and shared attitudes to those outside of their group. There are three elements of this theory: categorization (categories individuals belong to in different contexts), identification (individuals thinking of self as group members), and comparison (individuals evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to others).

Marcia (1980) expanded on Erickson’s (1968) model. Marcia (1980) interviewed youth and inquired about their commitment to an occupation and an ideology, and whether they had experienced or were experiencing an identity crisis where they were grappling with making a decision. As a result, Marcia devised a conceptual framework of identity which included four statuses. His four possible statuses when developing identity are: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. Marcia’s resolution is a “balance”, where, similar to Erickson’s (1968) resolution of identity confusion, the person makes a “commitment” to an identity. While Marcia did not specifically speak about ethnic identity, his model explicated how
having a commitment to and achieving an identity leads to a happier and healthier life. Conversely, having a diffuse identity leads to not developing a unified sense of self.

Unfortunately, just as Erikson (1968) did in his description of identity formation, Marcia used a white European population and did not include non-dominant groups in his sample of youth that he interviewed in his study.

**Ethnic Identity Theories**

Phinney (1990) devised a conceptualization which integrated Erickson’s and Marcia’s work in an effort to further research on ethnic identity development. Adapting the notion that ethnic identity development is complex and multidimensional, Phinney (1990) included non-dominant ethnic groups in her research. Phinney and Ong (2007) postulated that ethnic identity is either determined at birth (by the parents’ already identified ethnic identity) or assigned to individuals by others according to ethnic background or phenotype. Additionally, Phinney and Ong (2007) also state that as a result of individuals’ ability to choose regarding their assigned ethnicity and the meanings they embrace in their group membership, their construction of their sense of self as a group member, their attitudes, and their conceptualization of that group membership, suggest that ethnic identity formation is a dynamic process that occurs over a lifespan.

For non-dominant groups whose parents are immigrants to the U.S., such as the case in this study with Dominican-Born mothers, the acculturation process of both the parents and their children, plays an important role in the development of their children’s ethnic identity. In understanding the concept of ethnic identity, Phinney et al. (2001) posits ethnic identity “as that aspect of acculturation that focuses on the subjective sense of belonging to a group or culture” (p. 495).
Phinney’s studies also placed the concept of ethnic identity within the framework of a dominant ethnic group. In other words, ethnic identity development would occur as a result of two cultures coming into contact: the dominant ethnic group and the non-dominant ethnic group.

Phinney’s (1989, 1993) original work, presents a three stage model where the individual moves from an unexamined stage through moratorium and finally achieved ethnic identity. Phinney interviewed 91 American-born Asian-American, Black, Hispanic, and White tenth-graders enrolled in U.S. urban high schools. These participants in the study also answered questionnaires geared towards measuring ego identity and psychological adjustment.

The first stage is an “unexamined ethnic identity” characterized by adolescents’ lack of exploration about their ethnic identity. These participants had not engaged in any exploration and questioning about their ethnic identity.

The second stage is “ethnic identity search/moratorium.” This stage is described as continuing until adolescents encounter a situation that initiates an ethnic identity search. This is the stage where ethnic identity awareness becomes salient, thus stimulating the search for ethnic identity definition.

The third stage is “ethnic identity achievement” where adolescents show confidence about, acceptance, and internalization of, their ethnic identity. It is in this stage that individuals enjoy their membership and proud affiliation to their own ethnic group.

Phinney’s work has contributed to the identification of factors that can increase ethnic identity awareness within adolescents (Phinney, 1990). As a result of their membership in their own ethnic group and interactions with the dominant group, adolescents engage in social situations that not only increase their awareness of their ethnic identity, but as Phinney (1990)
Ethnic Identity

described, they also undergo experiences (for example oppression, racism, discrimination) that can debilitate their ethnic self concept.

Throughout the last decade, ample documented theoretical development and empirical research on ethnic identity has been focused mainly on its developmental process during adolescence (Phinney, 1989, 1991; Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997; Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). In addition, most of this research has been silent about the role of mothers in ethnic identity development, and maternal perceptions of this process of ethnic identity development in their children.

More recently, ethnic identity development researchers have focused on ethnic identity development during middle childhood (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). For children who reside in the U.S., the influence of multiple contexts (family, school, and community) and interactions within those contexts on the process of ethnic identity development is prominent. Social, political, and economic implications have also been identified as important functions in studying ethnic identity development, particularly for non-dominant groups (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). In addition, research has shown that for non-dominant groups, their ethnic identity knowledge and ethnic identity concept formation is present earlier than in members of dominant groups (Bernal et al., 1990; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Marks et al., 2007). The Marks et al. study has also identified non-dominant groups developing their ethnic identity as early as middle-childhood. That is, as these children start the process of developing their identity as an individual (Erickson, 1968), they also start developing (at a very basic level) their ethnic identity (Connolly, 1998; Ramsey, 1991).

Marks et al. (2007) studied more than four hundred children and found that the children of foreign-born immigrants develop their ethnic identity prior to adolescence. Unfortunately, the
research with ethnic identity development on children is scarce where a comparison with dominant groups on ethnic identity development prior to adolescence is a central focus. However, their study (Marks et al.) was consistent with the findings of Fordham & Ogbu (1986) where there was evidence that children who are as young as middle childhood (approximately ages 10 to 12) demonstrated knowledge of their ethnic identity and had internalized the concept and the meaning of ethnic identity. Additionally, Marks et al. is also consistent with Bernal et al. (1990) in their finding of the presence of ethnic identity constancy in their longitudinal study with Mexican American middle childhood age children. This ethnic identity constancy (as evidenced by greater number of correct naming labels, fewer errors in identifying and sorting children of their own ethnic group, and more complex reasons for sorting themselves into this group as they grew older) referred to those children’s ability to understand that ethnic identity or belonging to a certain ethnic group does not change over time and stays constant (Ocampo, Knight, & Bernal, 1997).

Building on Phinney’s work, Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) designed a three year longitudinal study and utilized a mixed methods approach that included a qualitative interview portion. The Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) study demonstrated how middle-school age children consistently identified with their cultural group and that there is evidence of ethnic identification prior to adolescence contrary to what Erickson (1968) had discussed in his psychosocial developmental stages theory (i.e., identity development as taking place during adolescence). The qualitative nature of that study was geared to listening to the lived experiences of these non-dominant groups. Garcia Coll and Marks’ (2009) study included Cambodians, Dominicans, and Portuguese families and children. They developed ethnic identity process models for each of the three populations who participated in the study: Portuguese, Cambodian, and Dominican. They
utilized interviews and community focus groups to collect the data used in the study. They also created and employed questionnaires for a range of children from 6 to 12 years and their parents to gather information from the participants. Over 300 families of Dominican, Portuguese, and Cambodian descent were recruited with the final sample consisting of 772 first to fourth grade students enrolled in urban school settings in Rhode Island. They were classified by their schools as Latino, Black, Asian, and other.

More specifically, the methodology of Garcia Coll and Marks consisted of a pilot phase where schools and ethnic communities were contacted, measures in English, Portuguese, Spanish, and Khmer were developed and piloted; a year one phase where the researchers conducted ethnographies and gathered information, interviewed the children who started in first and fourth grade while in this study; a year two phase where the parents and children were interviewed; and a year three phase where teachers filled out questionnaires and the children were again interviewed.

Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) used a developmental perspective in their study as Phinney (1990, 1993) did, but they also incorporated the importance of the individual’s multiple contexts, consistent with an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as part of the development of their ethnic identity study. Specifically, Garcia Coll and Marks summarize their conceptualization when they state that “this comprehensive approach reflects our notions that developmental outcomes are embedded in multiple contexts, and outcomes and contexts are mutually affecting each other” (p. 55). They, in particular, placed a lot of emphasis on the influence of home and school, among other contexts, in ethnic identity development. The quantitative portion of their study incorporated the building of variables related to the multiple
contexts identified. A brief description of each variable identified by Garcia Coll and Marks follows.

Table 2.1 Study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Attitudes Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School engagement, academic aspirations, academic expectations, perceptions of teachers, school values, and school-related stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Attitudes Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic pride, ethnic identity resilience, ethnic identity centrality, child cultural practices, child language preferences, in-group social differences, and out-group social differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familial Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living below poverty level, parent employment, parents’ education, parent-child book reading, home educational resources, and family cultural socialization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These are identified as having a direct effect on child-level processes:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **School Racial Composition** – percentage of the white population,
- **School Economic Marker** - percentage of students receiving free or subsidized lunch program,
- **School Proficiency in Math and Writing** – % of students below or severely below proficiency in these subjects.
- **Teacher Number of Years’ Experience**.
- **Teacher Pedagogy**: family socioeconomic status (SES) matters in education.
- **Teacher Pedagogy**: ethnicity matters in education.

Note: Adapted from Figure 8.3 (p.159), Figure 8.4 (p.161), and Figure 8.5 (p.163) from García Coll, C., Marks, A. K. (2009). *Immigrant stories: Ethnicity and academics in middle childhood.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) found that for Dominican children in their study, ethnic pride was indicative of academic achievement, but ethnic centrality or acting as a Dominican at school was indicative of low academic achievement and failure. In their study, Dominican children tended to give up their Dominican ethnic identity while in a school which was predominantly white. That is “learning school curriculum and learning to follow the standard academic practices of the school are often equated by the minorities with learning to act white or
as actually acting white while simultaneously giving up acting like a minority person” (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p. 182; as cited in Sanchez & Welsh, 1999).

In addition, in Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) the Dominican-American children were found to be grappling with their racial identities in the school context, where some children would attempt to dissociate themselves from being black. “The construction of ‘race’ in the Dominican Republic is such that anyone who is not of Haitian ethnicity is considered white” (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009, p. 182). The Dominican children’s parents in their study did not consider their children black even though their children were ascribed as “black” by other members of the community, particularly within the school context.

These findings from the Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) study on Dominican children are alarming and emphasize the fact that these U.S.-Born Dominican children, in attempting to find ways to adapt to the mainstream dominant group, prefer to give up or reject an important aspect of their identity, which is their ethnic identity. According to their findings, they stress the importance of the adults (parents, teachers) working with these children to constantly assess any negative feelings “in order to provide them with experiences that will affirm rather than undermine the development of positive feelings toward their own ethnicity/race and that of others” (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009, p. 181). Knowing the history of local ethnic groups in order to discern isolation and negativity towards themselves and other groups’, affirming multiculturalism and diversity, confronting racism, and providing cross racial/ethnic experiences through the curriculum are other recommendations made. “It is especially important to help children associate with their ethnicity/race with success in school: They need role models and mentors in their communities who can provide such knowledge when their families cannot” (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009, p. 182).
Thus far, the ethnic identity research presented in this literature review has ranged from developmental stages to ethnic identity processes within an ecological perspective. As mentioned earlier in the brief historical review of ethnic identity section, ethnic identity has its roots in social activism and was formed as a result of the civil rights movement (Sanchez & Welsh, 1999).

Padilla (1985) views ethnic identity as a state of critical consciousness which results in a collective identity and behavior or “as a political phenomenon: a strategy to attain the needs of the groups” (Padilla, 1985, p. 138). Ethnic identity is also described as forming within contentious sociopolitical contexts. In his study, two distinct groups, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, united as a political act of resistance to confront discrimination within the labor industry in Chicago during the 1980s. In essence, this event is similar to that critical incident described by Cross (1994), Helms (1990; 1993), and Sue and Sue (1990) which force individuals to challenge the values of the dominant culture. In the Padilla (1985) study, these two groups utilized what Padilla refers to as “Latino ethnic mobilization” to organize around some common features of their ethnic identity. In their case it was initially the Spanish language (Padilla, 1985). However, Padilla argues:

That these groups speak the same language is not sufficient to influence or bring about the creation of a Latino or Hispanic ethnic identity and consciousness; instead, the construction and expression of this type of group identification and behavior is dependent upon the influence or effect of structural factors such as systems of inequality, discrimination, racism, and the like of the groups’ shared cultural and linguistic similarity. (Padilla, 1985, p.154)

As a result of their unification and through the Affirmative Action Policy, the Spanish Coalition for Jobs was formed. Their goal was to “alter existing social and power arrangements between the Spanish-speaking and the larger American society structure” (Padilla, 1985, p. 82), and, they achieved it.
Ethnic Identity Measures

In order to measure the construct of ethnic identity, researchers have developed instruments to provide empirical support to their theoretical constructions. Phinney (1992) and Umaña-Taylor (2003) will be briefly reviewed in this section.

Phinney (1992) developed the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) which is a questionnaire to measure ethnic identity using elements of ethnic identity which are common across different ethnic groups in order for the measure to be generalized to different populations. The measure includes 14 items to assess the level of exploration, commitment, and participation in cultural activities and belonging to their ethnic group. The initial scale development sample included 134 Asian American, 131 African American, 89 Hispanic, 12 White, 11 Black, 1 American Indian, and 8 mixed background college students, ages 18-34 years. A Cronbach’s alpha score was .81 for the high school sample and .90 for the college sample. Demographic variables were cross examined with ethnic identity. The MEIM developer found this measure reliable and that it can be used particularly to examine similarities and differences in ethnic identity and its correlates among youth from diverse cultural groups.

Umaña-Taylor (2003) designed an ethnic identity scale as a critique to Phinney’s Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. According to Umaña-Taylor, Phinney’s general score was a combination of all three statuses: unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search/moratorium, and ethnic identity achievement. Umaña argues that it was inconceivable for non-dominant groups to report their ethnic identity in terms of one combined score. In addition, Umaña saw as a problem that “in using the MEIM, only individuals whose commitment to their ethnic identity is positive are characterized as having an achieved identity. Consequently, the measurement is
incongruent with the theory, as one’s commitment is confounded with one’s affirmation of one’s ethnic identity” (p. 6).

Umaña then devised the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS). The EIS is a measurement tool to “assess a typology for examining ethnic identity statuses consistent with Marcia’s operationalization of Erickson’s theory and Tajfel’s social identity theory” (p.7). The scale contains 17 items, scored on a 4-point Likert scale. The three study scale development sample included high school and college students from diverse groups (Study 1: Polish, Mexican, Irish, and Eritrean; Study 2: Polish, Vietnamese, Mexican, and Native American; Study 3: Latino). Ethnic identity, race/ethnicity, self-esteem, and familial ethnic socialization were the indices measured. Findings “highlight the importance of examining the three components of ethnic identity as individual factors, as opposed to using a sum score of the three scales” (p. 23).

Both the MEIM and the EIS, while taking an ecological perspective in their design as they involve various groups and recognize differences among those groups, are still attempting to claim a correspondent score to determine an individual’s ethnic identity. It would be inappropriate to presume that a score or a set of combined scores could capture a complex psychological phenomenon as in ethnic identity, including the importance of integrating context. As Phinney (1990; 1992) and Umaña-Taylor (2003) claimed, ethnic identity is a dynamic process (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Given the qualitative nature of the current study and its conceptualization from a feminist ecological model, the MEIM and the EIS are considered incomplete measures in that they fail to capture the lived experiences of non-dominant participants within real life settings. The goal of this study is not to find a score to measure ethnic identity but instead it is to inquiry about Dominican-born mothers’ lived experiences as they relate to the ethnic identity development of their elementary school age children. To accept
a score as “the only” measurement for ethnic identity would be culturally and socially oppressive to the Dominican-born mothers as well as for their U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children. In addition, and in line with the feminist ecological central framework of this study, opting not to utilize a “standard” measure in this study stood not only as a way to give a voice to the participants, but also as a way to directly confront and counter against narrow conceptualizations of ethnic identity that do not integrate multiple contexts, including many of the sociopolitical factors that influence acceptance or rejection of ethnic identity in real life, contentious, settings. As a result, the above quantitative measures, while useful in other bodies of research and investigations, will not be used in the current study.

SUMMARY

The U.S. population, society, and culture, is increasingly reflecting a continually increasing number of Dominicans. Socio-political, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues and tensions arise not only for these U.S.-born Dominican children, but also for their Dominican-born mothers as they help them negotiate their ethnic identity development. This literature review concentrated on defining ethnic identity, conceptualizing ethnic identity through ecological and feminist ecological viewpoints, presenting past and current research on ethnic identity, and explaining ethnic identity measures. This chapter also described terms related to ethnic identity, including the important construe of acculturation. Nevertheless, while these related terms were recognized as salient components which contribute to the dynamic construction of one’s overall identity, they are seen as distinctive and separate terms from ethnic identity in this study and will not be extensively discussed nor compared to findings in this document.
This study’s task was to better understand how that process takes place from the perceptions and lived experiences of these Dominican-born mothers within developmental and political contexts. Within these contexts, the study attempted to counter the silence present in the current literature about the challenges and successes that Dominican-born mothers encounter in this process, as residents and participants in the well-established Dominican community. Moreover, the hope was to actively listen to the voices of their social contexts and political agendas with the crucial goal of helping them reaffirm their Dominican consciousness while decreasing the tensions and implications that arise from their lived experiences. The co-construction of an empowering position conducive to education, transformation, growth, action, and change was also an important goal of this study. In essence, it was expected that while these mothers participated in this co-construction during the study, they would also be better equipped to confront oppressive system and structures as they strengthen their sense of agency within the receiving society of Providence. Finally, the optimal goal was to close the gap in the literature as this study not only exposed but also confronted oppressive structures that overtly and covertly interact with the participants within multiple ecological systems.

For that reason, the present study employed an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and a feminist ecological model (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002) in addition to qualitative inquiry methods (i.e., focus groups and individual interviews), to answer the following question:

How does the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children take place as perceived through the lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers?
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

The main goal of this study was to understand how the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children takes place as perceived through the lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers. The mothers’ and children’s complex negotiations, tensions, and interactions within multiple contexts were examined through an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and a feminist ecological framework (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002). The questions developed in this study seek to give voice to these Dominican-born mothers’ experience in raising their U.S.-born children in the U.S., within developmental and political contexts. While a mixed methods approach (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009) has been identified as a more relationally appropriate inquiry method to use when studying populations from non-dominant ethnic groups, a qualitative method was utilized in exploring this phenomenon within this particular group as it is postulated that it really speaks to giving voice and empowering Dominican-born mothers and their children. Prior to introducing the research design and methods section, a brief definition of qualitative method will be presented.

Characteristics of qualitative research

This study used qualitative interview techniques in order to learn about Dominican-born mothers and their perceptions about the ethnic identity development of their US-born Dominican children. A qualitative procedure is different from a more traditional, quantitative approach commonly used in more traditional empirical research. Qualitative research can be defined as research that produces findings without the use of statistics and quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
In this study, the goal was to co-construct the meaning of these Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions regarding their U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children’s ethnic identity development. In addition, it incorporated the ecological model and a Feminist Ecological Model (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002) perspective in understanding how the concept of ethnic identity development is a dynamic process which involves multiple interactions within and across many contexts (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). This study also examined how power and cultural hegemony in U.S. society may be present in these Dominican-born mothers’ lived experiences.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Role of the researcher

In this study, I, the researcher will describe briefly my background. I am a Puerto Rican who was born in Puerto Rico and along with my parents and younger sister, migrated to the U.S. when I was 14 years of age. Like the participants in this study, I, too, left my country of origin to reside in the U.S. I am also a Puerto Rican of color and have experienced racism, discrimination, and oppression during my early years as a newcomer to the U.S. While I lived in Puerto Rico, I was taught through school that I came from what is called a Puerto Rican race. That is, I was taught for years that a Puerto Rican is made up of three races: White, Native (Tainos), and Black. Therefore, there was no distinction between racial and ethnic identity. Those concepts were considered one. However, skin color and hair texture were seen as distinct components within the Puerto Rican race.

When I arrived in the U.S., suddenly I stopped being black and became a Puerto Rican. My sense of who I was, transitioned as I encountered others who were Puerto Ricans and from other groups. To this day I still say that “en Puerto Rico yo soy negro, pero aquí soy
Puertorriqueño (in Puerto Rico I am black, but here I am a Puerto Rican).” Of course, I still was considered black particularly by the dominant group. However, some Latinos also considered me black if they did not know me and did not know that I spoke Spanish. Once I spoke Spanish I would get comments like “Ay Dios mío si yo creía que tú eras negro” (Oh Lord, I could have sworn you were black).

I am also married to a Puerto Rican woman and have two daughters. While I have taught both of my daughters that they are Puerto Rican, it has been extremely hard at times to provide full immersion in the Puerto Rican culture as a resident of Providence, Rhode Island. I take my family on trips to Puerto Rico most summers in order to maintain critical cultural traditions. I also keep close communication with my relatives in Puerto Rico. If you ask my daughters today, what are they? They will proudly state that they are “Puertorriqueñas (Puerto Ricans).”

I am also a school psychologist and a clinical therapist. In both jobs I come in frequent contact with new immigrant children and adolescents. I also worked with their parents, particularly the mothers. Their experiences, as they told them to me, were at times disheartening. In an effort to continue to help the population that I serve, I found myself always giving them information, the purpose of which was to empower them to take appropriate action and become their children’s primary advocate.

Given the complexity in the process that I went through in developing, transitioning, and maintaining my ethnic identity as a Puerto Rican, in raising my two Puerto Rican daughters, and my observations as a school psychologist and clinical therapist, I see the need to expand on this phenomena and assist these mothers in the process.

I seek to give voice to the meaning of the Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions about the critical developmental process of ethnic identity formation. My goal was to serve as a facilitator
and an active listener. I not only observed the participants, but also participated in their activities. That is, during the focus groups, I had the honor to interact with the participants and joined in the co-construction of their perceptions of the phenomenon of ethnic identity development in their children as these mothers expressed it through their lived experiences related through discussions among all participants in the focus group.

In order to decrease the male to female inequality of power during groups and interviews, I used casual and subdued clothing throughout the study. In addition, three female co-leaders/interviewers were employed to assist during the focus groups and the individual interviews. The female co-leaders/interviewers helped to reinforce this study’s theoretical frameworks in creating a balance in power between me and the female co-leaders/interviewers. That is, these Dominican-born mothers were modeled gender equality and were given a voice with the goals to psychological empowerment.

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 16 Dominican-born mothers whose children are U.S.-born and fall within the elementary school age range (children were approximately 6-12 years of age if they were still attending Providence schools or older if they had attended to Providence schools in the past).

Data collection procedures

Following Northeastern University Institutional Review Board approval in May of 2011, recruitment of participants occurred by using a snowball sample generation technique via flyers and word of mouth. I contacted local Latino community leaders in order to utilize already established natural groups or settings within the community. Contacting local community leaders affords great benefits in engaging groups and people of the community that are social activists.
and who are already providing services to non-dominant populations. However, the
preponderance of the sample derived from churches, gyms, and Spanish-speaking and
Dominican beauty salons in the city of Providence, Rhode Island. The participants who indicated
interest were screened by phone in order to meet criteria to be included in the study.

In line with the prevailing forms of data collection associated with qualitative inquiry,
this study was originally designed using only two phases for data collection: *Phase I – Focus Groups* and *Phase II – Individual Interviews*. *Phase III – Individual Interviews Only*, was added in order to include participants who indicated interest in taking part in the study but were not able to attend scheduled focus groups. All the focus groups and individual interviews were conducted in Spanish and careful attention was given to idioms and phrases in Spanish used differently in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The researcher’s experiences working with Dominicans also helped a more nuanced use of the Dominican Spanish dialect in the groups and interviews. That is, the main researcher and two of the female co-leaders/interviewers had vast experience and knowledge about different dialectical expressions between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The third female co-leader/co-interviewer was a Dominican-born mother and had also U.S.-born Dominican children, which helped in decreasing the potential risk of misinterpreting data obtained due to the language differences mentioned above. The data collection process started in July of 2011 and ended in April of 2012.

All participants were required to complete a demographic questionnaire after signing informed consent documentation (which was translated in Spanish). This questionnaire also asked the participants about their time in the U.S.

**Phase I:** Five focus groups were done, first to obtain information from the Dominican-born mothers’ perspectives on their U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children’s
Ethnic Identity development. The focus groups consisted of two to three participants each. Dominican-born mothers were assigned to the focus groups in order to increase the dynamics of the interactions among the group members and to accommodate the participants’ complex schedule. That is, no special grouping or categorization was utilized reinforcing the theoretical framework of this study. One of the focus group and three individual interviews were conducted by two of the three female co-leaders/co-interviewers without the assistance of the main researcher. This gender variation in leading the group and interviews yielded no apparent difference in the mothers’ level of comfort to share their lived experiences, as reported by the two female co-leaders/co-interviewers. In addition, when the data obtained in those female-only conducted group and interviews was compared to the data from the remaining groups and interviews, the mothers’ lived experiences also reflected similar themes. While the groups took place at a public library in the North End of Providence, they still captured the participants’ experiences from multiple residential contexts within the city. Using a collaborative orientation, these focus groups aided in identifying themes on ethnic identity development. As it had been anticipated the focus groups lasted from 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours in duration depending on the respective dynamic of the interactions of the participants.

Phase II: Six Dominican-born mothers who agreed to participate in the study were scheduled to be individually interviewed at a time convenient to them after the completion of the focus groups phase. Five of these mothers were interviewed at their homes, and one was interviewed at a local church. In addition, one Dominican-born mother agreed to be interviewed at the local library where the focus groups were conducted as none of the participants who had been previously scheduled to be at her focus group attended. The individual interviews lasted from 1 ½ to 3 hours in duration.
Ethnic Identity

Phase III: Three additional mothers were interviewed at their homes at a day and time convenient to them. As explained earlier, these participants did not attend a focus group due to their limited availability. The individual interviews also lasted from 1 ½ to 3 hours in duration.

Data recording procedures

The use of audio recorders was employed during all data collection phases of this study. Two recorders were present during the focus groups and the individual interviews. Dominican-born mothers signed an informed consent form in order to be audio recorded. The female co-leaders/interviewers and I also recorded information by taking notes during both focus groups and individual interviews. All recorded material was transcribed verbatim and the data underwent careful analysis.

Data analysis procedures

Once the individual lived experiences were captured, I searched and described patterns and themes from the perspective of the Dominican-born mothers, and then I integrated and explained themes and patterns found through the focus groups and interviews. A major component of this phase was to code the themes and patterns found after they had been organized categorically. To achieve this goal, open and selective coding of the transcripts was utilized. Finally, major ideas encountered were chronicled and used in the development of Chapter Four of this manuscript.

Strategies for validating findings

The authenticity, trustworthiness, and credibility of this study were assessed by taking a procedural perspective as proposed by Creswell (1998; 2003). Six of the eight recommended strategies that were used in this study are (Creswell, 2003, p. 196):
1. **Triangulation** – examining evidence from different sources in order to build a coherent justification for the themes;

2. **Member-checking** – use themes found to determine if the participants feel that the themes are representative of their expressions;

3. **Rich, thick description of findings** – this refers to providing a description of findings that could actually mentally transport the readers to the particular research setting and their experiences;

4. **Clarification of bias** – is a self-reflection of the researcher about how personal bias could be reflected in the study and in the writings;

5. **Negative and discrepant information presentation** – discussing contrary information to add credibility to the findings;

6. **Peer debriefing** – using a person to review the study and ask questions about the findings. This debriefing will be provided by the dissertation committee.

As a qualitative inquiry, the validity of the study was derived from the faithfulness to the Dominican-born mothers’ stories. The reliability of this study came from checking for consistent patterns of theme development. The traditional understanding of reliability in this study played a minor role in this qualitative method as there was no standard measure being used in this study. However, the reliability in this study took on a different meaning with the concept of lived experiences and co-construction of the Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions in their U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children. The consistency of the information collected in the focus groups was reviewed individually with a sample of the participants who agreed to be interviewed. Specifically, the interview contents were categorized descriptively and given to the co-leaders/co-interviewers to determine rate of agreement among the themes prior to discussing
them with the sample of participants. Once preliminary themes were identified, they were presented to the participants. The participants were asked to relate or reject the findings as a way to engage with them in the co-construction of the meaning of the process, challenges and successes, and influential factors in their children’s Dominican identity development. Subsequent to recording their meanings, a visual diagram was created to capture the participants’ lived experiences as relevant in their real life settings.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, generalization across different settings was neither possible nor needed. This study was concentrated in finding ways to help the oppressed non-dominant community in Providence, Rhode Island particularly the Dominicans. In this case, the need to serve and understand the population in a natural setting superseded the need for generalization.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter will present major and emergent themes that surfaced by analyzing and interpreting the data generated from conducting the focus groups and the individual interviews related to the lived experiences of the sixteen participants. *Major themes* are those which were more commonly experienced and described by many of the participants. *Emergent themes* are those which were less commonly experienced and described by either a few or only one of the participants. The Dominican-born mothers’ recommendations, a visual representation of the themes, feedback from the participants, in addition to my experience in the process will also be included in this chapter. A review of the data collection process, a description of the demographic information, and a brief narrative of a sample of seven of the participants will be presented prior to introducing the findings.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

As presented in Chapter Three, the sixteen Dominican-born mothers in this study were recruited utilizing a snowball sample generation technique via flyers and word of mouth. Local Latino community leaders and teachers, Latino churches, local gyms, and Spanish-speaking and Dominican beauty salons in the city of Providence, Rhode Island, also contributed in generating the total number of participants for this study. As previously discussed, the study consisted of *Phase I: Focus Groups* and *Phase II: Individual Interviews* (as an option presented post focus groups). *Phase III: Individual Interviews Only* was added as an attempt to recruit additional participants for this study and in order to accommodate the participants’ demanding life schedules. All focus groups and individual interviews were conducted in Spanish and one of three female co-leaders/interviewers was employed to facilitate the participants to share their
lived experiences with a male researcher. The first thirteen participants were assigned to a one time focus group session (Phase I). One of the participants was only interviewed individually as the other participants who had been assigned to that group session could not attend. Six out of the original thirteen participants agreed to be individually interviewed (Phase II). Additional individual interviews (Phase III) were offered to the remaining three participants who wanted to share their lived experiences by taking part in this study but could not attend a focus group session.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Description of the Demographic Information

All sixteen participants in this study were Dominican women born in the Dominican Republic and whose elementary school age children were born in the U.S. They were also invited to share their lived experiences if they resided in the city of Providence, and if their children attended or were currently attending school in Providence. Eight of the participants lived in the South End, five lived in the West End, and three lived in the North End neighborhoods of Providence.

The participants’ age when they immigrated to the U.S. ranged from two to twenty nine years. Two of the participants arrived at preschool age (2 and 3), seven of the participants arrived as teenagers (13-19), and five of the participants arrived as young adults (20-29). Eight of the participants were married, seven of the participants single, and one divorced. Seven of the participants indicated having three children, eight as having two children, and one indicated having one child. Six of the participants owned their homes, and ten rented their homes. Two of the participants reported income between $0 – $15,000, six reported income between $15,000 – $25,000, six between $25,000 – $30,000, and one did not report an income amount. The
participants’ level of education ranged from elementary instruction to graduate school. Two of the participants reported being in excellent health, ten reported their health as good, two as having regular health, one in bad health, and two of the participants did not report their health condition. Six of the participants’ children’s fathers were not Dominican. The participants’ ages range from 28 to 51, with an average age of 39 years.

Description of the Participants

_Aida_ (participant 13) is a forty-three-year old single Dominican-born mother who arrived in the U.S. when she was nineteen years of age. She lives in the North End of Providence where Dominican markets, businesses, restaurants, and beauty salons are scarce. However, Aida’s neighborhood has not impeded her from creating an internal home environment where the Dominican culture is portrayed and reinforced through Dominican folk art on colorful walls, the traditional cinnamon and spices smells, Dominican food dishes, music, mahogany furniture, the speaking of Spanish, and the imported goods from the Dominican Republic that you find as you enter her welcoming home. Aida has two children and describes her Dominican childrearing experience as “very difficult,” but she tries to maintain her Dominican roots by visiting and sharing special traditions with her relatives as that helps keep “us closer together/compenetrados.” Aida also expressed how she felt her “hands tied” when her children’s father insisted in rejecting bilingual education against her will. Aida states how easier it would have been if her children would have been given bilingual education. Hence, Aida made it her undertaking to teach her children Spanish.

Aida further expresses her frustration in terms of the economy. She is a stay-at-home mother living below the poverty level. Aida explains how having limited economic resources has taken away her ability to provide her children continued connection with the Dominican
Ethnic Identity

Rosa (participant 12) is a forty-year-old Dominican-born woman who lives in the South End of Providence. She immigrated to the U.S. at the age of seventeen. She is a single mother and has three U.S.-born children. While she also describes as “hard” her lived experience raising U.S.-born children as Dominican, Rosa and her children enjoy their Dominican culturally enriched neighborhood. Rosa’s surroundings resemble that of a neighborhood in the Dominican. The South End is a key landmark for the Dominican community in Providence where residents have firsthand access to artifacts and goods right from their island. Rosa’s frustration tends to be more in terms of the political status of Dominicans. Rosa describes how “unfair” it was for the U.S. Census form not to include Dominican as one of the ethnic choices. Rosa was very discouraged that the numbers would not show how many “we are.” On the other hand, Rosa views Providence’s Dominican mayor as a counterbalancing factor influencing her children’s identification as Dominican. Rosa says:

El alcalde es padre de hijos dominicanos, eso incentiva, hasta los pequeños están al tanto. ¿Tú quieres ser como el mayor? Sí, es algo positivo. (The mayor’s parents are from Dominican descent, which incentivizes, even the little ones are aware of that fact. Would you like to be like the mayor? Yes, having a Dominican mayor is something positive.)

Rosa has close contact with family that resides in Providence as, due to the “bad economy situation,” she has not been able to take her U.S.-born children to the Dominican Republic. Rosa views her children as Dominican and states that her oldest son would state
Dominican if asked about his ethnic identity. She states that she does not know what her younger children would consider themselves to be as they are “too little.”

_Nuri_ (participant 14) is thirty-four years old and emigrated from the Dominican Republic when she was fourteen years of age. Nuri lives in the North End of Providence. She works as an administrative assistant in a manufacturing company. Nuri places great value in having two languages as that “opens more opportunities.” Nuri expresses that it has been very hard for her to raise her U.S.-born children as Dominican. Her husband and father of her three children is Guatemalan, but she describes how he supports and actually encourages the children to adopt Dominican practices. Nuri describes that both her limited economic status and her lack of time are obstacles in raising her children with strong Dominican roots. She further expresses how her desire to succeed detours her from spending much time passing on the cultural traditions she experienced and learned while growing up in the Dominican Republic. However, Nuri grapples with this as she sees providing this transmission as the job of Dominican mothers:

Como uno se la pasa trabajando y tenemos menos tiempos con los hijos, tú cocinando y haciendo las cosas, uno tiene que forzarse a pasar tiempo con sus hijos, por más que uno ame sus hijos es difícil. (As one spends most of the time working and less time with the children, one finds oneself cooking and doing home chores, one must employ great effort to spend time with the children, regardless of how much one loves the children it is still difficult.)

Ways by which she and her children have remained connected to her roots include having special holiday gatherings with her family, with Dominican friends, and with relatives. She also relates their active participation and membership in a Latino church, where Dominican and other Latino cultures are celebrated and Spanish language use is reinforced, as a positive influence on raising her children as Dominican. Nuri views her children as “…dominicanos. Dominicanos americanizados.” (…Dominicans. Americanized Dominicans.) Her children, according to Nuri, view themselves as Dominican even though their father is Guatemalan.
Ina (participant 11) is forty years old and arrived in the U.S. at age twenty-eight. She resides in the South End of Providence with her three children. Similar to the other seven participants who reside in this part of the city, Ina describes how she has taken advantage of her neighborhood’s accessibility to the Dominican culture. Her children are exposed to many experiences, practices, and traditions which she states, would not take place if they lived elsewhere in Providence. Ina describes her process as a Dominican identity agent as extremely difficult. Ina speaks more to socioemotional issues where she reports having limited familial support. Her first husband and father of her oldest son died when her son was a toddler. Ina states that she had to do everything alone and even with her mother being close by, Ina reports having to get childcare for her son. Ina states that her current husband and father of her other two children is Guatemalan. He provides her with emotional support as well as encourages her to impart her Dominican roots to all the children. Ina has also found support in her task in raising her children as Dominican from the school. Her children, particularly her younger ones, receive bilingual education. Ina happily states that her children speak, write, and read Spanish well. In addition, they feel proud of their culture. Consequently, Ina states that her children see themselves as Dominican while she sees them as Dominican-Guatemalan due to their father’s own ethnicity.

Olga (participant 3) is twenty-eight years old, and, at age eighteen, immigrated to the U.S. when she was eight months pregnant with her U.S.-born daughter. OLga lives in the multicultural West End neighborhood of Providence. This area has managed to incorporate varied immigrant populations ranging from Latino to European. Olga describes the process of raising her daughter as difficult, and at times lonely. Olga states that at the beginning she was discontent with the idea of moving to the U.S. She has the company of her mother, but can only
count on her support only intermittently as her mother also works and sometimes cannot take
care of her daughter when she gets sick. Olga cites the “bad” economy and having no support
from her daughter’s father as major hurdles in her task of assisting her daughter in identifying as
a Dominican girl. Olga’s daughter speaks, writes, and reads Spanish well due to her mother’s
teaching. Olga places great emphasis on the home context as a primary language transmitter. Her
involvement with politics and advocacy is evident when she spoke about Mayor Taveras’
political campaign. Olga sees her political participation as a major contributing factor to her
daughter’s identification as a Dominican. Olga sees her daughter as a Dominican-American and
states that her daughter views her ethnic identity as Dominican.

_Tere_ (participant 16) is a thirty-four year old single Dominican-born mother who arrived
in the U.S. when she was twenty two years old. She lives in the South End. Tere has one
Dominican-born child and two U.S.-born children. Tere indicates how difficult and different it
has been for her to raise her children as Dominican. While she describes socio-political
confrontations and socio-cultural reactions throughout her lived experiences, Tere states that one
of her longing desires is to obtain Dominican citizenship for her children so that they have dual
citizenship. Tere expresses having access to goods from the Dominican Republic through her
neighborhood, but when she compares the community to her own while growing up in the
Dominican Republic, it lacks the support of her neighbors.

_Somos dominicanos, pero ni Buenos días nos decimos. No es como allá. No es igual que
allá. Acá uno no se sienta al frente como en Santo domingo y conversa con los vecinos._
(We are Dominican but we do not even say a good morning to each other. It is not like
over there [Dominican Republic]. It is not the same. Here [in Providence] you do not get
to sit in front [of the house] like in Santo Domingo and converse with the neighbors.)

Conversely, Tere states her children’s school as reinforcing to their Dominican identity.
Tere’s children receive bilingual education where she felt that teachers celebrated their children’s
ethnic and cultural background. Tere’s children speak, read, and write Spanish very well. Tere views her children as Dominican. She believes that the children themselves identify as Dominican.

Vivi (participant 4) is a forty-year-old married woman who came to the U.S. at the age of twenty. Vivi lives with her Guatemalan husband and her two U.S.-born children. Vivi who holds a masters degree of chaplain service in Christian counseling and is a pastor of a local church in Providence, views her difficulties in raising her children as Dominican from a larger and collective context. That is, Vivi’s leadership position in the city of Providence affords her the opportunity to professionally observe this phenomenon from her many interactions with immigrant mothers. Vivi is also able to contribute to that process through the assistance that she is able to provide Dominican-born mothers who are both newcomers and already established in the receiving society of Providence. Vivi relates speaking Spanish fluently as an influential factor in fostering U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity:

Si, aquí se le da énfasis al inglés nada más, pero creo que es importante aprender. Me da tristeza que un niño criado en un hogar dominicano no hable un buen español. También en la gramática, creo que deben de tomar clases de español. Ellos quieren hablar su inglés, pero se los repito y si lo dicen mal se los corrio, me parece importante. Yo trato de que hablen en español en la casa. (Yes, here [in Providence] great emphasis is given to the English, but I believe important learn. It saddens me that a child from a Dominican home does not speak Spanish good. Even in grammar, I believe that they should all take Spanish classes. They want to learn their English, but I repeat it to them, and if they say it wrong I correct their mistakes, as I see that as important. I try my best so that they only speak at home in Spanish.)

Moreover, Vivi feels that seeking help, being informed, and actively connected with people from the Dominican and other Latino cultures as protective and reinforcing factors in helping children achieve a Dominican identity. In her experience with her own children, Vivi describes the task as an ongoing one where the larger the investment that she puts in in
transmitting traditional cultural practices to her children is rewarded with their identification as Dominican. Even with her children having a Guatemalan father, Vivi reports that both of her children identify themselves as Dominican.

MAJOR THEMES

The major themes from this study were identified by employing open and selective coding of the transcripts, by writing notes, and by designing conceptual diagrams.

For the mothers in this study, their children’s Dominican identity appeared to be a fundamental component of their children’s lives. They also viewed themselves primarily as Dominican identity-agents in assisting their children identify as Dominican individuals:

Orgullosos de ser dominicano, cuidando a nuestros hijos, la enseñanza y como tu llevas más que todo la cultura, como llevas los ejemplos que le das a tus hijos, los valores morales que hay que darle a los hijos, les ayuda a desarrollarse en esta cultura. (Proud to be Dominicans, caring for our children. The teachings and how one carries one’s own culture, the examples that one passes on to one’s children, the values and morals which one has to transmit to our children, will help them develop within this [Providence] culture.)

In their journeys to accomplish this life-enduring task with their children, socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions and socio-emotional issues arise, where, understandably, Dominican-born mothers described this undertaking as difficult.

Furthermore, they are placed in constant negotiations which either result in challenges or successes in raising their children as Dominican. In addition to their own influence, Dominican-born mothers in this study considered most influential, in reinforcing their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity, factors from their children’s continuous interactions within their immediate environment, which included various important community contexts.
Among the varied themes and sub-themes produced through the Dominican-born mothers’ sharing of their lived experiences, the following are the most salient categories: 1) socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues within the process; 2) challenges and successes in the process; and 3) influential factors in the process.

*Socio-Political Confrontations, Socio-Cultural Reactions, and Socio-Emotional Issues*

The narratives that the Dominican-born mothers in this study expressed exemplify and reaffirm the importance of giving a voice to underrepresented populations. These complications were mainly discussed as shaping their experience in the process of raising their Dominican children in the U.S:

Soy mamá soltera, no es que todo ha sido maravilla, en este país es duro, pero no he tenido la apuro de decir que no tengo que comer, no he tenido dos trabajos, por que al ser mamá soltera no quiero estar fuera mucho tiempo. No los quiero dejar solos, eso les puede crear a ellos problemas. Por ese lado, tengo que llevar las cosas bien calculadas para poder balancear las cosas y más ahora (Karen). (I am a single mother and I’m not saying that everything has gone marvelously as it is hard in this country. But, I have not gone hungry, have not had two jobs, as I am a single mother and do not wish to be out of the home for too much time. I do not want to leave them [children] alone, which could only bring problems for them in the end. For that reason, I must calculate things carefully to be able to manage and balance things well…and now even more.)

As mentioned previously, the mothers viewed the process complex or a “difficult” task to accomplish:

Es bien difícil poder pasar esos valores, especialmente, yo tuve mis hijos después de haber ido a la universidad…. hay cosas que se me hacen difícil a mí (Ana). (It is very difficult to pass on those values, I had my children after I had graduated from my undergraduate studies…there are things that I find to be very difficult [to implement with her children].)

Conversely, two of the Dominican-born mothers stated the process as a very positive one:

Para mí ha sido fácil, porque tengo dos hijos, he tratado de criar a la niña como hizo la mamá mía. A nosotros nos han criado aquí tratando de enfocar y que se queden con la cultura. No hemos viajado allá [Dominican Republic], pero sí hemos participado en paradas. (It has been easy for me, I have two children, I have tried to raise the girl just
as my mom did. We [her and her brother] have been raised here [in the U.S.] and encouraged to focus on keeping the culture. [Nonetheless] we have not even traveled over there [the Dominican Republic].

Aida also reported a similar positive process:

Ha sido positivo, tratamos de acostumbrarlo a la cultura y de acostumbrarlo a ser dominicano, le hemos enseñado un poco de nuestra cultura. (I has been positive, we try to make him get used to the culture and to be Dominican, we have taught him part of our culture.)

Nonetheless, Aida still reported the process as a difficult experience. That is, along with other Dominican-born mothers, Aida expressed her experiences that she had and continues to encounter in the process:

No he ido desde el 2007, la situación económica ha cambiado un poco, y hay que cohibirse un poco, si pudiera viajara mas. A los niños le encantan…Me ofrecieron el programa bilingüe, con mi hijo varón no me ofrecieron nada bilingüe. No sé porque no me ofrecieron, no tuve esa oportunidad. Me hubiese gustado que me hubiesen ofrecido la misma opción porque hubiese aprendido el español perfecto…No me gusta [Festival Dominicano], un año fue, mi hermana la llevo, a ella le encanta, cuando esté más grande…es que me da miedo. Como uno casi nunca conoce las personas, uno se sentiría más cómodo con personas que uno conoce. (I have not visited [the Dominican Republic] since 2007, the financial situation has changed somehow, and one must inhibit oneself. If I could I would travel more. The children love it…They offered me bilingual program [for my daughter], but not for my son. I don’t know why, I never had that opportunity. I would have loved to have had the same option they gave me [for my daughter] because he would have learned Spanish well…I don’t like it [the Dominican Festival], she went one year with my sister, and she loved it, [I will take] maybe when she is older…I get scared. You know how one almost never knows the people [in the festival], I would be more comfortable with people that I know.)

As the audio recorder was shutting off, Aida sighed “It’s no easy…”

Socio-Political Confrontations

The six sub-themes in this category speak to the inequality and imbalance that these mothers recognized as implications which tend to undermine their authority as mothers and eventually affect their roles in assisting their children identify as a Dominican individual.
The mothers in this study expressed how they *hold rather high standards about their experience growing up* in the Dominican Republic. Specifically, their experiences growing up contrasted with their current lack of familial support, lack of time and freedom, as complications which do not contribute positively to their task as Dominican identity-agents. This was expressed by a number of mothers:

Hay muchas cosas diferentes de cómo uno se criaba aquí que en la República Dominicana. Es un poco más difícil. Aquí cuando mi hija se enferma me tengo que quedar en la casa. Hace como una semana mi hija se quedó y tuve que quedarme tres días. Esas cosas me hacen falta de mi país, como ese apoyo (Olga). (There are many things that I find different from when I was growing up in the Dominican Republic. It is a little bit more difficult. Here, when my daughter gets sick I have to stay home. About a week ago, I ended up having to take three days off from work. Those are the things that I miss the most from my country; that support.)

Eso allá hay mucho, surge allá que siempre hay una persona de más bajos recursos que tu y por unos pesitos, la persona te cocina y te atiende los niños por muy poca cantidad de dinero. Uno dedica ese tiempo a los hijos, al marido, los hijos, el bochinche (Joan). (Over there [in Dominican Republic] that happens a lot. Usually, there would be someone with less financial resources from yours, and for a few “pesos” that person cooks and takes care of the children for a small amount [of money]. That way one can dedicate time to the husband, the children, and even gossiping [she laughs].)

En un aspecto a las madres se les hace más difícil aquí. Es más fácil allá. En los países de nosotros los muchachos tienen más libertad, los niños aquí se deprimen mucho. Acá uno tiene que estar pendiente, que si anda un “sex ofender” por ahi. La ventaja es las posibilidades económicas, aquí hay muchos planes que en los países de nosotros. Allá hay más ventajas en lo económico, una mejor vida, aquí el encierro y poco sociabilidad, le crea un patrón de conducta (Nuri). (In one aspect, it is more difficult for mothers here [in the U.S.]. It is easier over there [in the Dominican Republic]. Our children have more freedom in our countries [Latino countries], here [in the U.S.] the children get too depressed. One has to be too careful of not ending up with a sex offender nearby [in the neighborhood. The advantages here [in the U.S.] are more financial possibilities, there are more plans [as in financial advisory, retirement for the future] available here than in our countries. Over there [in the Dominican Republic] there are more economic opportunities, a better life, her we spend most the time indoors and being less sociable which creates a conduct pattern [for the children to follow].)

In addition, the participants also expressed having gone through *different school experiences* than those which their U.S.-born children were receiving. The Dominican-born
mothers in this study disliked the schools in Providence where they charged them with lack of rigor, in having lower demands and expectations for U.S.-born Dominican children when compared to Caucasian and “American” children. Their critiques of the schools in Providence also focused on the schools lack of homework and the provision of limited to no discipline:

Aquí también las escuelas son diferentes. En Santo domingo los maestros se interesa más por los estudiantes, tratan a los estudiantes como si fueran sus hijos influye mucha la educación. Después las escuelas también son un poquito diferentes. Un montón de estudiantes en los salones. Muchas veces los maestros no conocen a los estudiantes y si los padres no van a la escuela, los maestros no se interesan hablar con los padres. Digo yo me crie en un pueblo y en el pueblo es así. Pero ahí hay mucha diferencia. Aquí deberá ser mejor que allá (Patri). (Things are different over here. In Santo Domingo teachers are more interested in the students’ wellbeing; they treat the students as part of their own children, which really helps the education. Then, the actual schools are different. For one, there are many students for one room [here in Providence]. Second, there are many times that teachers don’t even know the students and if their parents do not go to the schools, the teachers do not care to speak to those parents. I mean, I was raised in a town where things were like that [teachers cared]. There are many differences. It should really be better here than over there [in the Dominican Republic].)

Si uno trabaja uno tiene que estar llamando para ver si ya llegaron de la escuela. En mi caso he tenido que tener segundo turno para poder llevar a mis hijos a la escuela y trabajo en la noche casi no tengo tiempo de ver a mis hijos. Pero en nuestro país hay doble turno en las escuelas. Hay escuela por la mañana y por la tarde. Por la mañana están en las escuelas y por la tarde te da tiempo a estudiar con ellos. Si trabajas por la mañana puedes ayudar al niño en las tareas por la tarde. Es bien difícil. (Ina) (If you work you have to be calling to see if they have come from school. In my case I had to take second shift to be able to take my kids to school and working at night I have almost no time to see my children. But, in our country there are double shifts in schools. There is school in the morning and in the afternoon. In the morning they are in school and in the afternoon you have time to study with them. If you work in the morning then you can help your child with homework in the afternoon. It is very difficult.)

Los maestros más duros son los maestros dominicanos. A los maestros americanos no les importan. (Ana) (Teachers harder the Dominican teachers. American teachers do not care.)

The disparities between the childrearing practices in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic were seen as socio-political confrontations by the Dominican-born mothers in the study. Specifically, the Dominican-born mothers in this study expressed their constant state of
hyper-vigilance in terms of the unsafe neighborhoods, how having abundance of goods and things hampers their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity, how the local and state service agencies intervene negatively in their disciplining their children, and the extremely low motivation that their U.S.-born children place in valuing what they receive:

Bueno de pequeño aquí los niños viven encerrados es una diferencia muy grande de cuando yo me criaba. Mientras en Santo Domingo, yo vivía en un pueblo pequeño. Iba solita a la escuela. Acostumbraba caminar hacia la escuela sin ningún problema, y a pesar de que era lejos no tenía ningún problema. Ahí hay una gran diferencia. Aunque ahora ha cambiado un poco la cosa. Pero siempre jugaba afuera. Aquí no, hay que estar pendiente de todo, gente rara, por las drogas y otras cosas. Allá las cosas son bien diferentes. (Patri) (Well small children live here as if they were enclosed. That is a big difference from when I was growing up. While in Santo Domingo, I lived in a small town. We went to school alone. I used to walk to school without any problem, though it was far, I still had no problem. There's a big difference. Even though now it has changed a little, but we always played outside. Not here, we must be aware of everything, strange people, drugs and other things. There are very different things.)

Yo diría que casi lo mismo y es igual, lo único que aquí hay que tener más cuidado. Allá hacen más cosas solitos y hasta duermen solos. Aquí si la persona trabaja tiene que estar pendiente que tenga un cuidó (Ina). (I would say almost the same and that it is equal, the only thing here is that you have to be more careful. There are more things that children can do overthere by themselves, and they can even sleep alone. If you work here have to find a daycare.)

Los que llegamos de Santo Domingo tenemos una diferente forma de educación, uno vive allá, acá hay tanta abundancia que los niños se desvían. De por todo andan comprándole de todo a los muchachos. Les compre cuando terminan el año escolar, si se portó mal se lo quito. Pueden ver televisión hasta las ocho. Soy bien estricta como me criaron a mí (Maria). (Those who arrived in Santo Domingo have a different form of education, one lives there, here there is so much abundance that children are diverted. One tends to be buying all things to the children. I buy when they finish the school year, if I remove it misbehaved. They can watch TV until eight. I'm very strict as I was raised.)

Allá si un hijo hace algo mal se le da una pela y ya. Acá los hijos son intocables (Rosa). (There, if a child does something wrong he or she is given a spanking. Here, children are untouchable.)

La disciplina allá era muy buena, tres muchachos por pupitre. Se disciplinaba con reglas o y se jalaba por las orejas. Los padres decían muy bien hecho (Aida). (Besides the discipline being very good, teachers had three boys by desk. Rules are disciplined by being pulled by the ears. The parents would often say well done.)
Mi mama me enseñó a vivir con lo necesario. Creo que se debe aprender a ahorrar. No tirar las cosas rápido, porque ahorren hay niños que no tienen nada, que aprendan a cuidar lo que uno tiene. Deben aprender a valorar lo que tienen, cuando uno se cría con más necesidad uno es un mejor ser humano, creo que a los niños acá se les da todo. Habiendo tantos niños pobres que no tienen nada (Vivi). (My mother taught me how to live with the necessary. I believe that one should learn to save money. To learn not to waste things, there are children who have no understanding about this concept. They should learn to value what they possess. When you get raised with need you tend to be a better human being. I believe that here, children are given too many things, when there are still many children in the world with nothing.)

The Dominican-born mothers in the study expressed grave concerns in how different their receiving society’s moral views are, in comparison to those in the Dominican Republic. Thus, they described lower values and standards in their receiving city of Providence. That is, their perceptions about the city of Providence spoke to children having too much freedom as an accepted norm:

Hablamos acerca de los uniformes. El uniforme es necesario. No es que se pongan cualquier ropa trae libertinaje. He visto niñas que van con ropas que no deben ir, se les enseña que a veces se ponen hasta pijamas, hay demasiada libertad (Vivi). (We talked about school’s uniforms. Uniforms are necessary. I had seen girls wearing inappropriate clothes, even pajamas to school. I believe there is too much freedom.)

Deberían poner uniforme, cuando uno ve un niño caminando por la calle, aquí no se puede distinguir porque muy pocas escuelas tienen uniformes (Rosa). (All students should be wearing uniforms because if you see a student walking out of the street you can differentiate the school because just a few school wear uniforms.)

In particular, the mothers in this study expressed as disheartening the way in which the values of respect and being respectful to others do not appear to be taken as eminently as in the Dominican Republic. That is, the important practice of respect was viewed as a major component of the Dominican identity. This respect was not limited to the immediate household and happening only between parents, but it would include the community, school, and the neighborhood. Being respectful to family, neighbors, and older citizens is one of the hallmarks in the raising of Dominican-born children in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican-born
mothers stressed that in the Dominican Republic, children are expected to show the same respect to a neighbor as they would show to their parents:

Yo me acuerdo que allá en Santo Domingo, si un vecino le preguntaba a uno que uno hacía pasando por el lado de su casa a tal hora uno tenía que contestar en buena forma……no como estos muchachos de aquí que tal vez contesten: eso no le importa a usted……si allá uno hacía eso ya tenía su castigo pago (Joan). (I remember in Dominican Republic, if a neighbor ask you what had happened around your house as specific time you will always answer in a nice way…Is not like in here, if you asked some information to some kids they will answer without any respect, maybe telling you “that’s not your business,” but in our country if you respond like that, you will receive a punishment.)

Allá el vecino venía siendo tu familia. En mi casa tengo como cinco años y casi no conozco los vecinos, yo extraño eso de mi país… Los vecinos no los conozco. La Pase mal con la cesárea los nenes pasando hambre. Uno extraña la familia. Que no está aquí, mis hijos sin comer con hambre. Si los hijos se enferman con quien se van a dejar (Cari). (In our country your neighbor is family. I had been living in my house for five years and I don’t even know my neighbors that well, I miss that from my country. When I had my C/ section my kids were hungry and nobody take care of them. If my kids get sick, I don’t have anybody to stay with them.)

La familia es algo, mi tío yo lo veía como otro papa, yo fui la primera que nací y él era loco conmigo el siempre andaba conmigo cargada. Si hay un enfermo la casa no para de gente, aquí enfermo uno se tiene que preparar una sopa, allá tú no tiene ni que moverte, sin dinero y sin nada, te hace te. Mi abuela se me murió y allá yo no tuve que cocinar, todo el vecino me llevo comida, fruta y café, es una forma de acompañar a uno en el dolor, pero cuando pasaban gracia, estaba buenisima, seme juntaban dos y tres comidas, acá eso no se ve. En el trabajo poca gente me dio el pésame, me recogieron del piso, poca gente me dio el pésame, no hay esa unión, sin embargo lo dije en el trabajo no vuelvo a dar para nadie que se esté muriendo, he dado colecta y yo tuve que ir a Santo Domingo y para gente de ha hecho, para enfermo yo soy una de las primera que pongo y ayudo, gente que tiene que viajar, yo tenía gracia a Dios mi dinerito guardado y pude hacerlo, la gente solo piensa en el momento de ello (Joan). (Family is something very important. I used to see my uncle as other father. I was the first born and he was crazy about me, he always carry me. If somebody was sick in the family, everybody will come to visit, and will help you with everything, with money and without doesn’t matter. In here if you are sick you had to prepare everything including the soup. When my grandmother died, I didn’t have to prepare anything. Everybody brought food, fruits and coffee. That’s the way to show their appreciation. You don’t see that in here. At my work, only few people gave me condolence. You don’t see that joining together between people. I already mention at work that I won’t give any donation for nobody in need. I am always the first one that put money when they ask for it. One time I have to go the Dominic Republic and none of them help me with the trip. Thanks to the Lord that I have some save money that I was able to use.)
As mentioned above, the participants expressed their discontent with laws and child protection service agencies which have threaten or have placed at risk their authority and parental control:

Los padres allá tienen control de sus hijos (Rosa). (Over there [in the Dominican Republic] parents have more control of their children.)

El punto de 911, les ha dado demasiado derecho a los niños. En la escuela de mi hijo le hablan de eso. Le hablan de abuso en el noviazgo, maltrato en la familia. Aquí uno no tiene mucho derecho (Ana). (Calling 911 has given too much power to children. They speak about that to my son at school. They speak to him about abuse in relationships, and within the family. One has lost it rights as parents.)

Yo nunca he estado de acuerdo en la forma de crianza, en Santo Domingo había más castigo, y uno como que temía temor a algo, acá los niños creen que uno tiene que tenerle temor a algo. Las mismas leyes les han quitado la autoridad a los papas (Maria). (I have never been in favor of the way childrearing is done, in Santo Domingo there was more punishment and one used to have fear. Here, children think that you are afraid of them. The same laws have taken the authority from parents.)

_Socio-Cultural Reactions_

The Dominican-born mothers identified implications from a social context as well. Sub-themes identified were learning from other cultures, adaptation, practices, experienced acculturation, contextual/situation-dependent Dominican expression, mothers’ Dominican identity, similar views on identities, multi-ethnic or American identities, and children’s self-identification.

_Learning from other cultures_ was posited as a necessary and an inevitable practice. However, the Dominican-born mothers in this study stressed that they would never “forget their roots.”

Cari was committed to her own roots as a Dominican-born woman. “Tu cultura la vas guardando en el corazón, eso no te lo quita nadie.” (You keep your culture in your heart and that, no one can take it away from you.) Her words also spoke directly to the necessity of one
accepting their current cultural place of residence. This point she made prominent as she was married to a Cape Verdian man.

Tú vives en el medio ambiente donde tú te desenvuelves… (Cari). (You live in the environment where you are around.)

The mothers felt that their adaptation to a different culture other than the Dominican is not at the expense of their own Dominican identity. “Yo sí he notado que las madres son más despiertas, que otras culturas, no tenemos miedo” (Vivi). (I have noticed that [Dominican] mothers are more responsive, we are not afraid.)

Their passion and commitment to their identities as Dominican women provided them with the resilience to maintain a delicate balance between the two cultures:

Yo voy adaptándome aquí. Yo tengo un hermano que vive aquí pero es de allá y así no se puede…. un balance, que traten de adaptar la cultura de allá pero aquí (AnaCand). (I continue to adapt here. My brother, for instance, he lives here but from there [from the Dominican Republic] and one cannot live like that…a balance, to try to adapt the culture [from the Dominican Republic] but here [in Providence].)

Es una forma de ir aceptando a otra cultura. Aprendiendo y valorizando otras culturas…. Transculturando (Abi). (It is a way to accept another culture. Valuing and learning from other cultures… “Transculturing.”)

La cultura tuya un poco la vas quitando un poco de la anglosajona…Es parte de la vida de aquí (Joan). (You start scaling away part of your own culture [adding] a little bit of the Anglo-Saxon one…It is part of life here [in Providence].)

Si nos invitan, uno cuando llega aquí adopta las costumbres, uno esta tan americanizado, se nos va, no me doy cuenta. Yo no me acuerdo del día de las madres de allá. Uno termina adoptando las costumbres, sin uno querer se va olvidando de las tradiciones (Nuri). (Yes, they invite us [to the neighbors’ house], as one arrives here, one adopts the traditions, one is so Americanized, it goes away [own culture]. I don’t even realize it sometimes. I don’t even remember to celebrate mother’s day date from the Dominican Republic. One ends up adopting the customs. Even without intending to, one forgets the traditions.)

However, a few of the Dominican-born mothers did express how one becomes “American” in terms of the practices that one does:
Uno porque tiene sus raíces bien profundas, uno se convierte en americano más que otra cosa (Abi). (That’s only because one has one’s own roots deeply attached, one turns into an American more than anything else.)

Aquí se va acabando la cultura de uno, uno va frenándose, hay que dar para recibir, no es solo dar y esperar nunca recibir nada, pero cuando tú das mucho de ti, tus no ves ese apoyo ahí, el corazón se te va poniendo duro poco a poco. Tú vas quitando tu cultura y adoptando esa cultura, un poco como la del anglosajón. Que se ven para los “holidays”, a veces no son muy unidos. Ya después de que se casan se olvidan del papa y la mama. A veces uno va adaptando eso un poquito (Joan). (Over here [in Providence] one’s culture starts fading away, one begins to refrain. One must give to receive, it is not that I am only giving to receive, but when you give a lot of yourself, and then you don’t see that support from others, your heart starts becoming insensible. You start abandoning your culture and adopting that culture, similar to the Anglo-Saxon one. For instance, what do you observe that happens during holidays, sometime they are not that close. After they get married they forget about their father and their mother. Even that one may start adapting.)

While they appeared to be going through the acculturation process (see for example, Berry, 2003, 2005), their ethnic identity still remained intact. Even with their multiple interactions and interchanges of cultural practices across different contexts, their ethnic identity stayed constant and their experiences did not have any major apparent effects on their internal structure or how they saw themselves as Dominican:

Dondequiera que un va uno se comporta como dominicano….siempre está tu respeto hacia los demás……tu sabes cómo voltear la cara para no ofender a los demás (Joan). (Wherever one goes, one behaves as a Dominican…you always show your respect for others…you know how to turn your cheek so that you do not offend others.)

As the Dominican-born mothers increased their adaptation to a different culture, their ethnic identity did not change. However, the manner in which they expressed, displayed, or showed their Dominican identity varied across contexts and was dependent on the demands of the specific situation:

Ahora uno tiene que trabajar esos días, y celebra mas como tiene libres, uno se olvida los días festivos que uno tiene culturalmente. La comida no se tanto, nos vamos adaptando a la comida americana. Cuando vine aquí no pasaba el pancake, ahora aprendimos a hacer pavo, en vez de pernil. Nos vamos como mezclando (Cari). (Now you have to work on those days, and only celebrate when you have a day off. One forgets those special holidays. I don’t know about the food, we start adapting somehow to the American food.
For example, when I arrived here [to the U.S.] I could not stand to think about eating pancakes, now we even do turkey instead of roasted pig. We began to mix.)

Llevamos el plan de acá de Estados Unidos, no, no celebramos en la fecha de la Republica Dominicana. Mi familia esta acá toda completa (Vivi). (We only follow the course of the U.S., we don’t even celebrate those special dates of the Dominican Republic. All my family has relocated to the U.S.)

Yo doy confianza a mi hija. Mi mamá me dice yo no sé como tu crías. Yo digo, la crianza es diferente, no estamos viviendo como antes. Nunca pude llevar un novio a la casa. Mi papá nunca me aceptó un novio a la casa. El decía que no aceptaba que vinieran. Yo tengo otro pensar, porque si uno no le da esa confianza es malo. Ahora es una crianza diferente, antes era más estricta. Tú no estás en Santo Domingo, tú estás aquí. No he perdido mis raíces (Yesy). (I trust my daughter. My mom tells me that she does not know how I am raising my children. I tell her that things are different than before. I could never bring a boyfriend to my house. My father never allowed me. I have a different view of thinking about the way I raise my children, because if I don’t give them trust then I am inviting problems to happen. The current childrearing ways differ from how it was before; it used to be stricter. You are not in Santo Domingo, you are here. I have not lost my [cultural] roots.)

Las raíces están ahí, es algo como dinámico. Hay que adaptarse, hay gente que se enfocean y todo se lo llevan para allá, pierden su enfoque de aquí, que hacen los hijos se estropean de la escuela porque su papa no tiene con que ayudarlo, los muchachos no quieren llevar amigos a la casa, porque en Santo Domingo una casa de caoba (Joan). (Our roots are still here but it something that is dynamic. One has to adapt one self. There are some people who concentrate in doing everything for over there [the Dominican Republic]. They lose their focus here. So what happens to their children, they drop out of school because the parents do not have the financial resources to help him out. The children do not even want to bring their friends to their house [out of shame due to the poor conditions that they may live in, however, you see everything in mahogany over there [in the Dominican republic].)

At no point in the study did any of the Dominican-born mothers refer to themselves as being from another ethnic identity other than Dominican:

Le estoy siempre corrigiendo, eso de que uno es de donde nací, por ejemplo el pueblo de Israel vivió en Egipto, y era Israelitas. Creo que se puede mantener la identidad (Vivi). (I find myself always correcting you, what is that idea that one is from the place where one was born. For example, the Israeli people lived in Egypt but they were still Israeli. I strongly believe that one can maintain one’s own identity.)

Uno no ha perdido el hecho de que haya nacido allá, uno solo está en un país diferente (Karen). (One has not lost the fact that one was born over there [in the Dominican Republic], one is just residing in a different country.)
Differing viewpoints, however, were expressed when referring to their U.S.-born children’s ethnic identity. On the one hand, some of the mothers perceived their children’s ethnic identity similar to their views about their own Dominican identity:

La niña a pesar de que nació aquí pienso que es dominicana. Yo como madre la veo dominicana a pesar de que nació aquí. A ella le gusta más la música dominicana, la comida y como vestirse. Si le preguntan a ella dirá dominicana. Naciste aquí pero tu nacionalidad es dominicana porque tus papas son dominicanos (Karen). (I believe that my daughter is Dominican even having been born here. As her mother, I see her as a Dominican. She enjoys Dominican music, food, and clothing. If they ask her she would say Dominican. [I tell her] You were born here but your nationality is Dominican because your parents are Dominican.)

Se podría definir como un niño dominicano criado con una cultura mixta; se rigen creencias dominicanas (Abi). (He could be defined as a Dominican boy raised in a mixed culture; ruled by Dominican beliefs.)

Mis hijos son dominicanos nacidos aquí (Rosa). (My children are all Dominican who were born here.)

Yo la veo dominicana, para mí para ella es por conveniencia. Todo depende entre sus amigos es dominicana, si no dice que es americana porque nació aquí. Todo depende (Maria) I see her as a Dominican, but I believe that depends on convenience. It all depends if she is within her Dominican friends, then she is Dominican, if not she says: “I am Dominican because I was born here.” It all depends.)

Nacido aquí, pero con costumbres dominicanas. Tengo conciencia que nació aquí, pero son costumbres dominicanas (Aida). (Born here, but with Dominican traditions. I am very well aware that she was born here, but she has her Dominican traditions within her.)

On the other hand, some of the Dominican-born mothers tended to see their U.S.-born children’s ethnic identity either as multi-ethnic or as American. This difference was more evident if their U.S.-born children had a non-Dominican father:

Mis hijos más pequeños son dominicanos guatemaltecos (Ina). (My younger children are Dominican-Guatemalan.)

¿Qué son mis hijos? son americanos. Mis sobrinos creen que ellos [mis hijos] son dominicanos, ellos no son dominicanos, ellos nacieron aquí, ¿qué tu puedes elegir?... Los míos hay uno que es totalmente francés, pero dice que es dominicano. Hay cosas que no
le pegan, es igual que el papá; uno es caribeño y el otro es caribeñísimo. El del medio parece americano pero le gustan más las cosas dominicanas, el es el más dominicano [se menea mejor]. El chiquito parece dominicano. Todo el mundo me dice ese es el tigre que tienes. El del medio parece francés. El grande es francés aunque no quiera (Ana).

(What are my children? They are American. My nephews believe that they [my children] are Dominicans, but they are not Dominicans, they were born here; what could I choose for them? [ethnicity]… I have one that he is completely French, but he claims he is Dominican. There are things however that he has which are not part of the Dominicans [as I see it] he is just like his father; the other one is Caribbean and the other one even more [from the Caribbean]. My middle child looks American, but he loves to do Dominican cultural practices, he is more Dominican [he dances better than all of them]. The youngest definitely looks Dominican. Everyone tells me that he is the savvy one. The middle one also looks French. [However] the oldest is French even if he says otherwise.)

Para mí es tu eres de padres dominicanas que naciste en Estados Unidos. Yo digo (a mi hija) tú eres Americana (Kenia). (Well, I believe that you [daughter] are from Dominican parents but were born in the U.S. I tell her [my daughter] you are American.)

Notwithstanding, two of the six Dominican-born mothers whose U.S.-born children’s fathers were not Dominican still viewed their children as Dominican.

The Dominican-born mothers’ responses about their children’s own perceptions about their ethnic identity reflected a Dominican identity. The mothers stated that if someone would ask their U.S.-born children about their ethnic identity they would proudly state that they are Dominican:

Así mismo, una niña dominicana criada en los Estados Unidos. Dominicana-American. Yo vine con ocho meses y una semana (Olga). (A Dominican girl raised in the U.S. Dominican-American. I arrived to the U.S. when I was eight months pregnant with her.)

Los míos dicen dominicanos, pero tienen parte francesa, para mi tu eres de donde naciste…Siempre hay una nacionalidad en donde tu naciste (Vivi). (Mine are Dominican, but they have French in them. For me you are from where you were born…There is always a nationality from the place you were born.)

La niña se identifica con las dos nacionalidades. Ella sabe que es dominicana, la comida y es fanática de Aventura. Ella diría que nació aquí, diría que es dominicana. Nacieron aquí, pero son dominicanos. Las dos cosas (Yesy). (My daughter identifies with both nationalities. She knows that she is Dominican, loves the food and is a fan of Aventura [famous Dominican Singer]. She would say that she was born here, that she is Dominican. They [my two children] were born here, but they are Dominican.)
La segunda dominicana, mis hijos se sienten como lo que son. No se identifican como americanos (Patri). My second one, my children feel like they are [Dominican]. They do not identify themselves as American.

Socio-Emotional Issues

The Dominican-born mothers in this study reported feeling loneliness, emotional constriction, distress, and discrimination as they raise their U.S.-born children as Dominicans.

Ina experienced feeling *alone and lonely* when she had raised her first born by herself following the sudden death of her husband. Ina further explained how even with her mother around she did not find support from her: “Tenía mi familia pero mi mamá decía que no cuidaba nieto. Es como si estuviera sola. Se hace bien difícil la vida.”(I had my family, but my mom always said that she would not babysit for grandchildren. It was like if I was by myself.)

Patri’s story was similar as her mother also did not provide her with ample support with raising her children. “La mía también. Mi mamá dice que cada gallina con su pollo.” (Mine too. She [her mother] would have her own saying ‘each hen with its chicks.’) However, Patri shared that with her two oldest children she had the unconditional support from her mother-in-law. It was not until her mother-in-law moved to Puerto Rico that she started to feel lonely and experienced difficulty.

After several discouraging attempts to express sensitivity to others as she had been used to doing in the Dominican Republic, Joan expressed having to take measures to *constrain her emotions* and limit her culturally-appropriate ways of serving others: “Aquí se va acabando la cultura de uno y aunque uno no quiera uno tiene que ir frenándose inclusive con los de la misma cultura Dominicana……..uno se pone duro aquí.” (Here one culture starts fading and whether you like it or not you have to refrain yourself even with the ones that are Dominican….you become insensible.) Joan also expressed *distress* as her life had become rushed and busier since
she emigrated from the Dominican Republic. Joan dreamingly expressed how she would give her life to have that tranquility that one can freely enjoy in the Dominican Republic:

Yo me acuerdo que en mi último viaje a la Republica Dominicana, yo veía que la gente que iban camino a su trabajo les sobraba el tiempo….ellos tenían tiempo para tomar una taza de café….ellos también tenían tiempo para sentarse a platicar unos minutos con sus amistades y para saludar a los que se encontraban al paso……algunos cantaban y otros reían….simplemente tenían tiempo…. Aquí yo solo siento ese stress atrás de la cabeza…….Es la vida de aquí que te pone así… (Joan) (I remember on my last trip to the Dominican Republic, I would see the people going to work and they had all the time of the world…..they even had time to sit down and have a cup of coffee…..they also had time to chat a few minutes with a friend and greet people while on their way to work……some were singing while others were smiling…..simply having time…..here all I feel is that stress behind my head……life here gets you like that.)

Direct discrimination was witnessed by Cari as she shared her experience with the group members:

Yo trabajo en la escuela y veo discriminación de parte de las maestras que empiezan a decir, que no español, a veces el niño se trata de comunicar en español, porque no sabe el otro idioma. Yo creo que es discriminación cuando no aceptan que el niño se comunique. El niño se comunicaba y él les preguntaba a los amigos que decía, la maestra decía no español. La escuela tiene mucho que ver, los quieren empujar. Yo se que tienen que aprender inglés, pero no se pueden olvidar de su idioma. Cuando los niños se alfabetizan, y como niños son fluidos en su primer idioma pueden avanzar. Porque tenía su base en la lengua maternal. (I work at a school and I see how teachers start to discriminate when they tell the children not to speak in Spanish. Sometimes the children try to communicate in Spanish because they do not know how to communicate in another language. I believe that it is discrimination because they do not allow the children to communicate. This particular child would communicate and he would ask his peers: What did the teacher say? And the teacher would continuously tell him: “No Spanish.” School has a lot to do with this, they want to push the children. I understand that they have to learn English, but they cannot forget about their own language. When children are first taught to read, if it is done in their mother tongue they can advance rapidly. And why? Because they are taught in the mother tongue.)

Similarly, Yesy described how she would see overrepresentation of Latino children, including Dominican ones, being referred to special education to be evaluated: “A veces he visto que han mandado niños hispanos a ver si los niños tienen problemas, como si tuvieran problemas
Ethnic Identity

de educación especial. Y los refieren a ver si tienen problemas” (Ysy). (At times, I have seen how Hispanic children are sent to see if they had problems, like special education problems.

They refer them to see if they have problems.)

Abi described similar opinions about language discrimination in the Providence schools:

Es bueno que la escuela le de valor, que lo valorice, que no lo vea como un obstáculo para ese niño. Que ese niño puede comunicarse en dos idiomas. A veces quieren avergonzar al niño, por eso es que hay niños se siente avergonzado de donde vienen. Les ponen estereotipos a los niños. Deben darle valor a los niños para que sean orgullosos de donde vienen. Un maestro que yo conozco donde yo trabajo que es americano me preguntaba palabras. También una americana enfermera fue y aprendió a hablar español. Eso debería de repetirse (Abi). (It would be good if schools would value, give value, that they do not see it as an obstacle for that child. It would be good if that child is allowed to communicate in both languages. Sometimes, teachers would like to embarrass the child; that is why there are children who feel ashamed of their place of origin. They are given stereotypes. They [schools] should value the children so that they feel proud of their origins. I work with an American teacher who would ask me words in Spanish to communicate with his students. There was also an American nurse who made an effort and learned to speak Spanish. Those examples should happen more often.)

Karen also experienced discrimination due to her daughter’s Dominican identity or belonging to a Dominican culture:

La saqué de la escuela porque era más por la cultura. Ellos decían que los dominicanos tenían cultura. Era por lo prieto por el color. La saqué de la escuela por eso. Después que la saque de ahí no tuve más problema… Para mí no lo veo como que no pude, me trate de superar, me hice ciudadana, a pesar de que existe la discriminación racial. Pienso en que si otro pudo yo también puedo. Tú puedes competir con otro. Le he provisto a mis hijos ese apoyo para que ellos puedan llegar a lo que deseen (Karen). (I had to take her out of her school because of her [Dominican] culture. They [the teachers] would say that Dominicans would not possess any culture [civilization]. It was also because of [my daughter] being of color. That is why I took her out that school. I had no more problems once I transferred her to another school… I don’t see it [the process of raising her children] as if I could not do it, but I strived for success, I became a U.S. citizen, even though there is a great deal of racial discrimination. I think this way . . . I made it, therefore I am capable and I will too. You can compete. [As a mother] I have provided my children with that support and viewpoint so that they know they can become whatever they want in life.)
Successes and Challenges in the Process

The Dominican-born mothers’ voices were filled with tension as they shared their experiences in their daily negotiations raising their U.S.-born children as Dominicans.

Successes

Table 4.1 summarizes the successes that the participants identified in the process of assisting with the ethnic identity development of their children.

Table 4.1 Summary of the successes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUCCESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some jobs pay more money (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid for future education (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice in terms of civil rights (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school programs available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities to study in the future (D+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (D+) Positive difference in comparison to the Dominican Republic

The following opening question allowed the participants to describe their successes.

Question: What has been and continues to be your experience as a Dominican-born mother raising your U.S-born child in the U.S.?

Aquí hay más oportunidades, pero aquí hay que buscarlas. En Santo Domingo hay muchas personas dicen que en Santo Domingo no hay oportunidad, el que lucha puede. En Santo Domingo los papas no le dan mucha importancia. No se le puede echar toda la culpa al gobierno (Yesy). (We have more opportunities here, but we have to look for them. There are people who claim that in Santo Domingo there are not that many opportunities; if one strives one can be victorious. In Santo Domingo parents do not place a lot of importance. The government alone is not responsible for all the problems of our children.)

Cuando los papas traen niños pequeños a veces los regresan a sus países. Es por eso que hay muchos niños y niñas que no se llegan a preparar ni aquí ni allá. El error lo pagan los
niños. Van dos años aquí y dos años allá (Karen). (When parents bring their young children sometimes they end up bringing them back to their country. Consequently, there are many children who do not get fully educated in either place. It is the children who pay for that error. For example, they may even spend two years in the U.S. and two years over there, and so on.)

En Santo Domingo la educación es buena pero no tienen otro idioma. Si se regresan de aquí, si quieren inglés tienen que hacerlo privado (Yesy). (The education in Santo Domingo is good but they do not offer a second language. For instance, if they [the children] return to the Dominican Republic and would like to learn English they would have to do it privately.)

La probabilidad de centros comunitarios aquí es mejor. Porque está el Boys and Girls Club y el City Arts mi hijo está desde los ocho años. En Santo Domingo no tenía esa posibilidad. Si hubiera nacido alla eso no lo iba tener (Ina). (Community centers here are better. For example, my son has been attending the Boys and Girls’ Club and City Arts for about eight years. He did not have that possibility in Santo Domingo. If he would have been born there [in Dominican Republic] he would not have that opportunity.)

Allá la gente dice que las escuelas de allá son mejores pero acá hay la ayuda monetaria es mejor (Patri). (People say that over there [in the Dominican Republic] schools are better, ok but, here, financial aid [for college] is better.)

Aquí se dan más ayuda de renta, comida todo tipo de ayuda. En cuanto a eso es más fácil aquí. En cuanto a eso es más cómodo aquí. Pero por lo menos hay colecta (Ina). (In Providence I get aid to pay for my rent, food, all forms of help. In terms of monetary assistance, it is better here. At least one can also collect unemployment benefits.)

Allá no hay seguro médico libre solo privado. No confío en los hospitales. Mi hijo se enfermó de cuando tenía cinco meses y como dos días antes que me tocaba venir y me vine. Adoro a mi país pero no me gusta el servicio médico (Patri). (There is no public health insurance like here, only private. I don’t trust hospitals there [in the Dominican Republic]. One time my son got ill when he was about five months old and I opted for advancing the plane ticket. I love my country but I can’t stand the medical services and care there.)

Aquí es más fácil buscar trabajo. Para una madre soltera es duro en Santo Domingo (Patri). (Looking for jobs is easier here. It would be very difficult for a single mother in Santo Domingo.)

Te puedes morir si no tienes transportación y dinero (en la República Dominicana) (Rosa) (You could die if you don’t have money and transportation in the [Dominican Republic].)
Challenges

The proceeding narratives are a sample of some of the Dominican-born mothers’ responses to questions that they were asked during the focus groups as well as individual interviews which reflect some of their challenges. Table 4.2 summarizes the challenges that these participants identified.

Table 4.2 Summary of the challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative value to children’s Dominican ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower academic ability assumptions based on Dominican culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniforms use not mandatory (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low moral values/standards (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers imposing own liberal values (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers devalue Spanish language use (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not know population of schools (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School discrimination (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not know the students (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have no interest in speaking with involved parents (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costly after schools programs – baseball (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low academic standards (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No specific help from the city (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City activities routinely performed in English (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental authority is undermined by child protective services (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited familial support (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cultural activities at school (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited support from neighborhood (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low economy, limiting access to resources (ND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy life no time to practice all traditions (D)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (ND) Negative difference in comparison to the Dominican Republic, (D) Difference from the Dominican Republic, (D+) Positive difference in comparison to the Dominican Republic

These examples, derived from specific questions evoking Dominican-born mothers’ challenging experiences, were identified as taking place within their U.S.-born Dominican
Ethnic Identity

children's *school system* and within their *community* context. In addition, these challenges faced by the participants, in raising their U.S.-born children as Dominicans, also stem from their frustrations with the lack of assistance they receive from *politicians*, with the current *economically depressed context*, and with decreased opportunities to participate in Dominican *traditions*.

**Challenges: School System**

**Question:** How has the school system contributed or not contributed to your experience in raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?

No, no he visto si ellos celebran el día de la hispanidad. No he visto nada dominicanos en las escuelas (Rosa). (No, I have not seen them celebrate any Hispanic celebration. I have not even seen anything about Dominicans in schools.)

La escuela debiera tener más actividades de diferentes países, como una noche cultural, mas escuelas deben tener cosas así, para que los niños puedan saber más de las culturas. (School should have more activities about different countries, like a cultural night. That is a good way to learn more about other cultures.)

Si me dieron, pero no la tomé. No lo tomé porque su papá me dijo que no, para no frustrarla porque sería mucho, ella no entró al programa, pero yo no lo acepte, mayormente fue porque mi esposo me dijo no, yo estaba dispuesta pero el me dijo que no. A mi hija le van ahora a dar español (Aida). (Yes, they gave me that option but I rejected it. I didn’t take it because her father did not allow it as he thought that if she took classes bilingually she would be frustrated, too much for her. Ultimately, it was my husband who made that decision. I wanted to but he did not let me. At least now she will be taking Spanish as a language class.)

Mi esposo (nació aquí) nunca quiso que mis hijos estuvieran en programa bilingüe porque se iban a confundir pero yo le ensene solita. La grande aprendió en la escuela (Patri). (My husband was born here, but he didn’t want our children to be in the bilingual program because he thought they will get confuse. I taught her Spanish by myself. The other one learned Spanish at school.)

Cuándo empezó a ir a la escuela dejo de hablar el español bien. Con la pequeña no he tenido problema, me la querían poner en un programa bilingüe porque se iban a confundir pero yo le ensene solita. Los varones son como mas vagos, se acostumbran al inglés y quieren dejar el español, Tiene sus amistades que hablan más ingles (Aida). (When he started attending school, he stopped talking Spanish. With his sister, I have not had that problem; they wanted to put her in the bilingual program. But I say that it has been easier with her boys
are more lazy, once they get used to the English they tend to leave the Spanish behind. Their friends also speak English.)

Ninguno, mi hija coge clases de español siempre, pero de ahí nada más, no fomentaron nada… El departamento de escuela es que escoge la escuela, eso depende que fuerza te le pongas, es difícil que uno cambie algo porque eso está rígido por ellos, si uno trata a veces uno puede (Patri). (None, my daughter took classes in Spanish, but they did not sponsor anything…The school department is the one that chooses the school. It all depends on the power that one exercises. It is difficult for one to go there and try to change a school like that. Even if one tries, one cannot.)

Challenges: Community

**Question:** How has the community helped or hindered your experience in this process of raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?

En la comunidad todo está bien, lo único es que en la escuela deben enfocarse más en la cultura. Yo iba, mucha de la gente no saben porque lo están celebrando (Kenia). (Everything is fine in the community; the only thing is that the school should put more emphasis on culture. I used to attend but a lot of people would not even know what the celebration was about.)

He visto que hay más participación de actividades de diferentes países, en Rhode Island faltan más actividades culturales para los niños. Las que hay aquí no hay mucho. Deben hacer más. Aquí no lo hay (Abí). (I have seen that there are more activities involving different countries, in Rhode Island there is a notable need for more cultural activities for children. There is not much here. They must do more. Here there are not that many activities.)

La ciudad no hay nada como que esto es dominicano. Yo no me siento tu sabes (Yesy). (There is nothing in the city about Dominicans. I don’t feel that there is anything you know…)

Todo lo que se hace, se hace en el idioma inglés (Karen). (All the events are done in English.)

Challenges: Politicians

**Question:** How have politicians helped or hindered your experience raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?
Lo que se ve en la televisión. A veces se le olvida. Tradiciones porque allá se va a la playa. Pero uno lo tiene presente. Acá a que playa uno va a ir con este frío (Ina). (What you see on the TV. Sometimes one forgets the tradition. For example, over there one goes to the beach, but one is mindful about that date. But, here, who in their right mind would go to the beach in this cold climate.)

Hay un problemita educativo, Yo estuve en un meeting con Ángel Taveras (Alcalde) que tan pronto se dice latino. Pero también hay personas que no soy educadas y si tienen maestros buenos ellos pueden salir a camino. Que si son hispanos no esperan de ellos más. Los profesores de Providence son uno de los mejores pagados, usted tiene que empujar los profesores. Una maestra dijo que el 60 por ciento es de los padres. Un padre dijo seguro la mama de Taveras estuvo encima de él. Él dijo no, la mama no estuvo tan involucrada en su educación, que fue una maestra que lo describió. Fue la hermana que ayudo un poco más. Mi mamá tenia octavo grado, ella no me podía ayudar mucho, nosotros nos ayudábamos mucho entre nosotros. Mi papa muerto, mi mamá madre soltera. No tiene que ver a veces que si es madre soltera, que si vienen pobres, no comíamos manjares, era un pedacito, Mis hermanas fueron escuelas de monja semi-internas, las más fueron privadas. Yo estaba más floja. Yo considero que los padres tienen que ayudar pero los profesores influyen mucho. Los profesores duran más horas con mis hijos de lo que duro con ellos. Ellos los pueden conocer intelectualmente más que uno. Una profesora vio mi hijo entro a kínder y lo tienen en terapia ocupacional. Ellos los descubrieron en un mes, yo no pensé que tenía problema porque le hacía todo. Los maestros ven cosas que uno no ve (Ana). (There is a problem with education. I attended a meeting with Angel Taveras (Mayor). But there are uneducated people and they have good teachers to serve as role models for success. Of course, there are others who might not expect much form Latino students. One teacher at the meeting stated that 60 percent of success or failure is due to the parental influence. Another parent stated, “for sure his mother helped Angel Taveras be successful.” But Taveras stated that his mother had not a lot to do with his success. He claimed that it was a teacher who inspired him. He also had the support from his sister. My own mother had only an eighth grade education, and she could not help me. We would all help each other. My Dad had died, and my mom was single. Sometimes it has nothing to do with having a single mom, or growing up poor, we did not have banquets as meals but we ate a little. My sisters went to schools with nuns, I went to private schools. I was weaker than them. I know that parents have to be involved but the teachers have greater influence as they spend most of the time with the children. They get to know them better intellectually. For my son, a teacher told me about a problem which needed occupational therapy. I wouldn’t have known, teachers are capable of seeing other things.)

Challenges: Financial Situation
Ethnic Identity

**Question:** How has your financial and economic situation helped or hindered your experience in raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?

En la escuela de mi hijo había muchos médicos, esos niños siempre estaban con mejores notas. No sé si sus papas los empujaban a los maestros, siempre ellos estaban un poquito, se veía la diferencia. Mi esposo decía no se puede perder la parte de los blancos, porque ellos empujan más la educación, le tienen más respeto. El por ciento de blanco bajó bastante, porque no lo suben un poco, porque al mover la escuela bajo el porciento. Cuando ellos están tenían presión, ellos tenían los medios. Tenían los medios porque sus papas los llevaba mucho a viajar. Yo entiendo que mientras más dinero que tú tienes tú le puedes ofrecer un poco más de exposición, con un libro un le puede enseñar (Ana).

(There were many professionals in my son’s school. Those children had the best grades. I could not tell if it was due to the parents or if the teachers would be pressured by the parents. My husband would say, a school should not lose the influence of the Whites, that helps the education. When they are present they raise up the scores. We saw that when the school moved from its location, the scores dropped. They had the means to travel too. I know that the more money you have the more opportunities you can provide to your children. But even with a book you can provide some of that exposure.)

**Challenges: Traditions**

**Question:** Does your child participate in Dominican traditions?

Bueno cuando mis hijas eran pequeñas comían comida dominicana, pero a medida que fueron creciendo los dos mayores se americanizaron. No comen arroz, habichuelas con dulce, no postres, el pollo no le gusta así. Pero el pequeño come de todo como está bajo mi techo (Patri). (Well when my daughters were small they would eat Dominican food, but as they grew older they Americanized. They do not eat rice, beans, no desserts, and the chicken they do not like that. But the small one eats everything as he is under my roof.)

Ella come de todo, mangú por la mañana. No tengo tiempo de cocinar mangú por la mañana porque tengo que trabajar. Cuando se puede (Olga). (She eats everything, mangú in the morning. I have no time to cook mangú in the morning because I have to work. When I can.)

Se nos olvidó. Con el ajetreo de vida que se tiene (Patri). (We forgot with the entire fast pace of this life.)

Aquí es más triste la navidad (Patri). (Christmas is sadder here.)
Influential Factors in the Process

The influential factors in the ethnic identity development of U.S.-born children, as being told by their Dominican-born mothers, were organized utilizing the ecological model according to the theoretical framework of this study. Exo, macro, and micro systems are presented as influential factors. Factors from the individual-system are placed as the most influential factors according to the Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions and will be presented first.

Individual-System Influential Factors

As mentioned above, Dominican-born mothers described their role as the most influential factor in their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity development. In particular, transmitting their Dominican roots and the Spanish language were seen as part of the fulfillment of their role as agents in the ethnic identity formation of their U.S.-born children.

Depende más de uno que de la comunidad, no hay tanto clubes sociales latinos, donde uno pueda participar con sus hijos, los pocos que hay no se puede llevar la familia porque es una bebedera. Yo he participado de esos clubes porque después que nacen sus hijos me he apartado (Cari). (Depends more on one than on the community, there are not that many Latino social clubs, where you can participate with your children, there are few but one can not take the family because there is a lot of drinking. I have participated in these clubs but stopped after my children were born.)

In sharing her experience about transmitting Dominican roots to her U.S.-born children, Jess explained her role within the process: “Es más mi trabajo como madre enseñarle sus raíces, contarles cuentos de cuando era chiquita. Libertad de cultura y de expresión,” (Nuri). Others expressed similar sentiments:

En mi experiencia vine aquí siendo ‘teenager,’ mi mama se dedicó a la crianza, ella dejo el trabajo. Si tú le dedicas tiempo. El ejemplo que le das en tu vida diaria. En mi casa yo no veía malos ejemplos. Tenía el temor que mi mama se apareciera en la escuela. Yo me he mantenido con ellos. Mis hijos son mi prioridad, a pesar de que trabajo. Soy bien activa en la escuela, uno tiene que mantenerse atento. Darle soltura, no tratar que lo crie la escuela, ni el gobierno. La soltura, a los niños le da libertad para tener sexo en cualquier edad. Tengo amigas que el ‘DCYF’ le da ‘carefiew’ de venir a diez y once. Mis hijos se mantienen connigo en mi casa. Los padres deben estar activos en la
educación de sus hijos. El ambiente puede ser que afecte, la misma cultura que hubiese tenido en Santo Domingo la tengo aquí. Tengo cuidado con ellos. Los padres tienen mucha influencia. Si tú dejas, tu hijo te lo crían otros (Abi). (In my experience I came here as a 'teenager,' my mother was devoted to parenting, she left work. If you spend your time and the example you give in your daily life... In my house I did not see bad examples. I was afraid that my mom would show up at school. I have remained close with them. My children are my priority, although I work. I am very active in school, you have to stay attuned. The laxness gives children the freedom to have sex at any age. I have friends that the 'DCYF' gives 'carefiew' to come at ten and eleven. My kids are kept with me in my house. Parents should be active in the education of their children. The environment may be affecting, but the same culture that had been in Santo Domingo I have here. I have watched them. Parents are very influential. If you stop, your child will be raised others. )

Mi caso es difícil porque soy madre soltera. Le doy gracias a mi mamá porque ella fue fuerte con nosotros. Todos tenían que limpiar. Tanto los varones como los hombres. La crianza que me dio mi mama. Me dieron un buen ejemplo gracias a Dios. Con mi hija he hecho lo mismo. Un poco dura a veces, como estoy sola. Cuando es una solo la quiero la añoño, pero darle todo lo que quiere no es lo mejor para ella, ella se lo tiene que ganar, si no aprende, en el futuro ella no va a saber que las cosas hay que ganárselas (Olga). (My case is difficult because I am a single mother. I thank my mom because she was strong with us. Everyone had to clean. Both boys and men. Her raising gave me a good example, thank God. With my daughter I have done the same. A little hard sometimes, as I am alone. When I want to I spoil her, but if I give her all that she wants that is not the best for her, she'll have to earn things, if not, in the future she will not know that things have to be earned.)

(Mi hijo) Odia que sea (madre) Dominicana porque dice que soy muy estricta (Joan). (My son] hates it (my being a Dominican mother) because he says I'm Dominican and very strict.)

The transmission of the Spanish language to U.S.-born Dominican children is a commonly observed and celebrated task of these Dominican-born mothers. Speaking and maintaining the Spanish language was of high importance. Keeping the language was also seen to be a protective and sustaining factor to continue the connection with and within the cultural practices across important contexts:

Inculco el español, le recalco el lenguaje, trato de enseñarle el idioma correctamente, siempre he pensado, una persona que estudia debe saber dos idiomas, una persona que habla dos idiomas vale por dos, el español es el segundo idioma más hablado del mundo (Vivi). (I have instilled Spanish and emphasize the language. I try to teach them the language correctly, I always thought a person who studies should know two languages, a
Ethnic Identity

person who speaks two languages is worth two, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world.)

Yo pienso que basta con que ellos vean televisión en inglés. Que ellos le pueden hablar español. Y que el inglés lo deje cuando entre a la escuela. A esa edad ellos aprenden rápido. No hay necesidad que un niño de padres dominicanos no hable español. Y lo veo con frecuencia en la escuela. Mi mamá no creía que mi hija iba aprender tanto, lo sabe escribir, leer, ella usó el libro ese Nacho para alfabetizar (Olga). (I think they should just watch TV in English. Have them speak Spanish. And let them learn English when they enter school. At that age they learn very fast. No need for a child of Dominican parents to not speak Spanish. And I see that often in school. My mom did not think my daughter would learn so much, but she can write, and even read that book she used to teach the literacy program for children: Nacho.)

Eso da vergüenza. Deben hablar español. Si tú como padre no esfuerzas el español. Como nosotros hemos tenido problemas de aprender el idioma, nos gustaría que nuestros hijos no pasen por eso (Cari). (That is embarrassing. They must speak Spanish. If you as a parent do not put emphasis on learning Spanish.... It must be that because we [parents] have struggled to learn the language, we would like our children not to go through that.)

Sí, los míos hablan en español, el grande aprendió español...cuando viajábamos a Santo Domingo hablaba español. Cuando viene aquí quiere hablar inglés, pero cuando allá habla español (María). (Yes, mine speak Spanish, the oldest one learned Spanish ... when traveling to Santo Domingo he would speak Spanish. When he comes back here, he wants to speak English, but when he is there he speaks Spanish.)

Las más solo español hablan en la casa. La grande estuvo en un programa bilingüe de ahí entró a Paul Coffee (Vivi). (Mine speak only Spanish at home. The oldest was in a bilingual program and from there she went to Paul Coffee.)

Yo uso el español, le corrojo que me hablen un solo idioma, que no hablen Spanglish (Ana). (I use Spanish, I correct them to speak only one language, that they don’t speak Spanglish.)

Mi niña mía, me pongo a leer en español. Mi hija aprendió a leer y escribir español conmigo. Le digo como decirlas en español. Yo lo he hecho en la casa (Karen). (My dear child, I get to read to her in Spanish. My daughter learned to read and write Spanish with me. I tell her how to say things in Spanish. I've done that at home.)

Micro-System Influential Factors

Dominican-born mothers in this study viewed Dominican friendships, keeping local connections with relatives (familial support, special celebrations and traditions), sustaining strong connections with the Dominican Republic (communications with relatives using
technology, frequent traveling to the Dominican Republic), *having a strong base and foundation*, and *residing in a home environment where the Dominican culture is fostered*, as important factors that influence the identity development process within their U.S.-born children’s immediate context.

Consistently described by many of the mothers in this study, having Dominican friendships played a key role in their children’s identification as Dominican: “Los míos sí. Alrededor donde vivo hay dominicanos,” (Rosa). (Mine do. There are Dominicans in my neighborhood.) “El visitar las amistades mías que son Dominicanas aportan mucho a que mis hijos me vean dándoles mi ejemplo de cómo se tratan los dominicanos,” (Joan). (Visiting my Dominican friends allows me to teach my children how Dominicans treat each other.)

The Dominican-born mothers in this study described the importance of being connected with relatives in Providence by communicating on a regular basis. In particular, gathering during important dates and celebrations was described as culturally-enriched experiences and opportunities to foster their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity:

Es aquí en Providence, nos reunimos en las casas, tomamos turno. Eso nos ayuda a estar compenetrados. He escuchado juntos que duran meses sin verse, si no nos vemos, si pasan dos o tres días, nos llamamos, tenemos ese apoyo (Aida). (It is here in Providence, we meet in our homes and we take turns. That helps us stay in touch. . I heard that there are families that could last for months without being in touch with each other, if we do not see, if two or three days pass, we call, we have that support.)

Frequent visits to the Dominican Republic, and encouraging continued access and communication with the Dominican Republic were viewed as strong influences on their U.S.-born children Dominican identity. Current advances in technology, such as “Facebook,” have been helpful in achieving this goal. This web-based social network serves as a way to keep abreast of current trends in the Dominican Republic by word of mouth from friendships and relatives. This social network, as described by the Dominican-born mothers in this study, also
motivates their U.S.-born children to want to learn to read and write Spanish to communicate with relatives and friends who only speak Spanish:

Ellos están acostumbrados a la cultura dominicana, a veces tiran unas palabritas en inglés, pero (allá) ellos hablan español (Rosa). (They are used to the Dominican culture, sometimes they may throw a few words in English, but they speak Spanish.)

Todos los años las llevaba cuando eran pequeñas. A ella le encantaban por la libertad de correr bicicleta. Se encontraban tranquilos (Patri). (Every year when they were little, I would take them. She loved the freedom of biking. They were at ease.)

Tengo unos tíos y me mantengo en comunicación, de parte de mi papa viven acá, pero de parte de mi mama me mantengo con mi tía, siento que es parte de mi familia, eso es muy importante para mí, eso es como lo único que me queda ahí (Aida). (I have uncles and stay in communication with them, from my dad’s side, but from my mom’s side I stay in touch with my aunt. I feel she is part of my family, that's very important to me. That’s all I have there.)

Yo vi que en Facebook tiene una bandera en su ‘profile’. Yo me comunico con mi familia por teléfono. Ahora mis hijos tienen Facebook, se están comunicando con mis sobrinos aquí en los Estados Unidos. Es difícil porque nosotros teníamos otros métodos. Nadie llama porque los papas sabían por las llamadas, ahora eso está fuera del control de nosotros, ellos no tienen celular solo por los textos, es muy difícil para los padres controlar (Ana). (I saw that in his Facebook he has a Dominican flag in his 'profile'. I communicate with my family by phone. Now my kids have Facebook, they are communicating with my nephews here in the United States. It's hard because we had other methods. Nobody knew because the parents would know about things from the record keeping of the phone calls, now that is outside of our control. They have no cell only by the texts, it is very difficult for parents to control.)

The passage of values and morals to their children was seen as an extremely important influential task. The Dominican-born mothers related as essential that their U.S.-born children internalize Dominican-based views on appropriate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors:

Si ese es mi caso, viene siendo en mi casa la crianza de mi hijo (Aida). (Yes, that's my case, it has been at home where the raising of my son comes.)

Cuando los niños ven el buen ejemplo, puede ser que vean algo pero siguen el buen ejemplo de su casa (Cari). (When children see a good example, even if they might see something different outside, they would still try to follow the example of their home.)

Uno les enseña a los hijos... “en mi casa a mi no me enseñaron así.... ¿por qué tu eres así?...los niños dominicanos no se comportan así”....siempre la cultura uno la mete
aunque uno a veces no quiera (Joan). (You teach the children ... "in my own house I was not raised that way.... Why are you like that? ... Dominican children do not behave like that"... One always ends up including the culutre even if one sometimes does not want to.)

El ambiente puede ser cargado, pero si tenemos supervisión...hace la diferencia. Los niños comienzan a cambiar en 'middle school' cuando son influenciados por otros niños, sino tienen buen fundamento en la casa ellos son exitosos. A veces en la casa no se está ahí para dirigirlos (Cari). (The environment can be loaded, but if we have oversight...it makes a difference. Children begin to change in 'middle school' when they are influenced by other children, but if they have had a good foundation at home they succeed. Sometimes parents are not at the house to lead them.)

Lastly, the mothers in this study also cited their homes’ practices as opportunities for constant cultural interactions where the Dominican culture is fostered. Music (merengue and bachata), art, foods, traditions, games, rituals, and routines are among the practices displayed in the Dominican-born mothers’ home environments. Additionally, watching television in Spanish was also reported as a common practice within the home. In particular, the mothers reported enjoying the accessibility to Latino American “novelas” or soap operas in Spanish as well as watching the old time classic children’s show “El Chavo del Ocho,” among other television shows:

Mi hija hace todo lo que hace un dominicano, no le hemos quitado esas tradiciones (Yesy). (My daughter does all a Dominican does, we have not taken away these traditions.)

Los míos en comida, música, tengo dos años que no voy a Santo Domingo. Los míos no saben bailar, pero si oyen la música, nos reunimos y si tienen la tradición. Porque en la casa nos reunimos... los míos se sientan hasta jugar domino, están bien empapados en la cultura dominicana (Maria). (Mine (my children) in food, music, I have two years since I visited Santo Domingo. Mine (my children) can not dance, but they hear music, we meet and they do have the traditions. Because when we gather in the house ... mine (my children) sit up and start playing dominoes, they are well steeped in the Dominican culture.)

En algunas comidas, mi esposo me dice ponle música, tienes que ponerle merengue aunque sea cristiano por el ritmo (Ana). , During some meals, my husband even tells me to put on music. They have to hear it even if it is Christian merengue rhythm.)
Mi mamá, allá se cocina a las 12, ella lo hace acá, mangú, queso frito, salchichón. Solo los domingos mi mamá hace desayuno grande, desayunamos el mangú. Y los nenes también comen mangú. Se hace cena de pan de agua y chocolate, a veces pero no siempre lo hace, si a las 12 siempre está hecho, yo vivo con mi mamá y ella es la que cocina y ella cuida mi niño. Eso es una tradición que los niños no se le pueden confiar a nadie, yo soy la abuela y los tengo que cuidar. Me gustaría que después ellos fueran y visitaran a Santo Domingo (Kenia). (My mom cooked there at 12, she does that here too, mangu, fried cheese, salami. Only on Sundays my mom makes big breakfast, at breakfast we eat mangu. And the kids also eat mangu, dinner bread is made of water and chocolate, sometimes but not always, yes but by 12 it is always done. I live with my mom and she does the cooking and she takes care of my child. That's a tradition that children cannot be trusted to anyone, “I am the grandmother and I have to look.” I wish that someday they get to visit to Santo Domingo.)

Macro-System Influential Factors

The following are among the factors which Dominican-born mothers see as influencing the identity development of their outside the home environment. Residing in a neighborhood which resembles the Dominican Republic influences the Dominican identity experience of the U.S.-born children as expressed by the Dominican-born mothers: “Si ha influenciado mucho porque donde vivo [South Providence; Broad Street Area] hay muchos restaurantes dominicanos,” (Kenia). (Yes, it has had much influence because there are many Dominican restaurants where I live).

In particular, Broad Street businesses were described as important centers of access to comestibles and goods from the Dominican Republic:

Mis hijas no son muy sociables que digamos allá afuera….. o si eso si, en los sitios así le dicen mami yo voy para Blancoland. Ellas dicen que la gente de Blancoland dice que esto es malo, pero ella no le tiene nada de miedo a eso, a la Broad, esta área, ellas de las más tranquilas por ahí (Patri). (My daughters are not very sociable out there….. oh that? yes, when they go around other places they jokingly tell me “Mom I'm going to Blancoland.” They say that people in Blancoland say that this neighborhood is bad, but they (my daughters) do not have any fear of it, of the Broad Street area. This area, you should see how comfortable they feel walking around here.)
In addition, Rosa described her satisfaction with her community and neighborhood which offers “baseball” among other activities and opportunities for her children: “El hecho de estar aquí ya es mucho” (Rosa). (The fact that one is here is enough).

The mothers whose children had received or were receiving _bilingual education at school_ were very appreciative. Their satisfaction stemmed from the positive experiences they have had with their children’s teachers, principals, and school staff. These mothers also expressed how Spanish was valued within that school context and how their children were encouraged to speak Spanish:

En la lima el español lo hablan lindo, muy lindo, a mí me dijeron no los pongas en escuela bilingüe porque cuando hablan inglés no se saben expresar tanto, a simple vista me han gustados estudiantes de la Lima porque hablan el español muy lindo. Veo que mi hijo sabe matemática, parece que se han esforzado en matemáticas, a nivel nacional (Ana). (Good Spanish is spoken at the Lima School, very beautiful, they told me not to put them in bilingual schools because when they speak English they do not know how to express themselves in both. At first glance, I have admired the students at the Lima School because Spanish is spoken well. I see that my son knows mathematics, it seems that they have done well in math, nationwide.)

Él estuvo en la Lima. Esa fue muy buena escuela, esa escuela tienen uniforme, involucran al padre, fomentan el desarrollo cultural. Muy buena escuela. Los niños hay eran..., las maestras eran muy buena, yo era voluntaria, el estaba el kinder, primero y segundo, la principal era muy buena, era dominicana por cierto. Ahí si se veía la influencia, hasta las maestras anglosajonas le inculcaban la cultura hispana y lo trataban como que eran dominicanas o hispanos. No le trataban como que tenían que actuar como americanos (Nuri). (He was at the Lima School. That was a very good school, that school has uniforms, they involve the parents, and they foster cultural development. Very good school. Children there were …the teachers were very good. I was a volunteer, he was in kindergarten, first and second, the principal was very good, and they were certainly treated as Dominican. You could even see the positive influence because Anglo teachers inculcated the Hispanic culture and treated them as if they were Dominican or Hispanic. They did not treat them as if they had to act as Americans.)

Español, nos enfocamos en el español. Deberían promover más el programa bilingüe (Kenia). (Spanish, we focus on Spanish. They should promote further the bilingual program.)
Mis hijos hablan inglés y español. El grande no sabe leer español, pero habla muy bien el español nunca estuvo en el programa bilingüe. Los pequeños están en clase bilingüe. La escuela ha ayudado (Ina). (My children speak English and Spanish. The oldest one cannot read Spanish, but speaks fluent Spanish, he was never in the bilingual program. The kids are in bilingual class. The school has helped.)

Furthermore, participating as a member in a church community where activities are conducted in Spanish, enriched opportunities for exposure to Dominican culture and values:

El pastor habla más que otra cosa, el culto es en español, aunque los jóvenes hablan entre ellos…si la mayoría son dominicanos, nosotros nos desarrollamos de manera diferente, es raro que las personas de otros países lleven comida, ellos se comen lo de nosotros. Ustedes pueden traer y probamos, ahí predominamos nosotros los dominicanos. Se han enriquecido (Patri). (The pastor speaks more than anything else, the service is in Spanish, although young people talk to each other … the majority is Dominican, we develop differently, it is rare that people from other countries would be bringing food, they eat ours. We tell them that they are welcome to bring theirs and we taste them. There Dominicans are predominant. They have been enriched.)

Como se van a comunicar con sus padres, porque si sus padres no saben inglés. En la iglesia no hay clases en inglés, todo es en español. Las clases son en español, el inglés lo captan en la escuela (Vivi). (How are they to communicate with their parents, because the parents do not know English. In the church there are no classes in English, everything is in Spanish. Classes are in Spanish, English is learned at school.)

Moreover, the church also was identified as an influencing factor in terms of providing support for newcomers from the Dominican Republic. This constant provision of support from the church to new immigrants from the Dominican Republic reinforces the use of Spanish and maintains Dominican cultural practices current within the church members, including the U.S.-born Dominican children who attend.

Nosotros ayudamos en la iglesia con ropa porque viene gente sin ‘jacket,” buscamos cosas en buen estado, gente nueva que llega, los ayudamos con comida, tratamos de orientarlos en cómo buscar apartamentos y como establecerse en este país… Los orientamos hasta para buscar las escuelas. A veces es difícil cuando el padre viene y no habla el idioma. En el estado hay algún tipo de ayuda. Ha tenido un impacto positivo. Compartimos experiencia de cómo le hizo cuando el niño comenzó en la escuela, donde lo lleva, que pediatra, siempre hay alguien que aconseja por pediatras, y se hace el trabajo
más fácil (Vivi). (We help in church with clothes because people come without 'jackets, we look for donations that are in good condition. There is always new people coming, we help with food, and we try to guide them in how to find apartments and get established in this country ... We help them to find schools. It is sometimes difficult when parents come and do not speak the language. In the state there is some help. This help has had a positive impact. We share our experience of how we did when our children started school, where to find a good pediatrician, and we try to make the job easier.)

*Living in a city where the Mayor is Dominican* is also seen as reinforcing children’s Dominican identity, but with a less influential intensity, when compared to the aforementioned macro-system factors:

Ahora si porque el alcalde es dominicano, le dije a mi hija mira el alcalde, a lo mejor tu puedes llegar a ser alguien grande porque si el llego (Kenia). (Now because the mayor is Dominican, I told my daughter: “You see the mayor? Maybe you can become someone great because he did it.”)

El alcalde es de padre de hijos dominicanos, eso incentiva, hasta los pequeños están al tanto. ¿Tú quieres ser como el “mayor”? Si es algo positivo......a mi hijo si le ha llamado la atención, dice: ¡hay un dominicano en el poder! (Rosa). (The mayor is the son of Dominican parents, that encourages, even the younger children are aware. “Do you want to be like the mayor? It is something positive ...... it has drawn my son’s attention, he says, “There is a Dominican in power!”)

Sí, yo participe en la campaña, el alcalde siempre está en actividades de la escuela, en ese aspecto sí ha ayudado (Olga). (Yes, I participated in the campaign, the mayor is always at school activities, for that matter I believe that it has helped.)

El mayor dijo wau hay un dominicano en el poder. A la pequeña no le he hablado (Aida). (The oldest said “There is a Dominican in power.” I have not spoken about that to the younger one.)

However, some of the Dominican-born mothers did not see the Mayor as a factor of influence in their children’s Dominican identity.

Si voté por él, pero de ahí a que se motiven no. Al principio sí pero después se le paso a todo el mundo la furia (Patri). (I voted for him, but he motivates, no. At first yes, but then things cooled down.)

Si lo hemos visto, pero de que los niños como tal le den tanta importancia, no, ni sé si ha hecho algo por la cultura dominicana.....aunque creo que ha hecho algo como lo de
Duarte (Vivi). (We as adults have seen some benefit, but that children would give it much importance, no, I do not know if he has done something for the Dominican culture ..... although I think has done something like the day for ‘Duarte.’)

*Exo-System Influential Factors*

Dominican-born mothers saw the *Dominican Festival in August, 27 de Febrero Independence Carnival*, and *El Día de Juan Pablo Duarte*, as activities, celebrations, and traditional food-sharing events that influence the ethnic identity development process within their U.S.-born children at the community context level:

Yo no he perdido mis raíces, hago lo mismo, navidades, la vieja Belén, todo eso (Yesy). (I have not lost my roots, I do the same, Christmas, kings, the old Bethlehem, all that.)

Se celebra la restauración de algo no sé, la gente no sabe porque la mayoría que son jóvenes. Hacen desfiles, Yo le dije a mi niña que si quiere participar, me gustaría que ella participara, Ponen cosas de los carnavales. Usan disfraces. Y tienen bailes típicos, las muchachitas representado ciudades, viene un merenguero, comienza a las doce, con músico, el artista famoso, tienen diferentes kioscos. Reconocer a Duarte, y a tres fundadores de la Republica... en navidades el 24, abrimos los regalos, para viernes santo hacemos habichuelas con dulce, para el 27 de febrero se celebra el carnaval de la independencia, comida arroz, habichuela y carne (Kenia). (We celebrate the restoration of something I do not know, people do not know because most are young. They do parades, I told my daughter that if she wanted to participate, I would like her to participate. They put things in the carnival. They wear costumes. And they have dances, the girls represented cities, there is a merengue singer, it usually starts at noon, with music, the famous artist, they have different kiosks. They recognize Duarte, and three founders of the Republic ... in Christmas on the 24th, we open gifts, we do Good Friday and eat sweet beans, we do Feb. 27 for the independence carnival, we eat food, rice, beans and meat.)

Allá en Santo Domingo celebrábamos el día de Reyes. Pero aquí Yo celebro la navidad, nunca he celebrado el día de reyes aquí. Y como también yo viví en PR (Ina). (Back in Santo Domingo we celebrate the Epiphany. But here I celebrate Christmas, I have never observed the day of kings here. And also I lived in PR.)

A mi hijo le encantan, pero yo misma no me he involucrado, a mi hijo le gustan y le encantan los carnavales, si se ha envuelto (Aida). (My son loves them, but I have not myself been involved, my child likes and loves carnivals, he is involved.)
Están así como en Nueva York. Para el tiempo del festival dominicano. Todavía a las cinco de la mañana están como si fuera por el día, como si estuvieran en Santo Domingo (Patri). (Here they are as if they were in New York. For the Dominican festival time. Even at five o’clock in the morning is like the day, as if in Santo Domingo.)

EMERGENT THEMES

Eight emergent themes were identified utilizing open and selective coding of the transcripts, by writing notes, and by designing conceptual diagrams. The emergent themes are presented in Table 4.3 and are described subsequently.

Table 4.3 Emergent themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing when older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender differences in preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistant to bilingual education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incongruent Cultural Clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not children friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Social Exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy children who are less sociable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A call to unite as a Latino group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desiring dual citizenship for the U.S.-born children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Rights and Privileges in Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair to favor only the Dominican ethnic group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A few of the Dominican-born mothers in this study that had older U.S.-born male Dominican adolescents related *Dominican friendships* as being the most influential factors in
reinforcing their Dominican ethnic identity. Consistently, these mothers would describe this gender difference as playing a role in this identity formation practice. That is, they reported that once their male children turned fifteen or older, they tended to take part in the local neighborhood and community Dominican activities mentioned in this chapter.

While most of the mothers related that their children were fluent in Spanish, regardless of their gender, they reported that their children would choose in which context to make use of it. However, gender differences were described in terms of the use of Spanish. Male Dominican children were described as “more lazy” and as a typical characteristic of giving up or being selective in their use of the Spanish language. Dominican girls were identified by some of their mothers as expressing pride in using Spanish across varied contexts.

Two of the mothers expressed how their children’s Dominican fathers were resistant to having them receive bilingual education at school. According to these two participants, they consistently indicated that two Dominican fathers worried about their children experiencing language confusion and that their main goal was for their children to learn English. The mothers reported that they had to reluctantly agree with the children’s fathers’ request. In return, they would teach Spanish at home and would encourage their children to register for Spanish classes as a foreign language in middle or high school.

While some of the mothers indicated the existence of Dominican cultural clubs within the Providence community, their mutual opinions revealed discontent and mistrust about the nature of influence that these centers would have on their children’s identification with the Dominican culture. In addition, Tere indicated that these clubs are “usually for the elite or selected ones,” and require a monthly fee in order to be a member. Tere stated:
“Eso es un grupo selectivo, todavía no he ido a nada que sea nada específicamente dominicano…” (Tere). (This is a very selective group; I have yet to attend any activity specifically about Dominicans.)

As Dan stated, the “ambience” is not appropriate for “my children.” Moreover, Tere stated that there is a bar or pub in the basement of the club: “Tú sabes que cuando se habla de política cada uno se va por sus propios intereses. Por ejemplo aquí hay un club que se llama Juan Pablo Duarte, dan clase de karate, pero al lado hay una barra. Como que para los niños no encaja…” (Tere). (You know that once the topic of politics is raised, each person strives for their own interests. For example, there is the Juan Pablo Duarte Club where they teach karate to children, but there is a bar next to that classroom. How is that compatible with children?) Jess explained her views about the end result of taking part in those clubs: “Encima de eso casi siempre terminan los lugares afuera, terminan en peleas, prefiero tener a mis hijos, fuera del ambiente, el tiempo a mí no me da para eso…” (In addition, the activities in those places end up outside with fighting involved. I prefer to have my children away from that environment, my time is too precious to be spent that way…)

One of the mothers expressed her concern with her children’s lack of freedom of expression. That is, in the Dominican Republic, children have more chances to play outside and to be more involved in the neighborhood and community. As she described, here in the U.S., children tend to be more indoors due to the climate which in turn detours them from being sociable. According to this mother’s perceptions, being sociable and not shy is a cultural characteristic of Dominican children:

Allá hay más libertad. Aquí pasan mucho tiempo en la televisión eso se limita, en nuestros países los niños son más sociable. Al ser madre de niños Americanos nacidos aquí, muy encerrados todo el tiempo. Esa timidez que tiene la niña, porque se la pasa viendo televisión, esa es la desventaja, nuestros hijos no son muy sociables, no tienen esa libertad de expresión (Nuri). (There is more freedom over there. Here we spend much
time (watching) TV, that is limiting. In our countries, children are more sociable. Being a mother of American children born here, they are indoors all the time. The girl is shy, because she spends time watching TV, that's the downside, our children are not very sociable, they have no such freedom of expression.)

Even though the mothers reported challenges in their journeys to assist their Dominican children in their ethnic identity experience, only two of the mothers voiced a need for solidarity among Latinos and Hispanics as a way to open more opportunities for all children including the ones with a Dominican ethnic identity. Ana and Vivi both spoke about themselves as social activists and being involved as change agents within the community of Providence, working against discrimination which affects the ethnic identity experience of children. This also has political, clinical, and social implications for the process of identity development as well: “Si nos uníramos los hispanos fuera diferente…” (Ana). (If we unite as Hispanics it would be different ...)

One mother expressed her personal goal to have her children obtain their Dominican citizenship. That is, her desire was that her children possess dual citizenship in order to reinforce their identity as Dominicans.

One of the mothers expressed her opinion in favor of schools not needing to be “equal or fair” only with Dominicans. She added that it would not be acceptable to have a school place their sole focus in fostering U.S.-born children’s identity as Dominican as that would leave justice behind for the remaining U.S.-born children whose ethnic and cultural background is not of Dominican descent. The concern that she raised also spoke for all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds to unite and share the same rights and privileges in schools.

DOMINICAN-BORN MOTHERS’ RECOMMENDATIONS AND FEEDBACK

Dominican-born Mothers’ Recommendations
Independent of their lived experiences, and whether they saw it as negative or positive, or saw themselves as conducting their role as Dominican-identity agents, and whether their perceptions about ethnic identity experience in their children were challenging, successful, and politically, socially, or clinically compromised, Dominican-born mothers in this study provided recommendations which they felt would foster ethnic and cultural maintenance. These recommendations encourage the transmission of traditions and practices, in addition to motivating the formation of a balance between both cultures, while at the same time holding “tight connections” and “loyalty to the roots” of their culture of origin:

Yo creo que deberíamos de tener más clubs para los dominicanos, que no sean solo para beber y jugar dominós. Cosas más educativas para los niños (Olga). (I think we should have more clubs for Dominicans, not only for drinking and playing dominoes. Educational things for children.)

Que las escuelas de Providence se abran para que se eduquen los padres, que les den clases de inglés, costuras, que aprendan algo. Hay padres que no tienen el dinero para pagar la universidad, Que el gobierno haga algo que por lo menos de clases de inglés (Abi). (Providence schools should be opened to for parents in order to educate themselves, to give them English lessons, sewing, learn something. There are parents who do not have the money to pay for college, that the government should at least provide English classes.)

Que le lea en su lengua porque si no, no van a querer hacerlo de grande. Que le enseñen las tradiciones. Que mantengan el idioma, la comida, con el tiempo si ellos quieren van dejando (Patri). (That you read in your language because if not, they will not want to do it when older. To teach them the traditions. Maintain the language, food, which over time they tend to leave behind.)

Que los lleven a su país (Ina). (To take them to their country.)

Que sigan la tradición, que no pierdan sus costumbres, que no pierdan el hilo, que se mantenga más unida la familia, que se sientan orgullosos de ser dominicanos (Aida). (Continue the tradition, do not lose their customs, not to lose the thread, to stay more united with family, to feel proud of being Dominican.)

Que conserve las cosas buenas de allá y coja las cosas buenas de acá de los Estados Unidos. Yo trato de adaptarme. Yo tengo un hermano que quiere todo lo de allá. Ya yo voy a las playas de aquí. Que hagan un balance, que se queden con las buenas raíces (Ana). (To retain the good things of over there and take the good things from here in the
United States. I try to adapt. I have a brother who wants everything over there. Now I even go to the beaches here. To make a balance, to stay with good roots.)

Que no pierdan la cultura, ni la educación que han traído de su país, ni las raíces (Olga). (Do not lose the culture or the education which they have brought from their country, nor their roots.)

Que no olvide sus raíces, que se les enseñe a sus hijos, porque en el futuro ellos lo van a valorar, que les demuestre la diferencia de cómo se criaron allá para que los niños aprendan a valorar, y no se quejen mucho (Nuri). (Do not forget your roots, to teach them to your children, because in the future they will value, to show them the difference of how children were raised over there so that they learn to value, and complain less.)

A educarse, a informarse, a este país se le llama el país de las oportunidades, a buscar ayuda en la comunidad, sabemos que es un cambio drástico, ¿cómo voy a lidiar con esto?, tratar con otras personas que pasaron por esto. Educarse es poder, es saber (Vivi). (To educate, to learn, this country is called the land of opportunity, to seek help in the community, we know that is a drastic change, how will I cope? By dealing with other people who went through this. To educate yourself is to know.)

Participants’ Reaction to Feedback

One important finding which was presented for feedback to the Dominican-born mothers for further clarification was the discrepancy between their verbal and written responses on the questionnaires about their own and their U.S.-born children’s ethnic identity. Specifically, while all the mothers articulated their ethnic identity as Dominican during the groups and/or while being interviewed, most of these mothers provided a different ethnic identity when asked in the demographic questionnaire. When they were asked about this variability in their response pattern, their answers fluctuated from confusion to fear of being identified as Dominican as reasons for their responses.

Quizá alguna gente no quiere que sepan de donde son, o quizás no quieren decir. Si ponen “Hispanic” pueden ser de cualquier sitio (Rosa). (Maybe some people do not want them to know where they are from, or may not want to say. If you put "Hispanic" then you can be from anywhere.)

Yo tenía esa duda no entendí la pregunta, está confusa, no entiendo cuando a veces me preguntan raza o étnica no entiendo la diferencia, tratamos de explicarle pero se ve confusa (Kenia). (I had this doubt and did not understand the question, it’s confusing,
sometimes I do not understand when I am asked about race or ethnicity as I do not understand the difference, they have tried to explain but it looks confusing.)

Probablemente hubo una confusión en el papel, solo una confusión, muchos dicen que pongo dominicano, es verdad estábamos confundidos con las preguntas. Como en el censo, estábamos confundidos (Aída). (Probably there was confusion in the paper, just a misunderstanding, many say they put Dominican, it’s true we were confused with the questions. As in the census, we were confused.)

Yo creo que yo puse hispano, cuando mandan un formulario, no tiene una para nosotros, no dice para el hispano, eso no es, ¿que quieren que uno ponga? Cuando tú pones hispanos, para ellos hispano no es una raza. Porque no lo aceptan por una respuesta. Todo esos formularios yo los dejo en blanco, ellos ponen lo que ellos quieran y dicen que no es así……..Yo no soy negra, uno les ponía más o menos el país que era, dominicano no estaba ahí, si uno le pone hispano, el que le puso hispano no lo contaron tampoco (Patri). (I think I put Hispanic, when one signs a form, it does not have one for us, does not say Hispanics, that is not what you want to put? When you put Hispanics, Hispanic then is not a race. Why not accept it for an answer. All these forms I leave blank, they put whatever they want and they say what it is or not so……... I'm not black, I would put them more or less from the country that one was, Dominican was not there, one could put Hispanic, but Hispanic is not counted either.)

Yo en realidad dicen que tengo raza ligada. Mis dos padres son dominicanas. Mis padres son dominicanos. Para mis hijos no los quiero identificar de una raza. Defiendo a Alex Rodríguez, porque él puso que era americano porque nació aquí, unos decían que el negó su país, pero el nació aquí. Uno de mis hijos, que dice, si se va de mi lado mi esposo que es Francés se va a poner guapo y el nació aquí. Esta interesante eso de que no sea en el papel (Ana). (Actually I say I have linked race. Both of my parents are Dominican. For my children I do not want to identify them with one race. I defend Alex Rodríguez, because he identified as an American because he was born here, some said that he had denied his country, but he was born here. One of my sons, what could he say? If he leaves my husband’s side who is French is he going to be angry, but he was born here. This is interesting that it is not on paper.)

The mothers also reported that during the last U.S. Census the Dominican ethnic identity was not presented as a choice to select. Consequently, Dominicans in the city of Providence were justifiably offended. This became a political issue with officials getting involved and addressing the Dominican community. A few of the mothers related this as a way of misrepresenting the already well established Dominican community in Providence. This is clearly a social justice issue: being recognized and about having a sense of agency.
De hecho hubo una controversia cuando hicieron el censo porque pusieron todas las nacionalidades, y no pusieron dominicano, la mayor parte de la gente es dominicana, y que uno va a poner si uno es dominicano, uno no es ni ecuatoriano....estaban del salvador, puertorriqueño, pero no dominicano, otros países. No marcaron nada porque no había. Hubo una controversia en la radio, duraron una semana hablando de eso (Rosa).

(Well, there was a controversy around that issue. In the last census, the Dominican ethnicity was not indicated. The majority of the people here [in Providence] are Dominicans, and what choice does one have as one is Dominican, one is not Ecuadorian...there was a space for people from El Salvador, Puerto Ricans, but not for Dominicans, other countries. There were many who did not mark anything because there was not a spot for it. There was a whole controversy on the radio; it lasted for about a week, talking about that issue.)

THE RESEARCHER’S EXPERIENCE

The life stories and lived experiences of the mothers that I had the privilege to meet during this study provided me with a deeper understanding of the complexities and daily realities that they face in their role as Dominican mothers to U.S.-born children in Providence. During their narrations and knowing that I consider myself a social activist, I paid careful attention to avoid my own commitment to advocacy from getting in the way of their stories. I was particularly mindful and worked diligently to be in the moment with them by being authentic and empathic. At times, their painful depictions about their challenges, their recounting successful experiences, and their tension filled circumstances provoked a mixture of emotions ranging from sadness, frustration, and exhilaration. The overall process was filled with enlivening rewards, and personal and professional growth.

Prior to commencing this study, I had knowledge and first hand reports directly from Dominican-born mothers about their frustrations and difficulties in raising their U.S.-born children, predominantly within the school context. My job as a school psychologist had provided me with the opportunity to pay careful attention to the struggles and challenges that they would
face as they would come into contact the schools. I saw my role as both a helper and a life story recorder. I knew that eventually I would seek an alternate way to fully understand this often repeated lived experience, which would appear multiple times every year in my role as a school psychologist.

From recruiting to making phone contacts, to meeting these graceful Dominican mothers, I began to actively listen, trying not to miss any critical details of their stories. Many times, I needed to restrain myself from arriving at conclusions before having heard the whole story, in order to have a comprehensive picture of their expressed difficulties. I knew that my own bias, which had been based on my experiences at schools, was a strong guiding force which I would work arduously to acknowledge, but not allow to take over and dominate the entire purpose of the project which was to empower a traditionally silenced group. There were moments in which I was teary eyed and deeply touched, while some of the mothers were crying and expressing their experience of injustice. I also had to constrain myself at times when I felt angry and frustrated as I listened to some of the mothers who would be more aligned with or justify factors of influence from oppressive systems as they defined some of their experiences. Nonetheless, listening to those particular experiences served to deeply reinforce my experienced-based notion of the need to inform, and give a voice to, underrepresented populations in the city of Providence.

On the other hand, the success stories of these resilient Dominican-born mothers were inspiring. As a Puerto Rican-born father, there were many experiences and recommendations that I saw myself implementing with my own daughters at home. These mothers’ consistent theme of endurance and how hard work pays in the end also increased my knowledge of their motivations to carry on the special task of raising their U.S.-born children as Dominicans in the U.S. As challenging as the Dominican-born mothers experiences were, there was always a smile
at the end of their story. It was very rewarding to see how the dynamics of the focus groups would also increase their hopes and dreams about their role as Dominican mothers. The focus groups also provided support among the members. Their shared experiences were, to some degree, an important intervention seeking to heal and create a sense of agency.

Lastly, I was profoundly moved by the call for solidarity and union from Caro, Cand, and Jess whose passionate voices expressed commitment to social activism and justice. Their demand for action was an invitation to take a proud stance in raising U.S.-born children in the “right” way. Their voices also called for a consciousness grounded in the famous phrase “in union there is strength.” In essence, they appeared to be validating and normalizing the challenges and successes of the process, but were encouraging a movement beyond this awareness to a position of action within the Latino group in the city of Providence.

One aspect which greatly helped me to go on and complete this project was the IRB-approved assistance of my Puerto Rican-born wife, in addition to my mother who is also a Puerto Rican-born woman. Both assisted me as co-leaders/co-interviewers. Their presence in the groups contributed to the mothers being more open to sharing their lived experiences. Consistently, each time the mothers were with either one of them, if I stepped out momentarily, they would bombard them with questions about the research. In particular, these Dominican-born mothers would ask my wife the specific reason for the study where my wife would consistently answer: “To obtain a deeper understanding of the process of raising U.S.-born children as Dominicans in the U.S.” Her presence also provided a more comfortable environment conducive to honesty and trust among the group members and among the leaders as well.

The overall findings and the experience have provided me with a broader perspective on what raising a U.S.-born child as a Dominican in Providence entails. Their perceptions about this
process not only instills knowledge and understanding but also may help clarify some misconceptions that oppressive groups or systems which deal with this population may have about this fast growing group in Providence. It is my goal to amplify the sound of their voices and responsibly represent their successes, challenges, and the political, social, and clinical implications, of this critical ethnic identity process. Giving voice to their views on the most influential factors which affect their difficult but rewarding roles as Dominican-identity agents for their U.S.-born children will continue to be important work within an advocacy, social justice framework. It has been a pleasure to work with the Dominican-born mothers in this study and learning more about their honorable jobs with their children.
CHAPTER FIVE
Discussion

This chapter will review the primary question of this study and its connections to previous research discussed in the literature review. The chapter will also present the lessons learned as this study was being conducted. Implications for research, training, clinical practice, and policy, and suggestions for further research will also be discussed.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND CONNECTIONS

The primary question presented at the outset of this project was:

How does the dynamic process of the ethnic identity experience of U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children take place as perceived through the lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers?

According to the Dominican-born mothers’ perceptions, the dynamic process of the ethnic identity experience in their U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children is categorized as one that is complex and takes place as a result of influential factors from varied contexts. Consistent with Garcia Coll and Marks (2009), for the mothers in this study their children’s Dominican identity appeared to be a fundamental component of their children’s lives.

Moreover, Dominican-born mothers in this study provided recommendations which fostered ethnic and cultural maintenance. These recommendations were geared to encourage transmission of traditions and practices, in addition to motivating the formation of a balance between two cultures, but still holding “tight connections” and “loyalty to the roots” of origin.

As discussed in Chapter Four, as the mothers in this study accomplish this life-enduring task with their children, socio-political confrontations, social-cultural reactions, and socio-
emotional issues arise, where, understandably, Dominican-born mothers described this undertaking as difficult.

The participants faced many challenges, some of which include significant socio-political (in the sense of confronting systems of power) confrontations. The mothers expressed their tendency to hold rather high standards, which were significantly influenced by their personal experiences in growing up as Dominican children and their frustrations with the disparities between childrearing practices in the Dominican Republic and those affecting their children in Providence. The different school experiences of the Dominican-born mothers and their discontent with schools in Providence stem from their strong emphasis on their children receiving a good education and high academic achievement. The perceived lack of rigor in the Providence schools was also deemed as a concern. In particular, having “too little homework, too little discipline” was a major preoccupation which the mothers described. This is consistent with findings in the Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) study.

The practice of being involved in their children’s school was also a topic discussed by the mothers. In contrast to the reviewed literature, the mothers in this study, who indicated being actively involved, had children who attended schools offering bilingual education. In their work, Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) while they provided recommendations for schools to find congruent ways to increase parental involvement, they related parental involvement of Dominican parents to their level of acculturation to the American culture. That is, possessing a higher acculturation level was related to a higher level of parental involvement in that study. Conversely, in the current study, parental involvement appeared to be more a function of the school climate which tended to be inviting, language sensitive, and accepting of their children’s Dominican identity than their acculturation level per se. This finding, from the current study, is
important in that it detours from the imperial ideology that being more acculturated is the only or most prominent way to survive in a “dominant” culture, particularly in Providence. This finding also confronts the erroneous idea and dominant reason that Dominican-born mothers who are dedicated, passionate, committed, and involved in their U.S.-born children’s school experience is primarily a result of their higher acculturation to the dominant culture. In contrast, in this study, there were participants who presented as less familiar with the American culture and practices, but were still actively involved in schools where bilingual education was provided and their atmosphere was inviting. Furthermore, the participants’ lived experiences of comfort, adaptation, or embracement of the American culture were unrelated to the treatment (e.g., discrimination, devaluing of Dominical culture and Spanish language, unwelcoming environment, etc.) that they received from schools in Providence which ultimately, along with other cultural factors (e.g. fatalismo, respect, authority submissiveness, etc.), distanced them from being “involved” in the school system. This finding attests to the continued need to hold school systems accountable for their lack of effective attempts to engage parents in their children’s school experience. Thus, it may be of benefit if non-bilingual schools in Providence mirror components of those schools which the Dominican-born mothers identified as conducive to increased parental involvement and better outcomes.

Dominican-born mothers articulated their constant grappling with what they perceived as lower values and standards. That is, they thought that schools attempt to develop children who are more independent (e.g., more freedom/independence fostering for children). In their receiving city of Providence they also expressed their fear of having their authority and parental control being minimized by protection service agencies which could eventually culminate in the removal of their children from their homes. This is seen both as a cultural clash and an issue of
systemic power that is the cause of tension in many Latino families. Consequently, this further minimizes the shared authority as it includes the home context. That is, not only is support from the neighborhood and community limited, but the authority within their home environment is seen as having less effectiveness in their parental practices with their children.

In addition, the mothers expressed their views on children practicing values of respect, and being respectful to others, which have also been documented in the work of Bailey (2000). Nevertheless, mothers in this study regarded respect as a salient aspect of the Dominican culture which has been politically and socially compromised. That is, respect was directly linked to the concept of a shared authority between these mothers and their neighborhood/community/school contexts which assist them in reinforcing values and morals, and applying discipline to their children which would lead in further reinforcing their identity as Dominicans. Not surprisingly, the participants experienced distress as Providence’s neighborhood/community contexts and most schools do not endorse these mothers in this shared authority.

In terms of socio-cultural reactions, the Dominican-born mothers expressed their experiences of the acculturation process, which is in line with the work of Berry (1986, 1997, 2003, 2005). The mothers regard themselves as constantly learning from other cultures and being challenged to adapt their parental practices as they encounter and interact with others from different cultures. However, their descriptions about their personal experiences and social-cultural reactions varied as a function of their own contexts. Moreover, this adaptation was expressed more strongly by the mothers whose U.S.-born children’s fathers were not of Dominican descent which in a way afforded them the option to choose to “acculturate” to another culture by marriage.
In terms of socio-emotional issues, the Dominican-born mothers in this study expressed feelings suggestive of loneliness, emotional constriction, and distress. These socio-emotional issues are similar to those discussed in the work of Garcia Coll and Marks (2009). That is, their explanations for these implications are postulated within an ecological perspective which includes the individual, the family, as well as the economic, historical, and current conditions within which the Dominican community finds itself. In regards to discrimination, the mothers conveyed instances where they were discriminated and/or where their U.S.-born children experienced discrimination within the school contexts, due to their membership in the Dominican ethnic group. Consistent with Bailey (2000), discrimination was indicated as a negative and unpleasant experience. The U.S.-born Dominican children in Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) had lower rates of perceived discrimination and better adjustment or integration to their social contexts, however, the study does not offer an extensive discussion which highlights the positive contributions of schools in Providence that offer bilingual programs in relation to discrimination. Nevertheless, their discussion on this aspect, while equally important, was from the children’s perceptions and not, as in this study, parental expressions and reports as they raise their U.S.-born children as Dominican.

The mothers in this study discussed other challenges and successes in raising their children as Dominican, with many of these issues being consistent with previous research (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ogbu, 2007). In particular, the participants expressed their frustrations with their limited financial situation that hinders their mobility to and from the Dominican Republic, and with the lack of assistance they receive from politicians to fund community programs to help fortify their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity. Dominican-born mothers related how there were limited to nonexistent opportunities to
participate in family-centered Dominican traditions within their receiving community of Providence.

In line with the literature (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009; Phinney, 1990), the mothers in this study identified influential factors and their effect on their own role as mothers in providing or fostering their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity. The perception of themselves as primary Dominican identity-agents in assisting their children identify as Dominican individuals is consistent with the Garcia Coll and Marks (2009) study, where Dominican parents (including Dominican-born mothers) reported encouraging their children to feel good about their ethnicity. Specifically, the participants in the current study indicated that transmitting Dominican cultural roots and practices, as well as teaching Spanish to their U.S.-born children, as essential components in their role.

Similar to Phinney (1990), mothers in this study viewed Dominican friendships or in-group preferences as highly influential factors in shaping the Dominican identity experience of their children. This finding is not only consistent with the above cited literature, but also was a significant element expressed among most of the participants in this study. Furthermore, maintaining local connections with relatives (familial support, special celebrations and traditions) as well as sustaining strong connections with the Dominican Republic (communications with relatives using technology, frequent traveling to the Dominican Republic) were also indicated as influential factors. The mothers in this study can easily call their relatives and friends on important occasions locally and internationally to the Dominican Republic (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). Consistent with previous research, the Dominican-born mothers in this study belong to a transnational community where Dominican families can freely travel back
and forth. Current immigration laws permit this “transnational phenomena” (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009).

Mothers also spoke about the influence of having their U.S.-born children receive strong and positive examples at home which fostered the development of culturally consistent values and morals (i.e., having a strong value base and cultural foundation). Residing in a home environment where the Dominican culture is promoted was also voiced as a factor that influenced the identity development process within their U.S.-born children’s immediate context.

The mothers in this study indicated that being a resident in or having access to a neighborhood which resembles the Dominican Republic was a factor which influenced their children’s Dominican identity as it offers cultural continuity, a finding consistent in the literature (Bailey, 2000; Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). Some of the mothers also felt that living in a city where the mayor is Dominican is a factor of influence for their children’s Dominican identity. Understandably, the presence and influence of a Dominican mayor in Providence is not reported elsewhere in the literature as this is a new experience for this (or any other) city. In addition, attending a bilingual education program was perceived as having greater impact on the children’s Dominican identity than receiving non-bilingual education. This finding was also consistent with Garcia and Marks (2009) where their descriptions of the majority of the children in their sample attended bilingual schools, serving to further reinforce the children’s Dominican identity. Lastly, and less prominent in available research, some of the mothers related being a member of a church community as an important factor. This provided reinforcement of their Dominican identity by giving them many opportunities to get involved in cultural practices. The role of the church was also described by some of the mothers in this study as a pivotal component in the reinforcement of the Dominican identity of U.S.-born children. Church involvement in this study
was presented as an effective manner to confront oppressive systems and structures within the city of Providence. The work of the church was described by some participants as an avenue to be actively involved in community changes by countering the current social injustice faced by the participants in this study.

The exo-system influential factors identified by the Dominican-born mothers in this study relate to the opportunities to locally participate in the Dominican Festival in August, February 27th, Independence Carnival, and El Día de Juan Pablo Duarte, which further allows for enjoying these traditional food-sharing events that in turn influence the process within their U.S.-born children’s community context. Similar to Bailey (2000), and Garcia Coll and Marks (2009), Dominican-born mothers attribute the presence of cultural continuity within the community context as reinforcing and influential in the identity development of their U.S.-born Dominican children.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS AND EMERGENT THEMES

This qualitative study builds on the existing but limited literature with this population. The study also explored the factors involved in the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of U.S.-born Dominican children as interpreted and explained by their Dominican-born mothers. Conceptually, an ecological framework was used to ground this process as one that is dynamic and influenced by varied settings, contexts, and experiences. The feminist ecological model also explained this process as a dynamic contextually based process, with ethnic identity being a constant across all contexts, and allowing for the mothers in the study to have a voice and dictate how that process takes within the context of their lived experiences.

The sixteen mothers who participated in this study shared their passion, commitment, and responsibility in their role in assisting their U.S.-born children acquire a sense of belonging and
pride in being Dominican. While these mothers were strongly attached to this mission, their encouraging experiences also spoke to this process as a difficult task, where the demands of balancing multiple systems, interrogating personal meanings, gender differences, and negotiating power (both obvious and subtle) was embedded in many of their narratives. These mothers had to engage in daily negotiations as an attempt to balance the challenges and successes that they encounter. In particular, these mothers had to defy the socio-political structures, and deal with socio-cultural and socio-emotional issues that at times would make their job as Dominican identity-agents for their U.S.-born children more stressful.

Gender differences traditionally have been described as key role definers within the Dominican culture. In this study, these differences were identified in terms of language use. Preferring to use Spanish was described as a task associated with U.S.-born female children by a few of the Dominican-born mothers in this study. That is, U.S.-born Dominican girls were described as using the Spanish language more frequently than boys. In addition, regardless of the type of education at school (i.e., bilingual or regular education), girls were described as excelling in this task (speaking Spanish) when compared to boys. Nevertheless, this variability among gender did not appear to have an impact or influence on ethnic pride. This conclusion could be inaccurately interpreted as minimizing the important role of language within the ethnic identity development process. However, a careful examination of the narratives of the mothers reveals that these gender differences were in terms of language use preference and not in fluency or language proficiency. That is, girls were both fluent and used Spanish across multiple contexts, whereas boys were fluent but preferred to use Spanish only within contexts they deemed appropriate. That is, mothers in this study spoke strongly about how Spanish was still held as an important element of cultural and ethnic identity, even though it was conditioned by
both gender and context. Further inquiry will be imperative to explore these contextual differences for boys and their implications.

In this study, a few of the participants expressed how their U.S.-born male children’s Dominican friendships influenced their identity as Dominican individuals. They described this phenomenon as taking place particularly when their U.S.-born male children were reaching adolescence. These mothers viewed this as a shift in their children’s dependence on their mothers’ role as Dominican-identity agents. That is, in contrast to their strong perceptions of being the most influential factor in their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity, at least for the participants in this study, Dominican friendships would later become an important factor of influence on this process. However, while these few Dominican-born mothers described it as a shift, it may be that having Dominican friendships in Providence further reinforces Dominican identity. Having Dominican friendships as described by these Dominican-born mothers allows these U.S.-born male children to have direct contact with the Spanish language as well as traditional practices and celebrations within the community context. Given the well-established Dominican community in the city of Providence, Dominican friendships may serve not only as an influential factor but also as a protective factor for their Dominican identity. It appears that this practice has become a Dominican trend or pattern for U.S.-born male children as described by some of the Dominican-born mothers in this study. Conversely, girls’ development appears to be in line with traditional gender roles. Given differences in freedom regarding socialization patterns as defined by more traditional Dominican gender roles, there is a clash with broader mainstream values of freedom and gender equity; this then, in turn increases their distress. While these gender roles are traditional in the Dominican culture, they appear to place girls in
disadvantageous positions to access resources, social development, and upward mobility within their receiving society of Providence.

An intriguing finding in this study was the presentation of Dominican fathers as being resistant to their U.S.-born children, male or female, participating in bilingual education at school. According to some of the mothers, they expressed how the fathers were extremely concerned about their children becoming linguistically confused in attempting to learn between English and Spanish at the same time. For these Dominican fathers, one of their primary goals for their children was learning English. The mothers, however felt that even with this as the fathers’ primary goal, their children’s ethnic identity and pride still remained intact. It is not surprising that in wanting to be loyal to their Dominican fathers, the younger U.S.-born male children tend to temporarily give up their preference to use Spanish. However, as described above, when the U.S.-born male children reach adolescence, they seek Dominican friendships (in-group preferences) to reinforce and support their Dominican identity. It is noteworthy that for most of the mothers in this study, the Dominican fathers of their U.S.-born children were absent before or during the adolescent stage. Given this, the Dominican males’ desire to connect with their fathers conditions their use of Spanish, particularly when they reach adolescence, where there is a stronger pull to identify with their fathers. Similarly, as described above, these patterns of ethnic centrality discrepancy between age spans in boys may also prevent them from fully engaging some aspects of their Dominican culture, thus reinforcing, at least in boys, a higher commitment to “acculturate” to the mainstream society of Providence.

While the idea of having functional Dominican cultural clubs and organization were favored by Dominican-born mothers in this study, the current existing ones in the city of Providence were categorized as “not children friendly.” Hence, they described their role as
Dominican identity-agents as difficult due to the lack of “appropriate” cultural continuity within those settings. According to a few Dominican-born mothers in this study who used to frequent Dominican cultural clubs, the ambience of these cultural settings is incongruent with traditional familial practices which encourage respect and reinforce the values of the Dominican culture at large.

The lack of opportunities for U.S.-born children to engage socially with others is seen as a detracting complication to the children’s Dominican identity development. Building and developing social competence or the ability to be sociable and friendly is viewed as an important cultural characteristic of children within the Dominican culture, and, in particular, in the Dominican Republic. When compared to Dominican-born children, these Dominican-born mothers described their U.S.-born children as less social and shy due to their inability to be outdoors as a result of the climate and other more socially based fears. Their U.S.-born Dominican children spend more time indoors which hinders their interacting and socializing with neighbors and people within the community.

Consistent with Padilla (1985), some of the mothers expressed an urge to come together as one Latino group, and connected elements of identity with social activism (See also Sanchez & Welsh, 1999). That is, these Dominican mothers recognized a need for solidarity so as to facilitate a uniform acceptance of Latino mothers’ childrearing and transmission of traditions among the non-Latino general society and community members. They stated a call to unite as one Latino group.

A related concern was expressed by another Dominican-born mother in terms of equal rights and privileges in schools. As stated by this mother, it would be “unfair to favor only the Dominican ethnic group” as schools are “filled with children from many ethnic groups.” The
Dominican-born mothers who passionately shared their lived experiences appeared to be social activists. They present a starting point for the city of Providence to initiate future change. These mothers also present a glimpse of hope, not only for the Dominican population, but also for the general Latino population in the city of Providence. It is evident that the statements of these mothers resemble the actions of the two groups described by Padilla (1985) which he referred as “Latino ethnic mobilization,” when groups organize to confront oppressive social issues within the context of common cultural/identity features.

A strong desire for acquiring dual citizenship for her U.S.-born children was expressed by one of the Dominican-born mothers. That is, her U.S.-born children would be able to obtain their Dominican citizenship by virtue of having a Dominican-born mother. While this practice has been approved since 1965 subsequent to the Family Reunification Act, it was not explicitly voiced as a goal by the other fifteen participants in this study.

The mothers also shared their successes and challenges in their roles as Dominican identity-agents. Nevertheless, the participants continued to view their role predominating in terms of influence, and thus, any negative outcome in their U.S.-born children’s Dominican identity was internalized as their personal or individual characteristic as “bad mothers.” The participants would express their frustration in terms of their own failure as identity agents. Even in light of acknowledging socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues, these Dominican-born mothers continued to internalize successes and failures. It appears that these mothers’ sense of agency has been debilitated by their constant interactions between parts of their micro-system, macro-system, and exo-system and oppressive structures within their receiving city of Providence.
This response from the majority of the participants suggests that their traditional Dominican role as mothers is present; its presentation, however, does not match the local context of Providence. That is, increased tensions arise when they see their children breaking away from being overly dependent on them to attempting to reach an independence which is incongruent with their expectations or standards regarding childrearing practices in the Dominican Republic. This is also a result of a cultural clash between U.S. “Independent” functioning and Latino “Interdependent” world view (Sue & Sue, 1990).

IMPLICATIONS

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain a better understanding of the process of ethnic identity development of U.S.-born children from the perceptions and lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers. The findings are presented as an invitation to providers, community leaders, and researchers to be aware of how these identified socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues affect this population as residents in the city of Providence. The goal is to give others the understanding that by giving voice to these issues, we are then confronted with demands related to social justice, and ultimately, what it means to be a multicultural nation.

The hope is that these voices are heard, and that reforms and changes take place to facilitate ethnic identity development of U.S.-born children and their mothers. Table 5.1 summarizes some of the major implications of the results and recommendations, as viewed across research, training, clinical practice, and broader social policy development.
Table 5.1  Brief review of implications and recommendations of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research                    | Employ flexibility of research methodology (e.g., snowball sampling)  
Require female co-leader/interviewer if researcher is a male  
Use of qualitative methods  
Utilize multiple community settings                                                                 |
| Training of Providers       | Centralize the history of the Dominican Republic  
Expose students to Dominican community role models  
Increase students’ awareness of the political, social, and clinical implications of their work within different contexts  
Require discussions conducive to deeper cultural knowledge  
Teach the ecological/feminist ecological model and its application |
| Clinical Practice           | Ensure an understanding of multiple contexts, roles, and social forces  
Respectfully inquire about current migratory status  
Locate a Latino clinician if possible, in accordance to the Latina clients’ preferences  
Validate and normalize feelings and thoughts about their roles  
Discuss influential factors using the ecological model  
Work towards individual and community empowerment conducive to active and consistent confrontation of oppressive forces |
| Policies                    | **FOR SCHOOLS:**  
Apply sanctions to all school personnel who state discriminatory comments (Rhode Island Department of Education ineffective teaching status – pending results of all requirements)  
Require mandatory training about cultural sensitivity  
Support cultural activities  
Require monthly open discussions about ethnic groups  
Require mandatory that all schools contain in-school translator services available at all times |
|                             | **FOR THE COMMUNITY:**  
Include politicians and local Dominican leaders |
Implications for Future Research. Researchers investigating Dominican-born mothers should consider utilizing a qualitative methodology as it will provide a voice for this population. Researchers should keep in mind the need to be flexible in terms of the actual data collection as this demonstrates a key component within the Dominican culture, the important cultural variable of respect. Increasing the sample number of participants in order to intensify the number of voices telling life stories is also recommended. Employing a snowball sample generation technique can facilitate more “connections” as word spreads in the community, thus, the researcher can also gain greater access and be considered “trustworthy.” Conducting future research with this population in multiple settings in order to identify differences and similarities across diverse contexts should also be considered. It is imperative that researchers studying this population accommodate to having a female co-leader/co-interviewer in the event that the principal investigator is a male. This will also help decrease biases against authoritarian male roles and cultural issues related to respect and deference, and will also provide a more comfortable ambience within the focus groups and individual interviews, as was observed in this study.

Implications for Professional Training in the Field of Psychology. The important task of training professionals in the field of psychology should incorporate a curriculum that places emphasis in taking an ecological framework. Given the multiple and fast growth of immigrants and their U.S.-born children, formal training in multiculturalism should be a mandatory component
of training. It is recommended that teaching about ethnic identity development, working with
diverse communities, how to serve as social activists, and how students themselves find their own
voice, become elements of a liberating and critical professional education.

*Implications for Clinical Practice.* Clinicians providing treatment to Dominican-born
mothers need to be cognizant of the difficult position they are placed in as they fulfill their roles
as Dominican identity-agents to their U.S.-born children. The conflictive negotiations that
Dominican-born mothers encounter as they make decisions on how to best protect from
perceived threats their roles, merits that clinicians become aware of these issues with this
population. In addition, clinicians are encouraged to begin the therapeutic experience by taking a
nonjudgmental stance, thereby allowing Dominican-born mothers to tell their life stories in order
to normalize and validate their feelings and thoughts associated with their roles with their
children. Clinicians are also encouraged to avoid placing a diagnosis which only treats an
intrinsic mental health condition (e.g., depression) as the underlying issues may present
differently for Dominican-born mothers or other mothers from different ethnic groups. As
discussed in this study, Dominican-born mothers internalized their perceived failures in
completing their task of raising their U.S.-born children as Dominican. When forces from
different contexts outside of the individual-system impinge upon, the Dominican-born mothers
tended to attribute failures as personal characteristics to their identities as mothers. These
discrepancies between their ideal goals and dreams in raising their U.S.-born children as
Dominican cause them major distress and frustration. Therefore, suggesting alternatives to help
reduce the “symptoms” on an individual level, will not address the actual issue. These
differences may also be stemming from the embedded cultural belief of *Fatalismo* (*Fatalism*)
which would allow for these mothers to believe that it was God’s will for them to carry the
burden associated with their important tasks as mothers despite the “painful and sacrificial” consequences involved. Instead, clinicians are encouraged to validate and normalize the Dominican-born mothers’ feelings and thoughts, as well as to assist them to view the influential factors in the process from an ecological perspective. The goal would also be to differentiate between viewing *Fatalismo* as a global Latino belief versus a controlling aspect of individuals. As the clinician builds trust and a positive therapeutic alliance with the Dominican-born mothers and genuinely joins them in their journey to fulfill their role with their U.S.-born children, they will start to feel better, will start adapting, and will eventually stabilize. Clinicians are also encouraged to join these mothers as they strengthen their sense of agency, become activists, and work together towards individual and community empowerment to confront encountered injustice, according to the feminist ecological model.

*Implications for Social Policies: Schools in Providence.* The schools in Providence play a key role as Dominican identity-agents. Schools where bilingual education is provided seem to be better aligned with this role at this time. Conversely, schools were education was solely provided in English, did not appear, as reported in this study, to invite Dominican-born mothers to form relationships with teachers. The Dominican-born mothers perceived discrimination from the school personnel and teachers, within those school settings; and also indicated multiple barriers such as lack of time from teachers to meet with these Dominican-born mothers. The limited to zero use of interpreters within the school system was also mentioned. Therefore, there is a great necessity to provide a school climate which favors multilingualism and multiculturalism as an asset for each U.S.-born Dominican and Latino child. Including Spanish speaking interpreters and mandating the hiring of bilingual front office staff in all schools in Providence will also increase the Dominican-born mothers’ involvement in the schools where bilingual education is
not being offered. The Dominican-born mothers also expressed their desire to be offered cultural events, Dominican folklore activities, and traditional holidays celebrated within the school environment. Different ethnic groups’ discussions should also be mandatory to take place within the classroom context so that teachers and staff stop making discriminatory comments about the use of Spanish which, as mentioned above, the Dominican-born mothers described as perceiving those comments as very discriminatory for them as well as for their U.S.-born Dominican children. Sanctions and consequences should be implemented in addition to having the person who committed discrimination state a public apology at a school assembly to the affected child and the community of the school. Moreover, teachers found guilty of this offense should be reported to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and be deemed as ineffective teaching status until observations, interviews, investigations, and a written examination about cultural sensitivity in action, are completed.

*Implications for Social Policies: The Latino Community in the City of Providence.* This study’s findings suggest that politicians and local Dominican leaders in the city of Providence assist in the formation of Dominican cultural centers around the city. As discussed in this paper, the Dominican population in the city of Providence is the fastest growing Latino group and that increase includes U.S.-born Dominican children. For these children, both family/home influences and community involvement are important factors in the development of ethnic identity. Therefore, accessible cultural clubs and organizations for U.S.-born children in the City of Providence city which portray roles that reinforce their Dominican identity in a positive manner, can serve as critical identity formation sites, particularly for adolescents. These important community settings can serve to enhance, not only the ethnic identity development of Dominican children, but also serve to foster the development of culturally syntonic values, for
example, respect, furthering enhancing the multicultural life within Providence. The Dominican-born mothers in this study criticized current Dominican clubs which are not inviting environments for their U.S.-born children. That is, the main purpose of having Dominican cultural clubs is to provide a place within the community where families can get together and exchange their experiences, their cultural practices and traditions, and celebrate special events. According to the Dominican-born mothers in this study, the Dominican clubs in Providence are geared to the interests of single adults and thus, not appropriate settings for Dominican children.

Additional ways in which politicians and local Dominican leaders can foster stronger Dominican identities for the U.S.-born children in the city of Providence could be by planning and advertising cultural events in the city. It is important to provide these events in Spanish as the Dominican-born mothers were highly critical of the lack of cultural events conducted in Spanish within the community. The creation of mentorship programs by local Dominican leaders would be another way to address Dominican ethnic identity development at the community level. Politicians and local Dominican leaders in the city of Providence are encouraged to listen to the messages of solidarity within the voices of the Dominican-born mothers in this study. In particular, their voices called for Latinos to unite and take a stand against the injustice and indifference in order to help create change within the City of Providence. Their message indicated that as a result of taking such a stance, their roles as Dominican identity-agents would be valued and embraced, thus, increasing the chances of becoming a less cumbersome task to accomplish. Their message also called for a return to the values, morals, and traditions which were instilled in each Latino country of origin. This union would create uniformity within the community and perhaps may serve to balance the inequality of power that inherently exists in Providence due to oppressive structures. The mothers’ hope in this study was to unite, strengthen, and restore respect through cultural continuity within the community of Providence.
LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Methodology. The mothers in this study were eager to participate and contribute to this project when they were recruited. They also provided their best efforts to attend focus groups or individual interviews scheduled ahead of time. However, and in line with the theoretical frameworks of this study, the interaction of multiple contexts was also present. For example, attempts at scheduling within the complex lives of the participants (e.g., changing the group/individual time and place, rescheduling group/interview, numerous phone calls and texts, reminders, etc.) were respectfully done in order to be able to accommodate the participants’ busy daily schedules. This can be viewed as a reflection of some of the socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and even their socio-emotional issues which the Dominican-born mothers described during the focus groups and individual interviews. It was very important to continue to be attuned to their expressed desire and efforts to take part in the study and to continue to be mindful about their challenges and barriers as the main goal of this study was to actively listen to the voices of the participants. In hindsight, increased recruitment of participants would have been accomplished perhaps if the focus groups and individual interviews were offered as choices and not necessarily one being dependent of the other. Hence, in-home individual interviews and/or even in-home focus groups, where the recruited participant would be invited to serve as a host for a group in her home, may be more helpful, accommodating, and culturally syntonic to this population.

Researcher’s role. It was apparent that the Dominican-born mothers in this study felt comfortable in expressing and articulating their positive and negative lived experiences in their roles as Dominican identity-agents for their children. However, and as explained elsewhere in this document, my Latino male status as well as my professional and community leader statuses
could have influenced the responses of the participants. On the one hand, if the participants provided all the information and details of their lived experiences, then I wonder if they all complied due to the fact that I am a male and that traditionally men are listened to within Latino culture. On the other hand, if the participants only stated what they thought I wanted to hear, this also could have been as a result of my authority role as a male within the Latino culture. Either way, I was very careful not to present myself in a “traditional” role, but as a facilitator and a voice amplifier for their lived experiences. Consistent with the conceptual framework of this study, I attempted to co-construct the story of ethnic identity development for Dominicans in Providence. I also expressed my gratitude for their participation in my project which had been shaped and guided by my strong commitment and passion for social justice and activism.

**STRENGHTS OF THIS STUDY**

The strengths of this study are predominantly applicable to the city of Providence’s population of Dominican-born mothers. The recent rapid growth in the number of Dominican-born mothers and U.S.-born Dominican children in the city of Providence merits the attention of scholars, clinicians, and other providers in continuing to find ways to assist these mothers and their children. Our commitment to multicultural understanding also requires the general public to become aware of these issues as well.

This study attempted to provide a broaded analysis of ethnic identity development within the Dominican community by examining multiple systems through the presentation of Dominican mothers’ lived experiences with their children. In essence, the narratives of these mothers portrayed their children as possessing a strong sense of identification with a Dominican identity which indicates an increased necessity to align with these mothers to protect and support...
these U.S.-born children in their choices to ascribe to their Dominican identity within the well-established and fast-growing Dominican community, and its surrounding neighborhoods, in the city of Providence. The importance of examining and bringing to the surface systemic influences on ethnic identity development has clinical implications as demonstrated in this study. The tendency for Dominican mothers to internalize and blame themselves for perceived failures in their children’s development of a Dominican ethnic identity, reinforces the need for a more liberating analysis of systems of power within our society.

The feminist ecological model stresses the need for awareness of these systemic forces and the taking of action to counter oppressive forces in our society. The voices of the participants are important, but of higher importance for this study is what is done with their message. They have revealed within their experiences socio-political confrontations, socio-cultural reactions, and socio-emotional issues as a result of their struggles as they raise their U.S.-born children as Dominican in the city of Providence. While there are many components and factors of influence including, but not limited to, the positive and negative aspects found in any given culture, these mothers have spoken of their real encounters with oppression. It is time to confront the oppressors and to return to the time when the concept of ethnic identity began within a political context of confrontation. However, the reality of current times has shifted where minorities have become majorities and therefore initiatives which fostered forceful acculturation will certainly not be applicable today. This study’s main goal was to listen to and amplify the voices of the Dominican-born mothers in order to further support a confrontational and countering stance in their attempts to change oppressive social structures.
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

At this point, the Dominican-born mothers in the city of Providence may require increased community forums to further enhance individual and community empowerment. It is evident that there is also a need for the mental health field to become active in integrating ethnic identity development for U.S.-born Dominican children (and other culturally diverse children) as a crucial component of psychological health. Given the limitations and strengths discussed, future research on this topic may involve inquiring and listening to the life stories of the U.S.-born children as they develop their own Dominican identity. Future research should also focus on listening to the life stories of Dominican fathers and their roles in this important developmental process.

It would be intriguing to conduct a similar study in Puerto Rico where there is a large number of Dominican-born mothers. Recruiting Dominican-born mothers in Puerto Rico would allow the participants of that study to articulate their childrearing roles within a Spanish speaking community which is still part of the U.S. That is, it would be very interesting to find out how does the dynamic process of ethnic identity development of U.S./Puerto Rican-born Dominican children takes place as perceived through the lived experiences of their Dominican-born mothers.
References


Ethnic Identity


Westport, CT: Praeger.


Migration Policy Institute (2004). The Dominican Population in the United States:

Growth and distribution.


Ethnic Identity


Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2003, March). *Using the ethnic identity scale to measure the developmental pathways of high school and college age students.* Invited Speaker at the Child Trends Indicators of Positive Development Conference, Washington, DC.


Appendix A
Institutional Review Board Notifications

NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION
Date: May 4, 2011  IRB #: 11-04-01
Principal Investigator(s): William Sanchez
                                 Julio E. Sabater
Department: Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
               Bouvé College of Health Sciences
Address: 404 International Village
               Northeastern University
Title of Project: Dominican-Born Mothers’ Perceptions of Ethnic
Identity Experience in their U.S.-Born Dominican Elementary School Age Children: A Qualitative Study
Participating Sites: N/A
DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7
Informed Consents: One (1) signed consent form (English and Spanish)
Monitoring Interval: 12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: MAY 3, 2012
Investigator’s Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when 
   recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new 
   information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must 
   be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month 
   prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any 
   other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection
Northeastern University FWA #4630
NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION
RENEWAL APPROVAL

Date: May 3, 2012
IRB #: 11-04-01

Principal Investigator(s): William Sanchez
Julio E. Sabater

Department: Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Bouvé College of Health Sciences

Address: 404 International Village
Northeastern University

Title of Project: Dominican-Born Mothers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Identity
Experience in their U.S.-Born Dominican Elementary
School Age Children: A Qualitative Study

Approval Status: Closed to Enrollment – Ongoing Analysis Only

Participating Sites: N/A

Original Protocol Approved: May 4, 2011
Most Recent Approval Date: July 21, 2011 - modification

DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7

Informed Consents: N/A

Monitoring Interval: 12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: MAY 2, 2013

Investigator’s Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting
   participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new
   information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be
   reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to
   the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other
   university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #4630
NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION
MODIFICATION APPROVAL

Date: July 21, 2011
IRB #: 11-04-01
Principal Investigator(s): William Sanchez
Julio E. Sabater
Department: Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Bouvé College of Health Sciences
Address: 404 International Village, Northeastern University
Title of Project: Dominican-Born Mothers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Identity Experience in their U.S.-Born Dominican Elementary School Age Children: A Qualitative Study

MODIFICATION:
Addition of Angeles M. Benitez-Sabater to research team; recruitment pool broadened to include Dominican-born mothers of U.S.-born children who currently attend or attended the Providence Public Schools; the recruitment flyers will target mothers of children 5-12 years of age and mothers of older children will be recruited by word of mouth; the consent form and recruitment flyers have been updated.

Participating Sites: N/A
Original Protocol Approved: May 4, 2011
DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7
Informed Consents: One (1) signed consent form (English and Spanish)
Monitoring Interval: 12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: MAY 3, 2012

Investigator’s Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #4630
Appendix B
Flyers: Spanish and English

Si usted es madre de 18 años de edad o más, nació en la República Dominicana, vive en los Estados Unidos, tiene estado permanente o temporario migratorio, y tiene hijos nacidos aquí en los Estados Unidos de las edades de 5 a 12 años y que son estudiantes del sistema escolar público de la cuidad de Providence...

Nos gustaría escuchar su historia y que usted nos explique cómo verdaderamente le ha ido y por todo lo que usted ha tenido que pasar como madre criando a sus hijos en los Estados Unidos.

Estamos realizando un estudio de investigación acerca de su experiencia criando un hijo dominicano en los Estados Unidos. ¡Su historia es importante y ayudará a otros!

Se harán grupos de enfoque y entrevistas individuales. Cada grupo/entrevista durará aproximadamente de 1 1/2 a 2 1/2 horas. El lugar podrá ser en una biblioteca local, iglesia o centro cultural...

Por favor llamar a Julio Sabater, Jr. al (401) 954-9962 o a Ivelisse Sabater al (401) 954-9984

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Tell us your Story

If you are a mother, at least 18 years old, who was born in the Dominican Republic, live in the United States, with permanent or temporary migratory status, and have children born in the United States between the ages of 5 and 12 years who attend the Providence Public Schools District...

We would like to listen to your story and for you to describe to us how has it been for you and please let us know all you have gone through as a mother in the United States.

We are conducting a research study about your experience raising a Dominican child in the United States. Your story is important and will help others!

We will be doing focus groups and individual interviews. Each group/interview will last approximately from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours. Place will be at a local library, church, or cultural center...

Please call Julio Sabater, Jr. at (401) 954-9962 or Ivelisse Sabater at (401) 954-9984

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Appendix C
Screening Questions

Screening Questions
[Exclusionary Criteria and Inclusionary/Focus Groups Assignment Criteria]

1. How many years do you have residing in the U.S.?/¿Cuántos años tiene usted residiendo en los Estados Unidos?
2. In what part of the city of Providence do you reside?/¿En qué área de Providence vive?
3. Are you at least 18 years old?/¿Tiene usted por lo menos 18 años de edad?
4. In order to participate in this study you need to have either permanent or temporary migratory status./Para ser parte de este estudio usted debe tener status migratorio estadounidense permanente o temporero.
Appendix D
Informed Consent Form

Northeastern University, Department: Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Investigator Name: William Sánchez, PhD and Julio E. Sabater, PhD (Candidate)
Title of Project: Dominican-Born Mothers' Perceptions of Ethnic Identity Experience in their U.S.-Born Dominican Elementary School Age Children: A Qualitative Study

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study/ Consentimiento Informado para participar en un Estudio de Investigación
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Le estamos invitando a participar en un estudio de investigación. Este formulario le dirá acerca del estudio, pero el investigador le explicará primero. Cuando usted esté lista para tomar una decisión, tenga la libertad de decirle al investigador si usted quiere participar en este estudio o no. Usted no tiene que participar si usted no desea. De usted querer participar, el investigador le pedirá a usted que firmé este documento y le dará una copia a usted.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study? ¿Por qué me han pedido que participe en este estudio?
We are asking you to be in this study because you are a Dominican-born woman with permanent or temporary U.S. migratory status, who has a U.S-born Dominican child who currently attends or who attended the Providence Public Schools District.

Le estamos preguntando a usted si desearía tomar parte en este estudio ya que usted es una madre Dominicana nacida en la República Dominicana, con un estado migratorio estadounidense permanente o temporal y tiene un(a) dominicano nacido aquí en los Estados Unidos que asiste o asistió al sistema escolar público de Providence.

Why is this research study being done? ¿Por qué se está haciendo este estudio?
The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the challenges and negotiations that Dominican-born mothers go through in their journeys to assist their U.S.-born Dominican elementary school age children develop their ethnic identity. The study attempts to provide a forum in which these mothers and the researcher can co-construct the meaning of these mothers' perceptions on their experiences about this phenomenon in their children.

El propósito de este estudio es el de obtener mejor entendimiento acerca de los retos y las negociaciones que las madres Dominicanas encuentran en su jornada al asistir a sus hijos Dominicanos nacidos en los Estados Unidos, en el desarrollo de su identidad étnica. El estudio intenta proveer un foro por el cual estas madres y el investigador puedan co-construir el significado de las percepciones de las madres respecto a sus experiencias acerca de este fenómeno en sus hijos.

APPROVED

NUIRB# 
VALID: 
THROUGH:
What will I be asked to do? ¿Qué tengo que hacer en el estudio?

- If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to first sign the consent form.
- Then, we will ask you to fill out a brief questionnaire about you which includes information on time in the U.S., ethnicity, age, familial status, educational level, socio-economic status, and civil status.
- We will ask you to participate in a focus group which consists of 5 people and it will be lead by both co-leaders/interviewers. The focus group will be an opportunity to speak about your experience of raising a U.S.-born Dominican child in the U.S. the focus groups will be audio-taped for transcription and additional analysis.
- We then may ask you to participate in an individual interview if you decide to be interviewed. The interviews will also be audio-taped for transcription and additional analysis.

- Si usted decide participar en este estudio, primeramente le pediremos que firme el documento que indica que acepta participar del mismo.
- Luego, le pediremos que usted llene un breve formulario acerca de usted el cual incluye información sobre el tiempo que lleva viviendo en los Estados Unidos, su identidad étnica, su edad, su estado familiar, experiencia académica, estado económico social, y su estado civil.
- Le pediremos que forme parte de un grupo de enfoque el cual consistirá de 5 personas y será dirigido por los dos co-líderes/entrevistadores. El grupo le proveerá a usted la oportunidad de hablar acerca de su experiencia criando a su hijo nacido en los Estados Unidos como dominicano viviendo en los Estados Unidos. El grupo de enfoque será grabado en audio para transcripción y análisis adicional.
- Luego y si usted decide hacerlo, la estaremos entrevistando individualmente. La entrevista individual también será grabada en audio para transcripción y análisis adicional.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take? ¿En qué sitio y cuánto tiempo tomará llevar a cabo este estudio?
The focus groups in this study will take place at a local church and at a public library. You will be assigned to only one group at one of the locations. Should you decide to take part in the interview, you will be interviewed in your own home or at a place and time that is convenient for you. Each of the groups and each of the individual interviews will last about 1½ to 2½ hours.

Los grupos de enfoque en este estudio se llevarán a cabo en una iglesia local y en una biblioteca pública. Usted será asignado a uno de los grupos solamente. De usted decidir que quiere ser entrevistado, dicha entrevista será realizada en su propia casa o en un lugar y tiempo conveniente para usted. Cada uno de los grupos y cada una de las entrevistas individuales duraron alrededor de 1½ a 2½ horas.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me? ¿Habrá algún riesgo o incomodidad hacia mí?
We do not foresee any risks, harms, discomforts or inconvenience for you as a participant in this study.

No prevenmos ningún riesgo, daño, incomodidad o inconveniente para usted con su participación en este estudio.
Ethnic Identity

Will I benefit by being in this research? ¿Recibiré algún beneficio por mi participación en este estudio?
There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, the information learned from this study as well as the topics that will be discussed may provide you with a sense of community with other mothers and may help you establish new relationships with others mothers who may be having your same experience. This study may also provide better ways to contribute to the Dominican population in the city of Providence, Rhode Island.

Este estudio no promete beneficio directo alguno para usted. Sin embargo, tanto los temas como la información que será discutida entre los participantes de los grupos y los investigadores le brindarán a usted un sentido de comunidad con otras madres y podrá hacer nuevas relaciones con otras madres que tal vez estén pasando por su misma experiencia. Este estudio también puede ayudar a conseguir mejores formas de cómo contribuir con la comunidad Dominicana en la ciudad de Providence en Rhode Island.

Who will see the information about me? ¿Quién tendrá acceso a mi información?
Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you, your child, or any individual, in any way. All data pertaining to you will be de-identified and kept safe and will be destroyed at a reasonable time after all the analysis, results, and conclusions have been obtained.

Please be aware that if in answering select questions, information regarding abuse or neglect to you or your child is made known to us, the researchers are required by the Rhode Island General Laws Chapter 40-11 to inform the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families – Division of Child Protective Services, which is done to protect the welfare of you and your child and is in your best interest.

Su participación en este estudio es confidencial. Solo los investigadores en este estudio verán la información acerca de usted. Ningún reporte o publicación utilizada en este estudio contendrá alguna información que pueda identificarla a usted, su hijo(a), u otro individuo en forma alguna. Toda la data acerca de usted será de-identificada y mantenida asegurada y será destruida en un tiempo razonable después de que los análisis, resultados, y conclusiones de la información sean obtenidos.

Traemos a su atención de que si por alguna razón mientras usted contesta nuestras preguntas revela algún tipo de abuso o negligencia contra usted o contra su hijo, los investigadores estamos obligados por la Ley General del Estado de Rhode Island de informarlo al Departamento de Niños, Jóvenes y Familias – División de Servicios Para Protección de Niños, y esto es hecho para el bienestar y protección suya y de su hijo(a) y para su mejor interés.

What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research? ¿Qué me ocurriría si recibiera algún daño en este estudio?
No special arrangements will be made for compensation or for payment because of your participation in this research.

Ningún arreglo especial será hecho por compensación o pago por su participación en esta investigación.
Can I stop my participation in this study? ¿Puedo retirarme de este estudio si quisiera?
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time and you can refuse to answer any questions.

Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Usted no tiene que participar en este estudio si usted no desea. Inclusive, después de haber empezado el estudio, usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento y también puede rehusarse a contestar cualquier pregunta.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems? ¿A quién puedo contactar si tengo preguntas o problemas?
If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Julio E. Sabater, MS, Researcher, Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology, 404 Int'l Village, Boston, Mass 02115 tel. 401-954-9962, email: ivesabater@aol.com. You may also contact William Sánchez, PhD, Principal Investigator, Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology, 404 Int'l Village, Boston, Mass 02115 tel. 617-373-2404, email: w.sanchez@neu.edu.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o problema en este estudio, usted puede contactar a Julio E. Sabater, MS, Investigador, Consejería y Psicología Educativa Aplicada (Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology), 404 Int'l Village, Boston, Mass 02115 tel. 401-954-9962, email: ivesabater@aol.com. Usted también puede contactar a William Sánchez, PhD, Investigador Principal, Consejería y Psicología Educativa Aplicada (Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology), 404 Int'l Village, Boston, Mass 02115 tel. 617-373-2404, email: w.sanchez@neu.edu.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant? ¿A quién contacto acerca de mis derechos como participante de este estudio?
If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University Boston, MA 02115 tel. 617-373-4588, email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de sus derechos como participante, usted puede contactarse con Nan C. Regina, Director, Protección de Investigación con Sujetos Humanos (Human Subject Research Protection), 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University Boston, MA 02115 tel. 617-373-4588, email: irb@neu.edu. Usted puede llamar en anónimo si así lo prefiere.

Will I be paid for my participation? ¿Recibiré algún pago por mi participación en este estudio?
Your participation in this study is appreciated. However, we would like to inform you that no payment or gift will be given to you for participating in this study.

Su participación en este estudio es apreciada. Sin embargo, le queremos informar que usted no recibirá pago ni regalo por su participación en este estudio.

Will it cost me anything to participate? ¿Incurriré en algún gasto por participar en este estudio?
Your participation in this study will incur no cost to you.

Su participación en este estudio no le incurrirá gasto alguno.
Is there anything else I need to know?
You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

Usted debe de tener por lo menos 18 años de edad para participar en este estudio.

I agree to take part in this research. / Yo acepto participar en este estudio.

Signature of person agreeing to take part  Date/Fecha
Firma de la persona que acepta tomar parte

Printed name of person above  
Nombre de la persona que firma arriba

Email/Correo electrónico y teléfono/teléfono

Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent  Date/Fecha
Firma de la persona que le explico el estudio a la persona que acepto tomar parte en el mismo

Printed name of person above
Appendix E
Interview Questions

Questions reflect each of the spheres of the feminist ecological model.

**Exo System Questions:**
1. What has been and continues to be your experience as a Dominican-born mother raising your U.S.-born child in the U.S.?/¿Cuál ha sido y continúa siendo su experiencia como madre dominicana criando un hijo en los Estados Unidos EE UU?
2. Does your child participate in Dominican traditions?/¿Su hijo toma parte en tradiciones dominicanas?
3. How has the school system contributed or not contributed to your experience in raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?/¿Cómo el sistema escolar ha contribuido o no ha contribuido a su experiencia criando a su hijo como un niño dominicano en los EE UU?
4. How has the community helped or hindered your experience in this process of raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?/¿Cómo la comunidad ha ayudado o impedido en este proceso de criar a su hijo como un niño dominicano en los EE UU?

**Macro System Questions:**
1. How have politicians helped or hindered your experience raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?/¿Cómo los políticos han ayudado o impedido en este proceso de criar a su hijo como un niño dominicano en los EE UU?
2. How has your financial and economic situation helped or hindered your experience in raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S.?/¿Cómo su situación financiera y económica le ha ayudado o impedido en este proceso de criar a su hijo como un niño dominicano en los EE UU?
3. In your opinion, what can the community, school, and government do better to help you in this process of ethnic identity development of your U.S.-born Dominican child?/En su opinión personal, ¿qué pueden hacer mejor la comunidad, la escuela, y el gobierno para ayudarle a usted con este proceso del desarrollo de la identidad étnica de su hijo dominicano nacido en los EE UU?

**Micro System Questions:**
1. What is your child’s ethnic identity as you see it?/¿Cuál es la identidad étnica de su hijo de acuerdo como usted lo ve?
2. What does your child consider himself or herself to be when asked about his ethnic identity?/Si a su hijo le preguntan cuál es su identidad étnica ¿cómo él considera que es su identidad étnica?
3. What language does your child speak?/¿Qué idioma o lenguaje habla su hijo?

**Individual System Questions:**
1. What is your ethnic identity?/¿Cuál es su identidad étnica?
2. What language do you speak?/¿Cuál idioma habla usted?
3. What is your educational experience both in the Dominican Republic and in the U.S.?/¿Cuál fue su preparación académica en la República Dominicana y cuál es su preparación académica aquí en los EE UU?
4. What Dominican traditions do you still take part in? ¿De cuales tradiciones dominicanas usted participa?

5. What should be changed in order for your experience in raising your child as a Dominican in the U.S. to be better? ¿Qué debería de cambiar para hacer mejor su experiencia criando a su hijo como dominicano en los EE UU?
Appendix F
Brief Personal Questionnaire

Brief Personal Questionnaire

Date of birth: ___________  Age: ___________
Address: __________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Status: _____ S _____ M _____ W _____ D __________ other
How many children do you have? _______________
Where were your children born? _______________________
What is your children’s ethnicity? _______________________
How old are your children? _______________________
Living Situation: ____ own ____ rent ____ other
Education:
  Elementary School _____
  Middle School _____
  Secondary _____
  College _____
  Graduate _____
  Post-Graduate _____
  No School _____

Occupation: _______________________________________

Place of employer: ___________________________________

Income:
  $0-15,000 _____
  $15,001-25,000 _____
  $25,001-50,000 _____
  $50,001-75,000 _____
  $75,001-100,000 _____
  $100,001+ _____

Race ____________________________________________
Ethnicity ________________________________________
Place of birth

How much time do you have living in the U.S.?

How old were you when you moved to the U.S.?

In what year did you move to the U.S.?

What language(s) do you speak?

How would you describe your health overall?

Any additional information:
Bienvenida: Le estamos bien agradecidos por haber decidido tomar parte en este estudio. Queremos que sepan que nosotros estamos aquí para trabajar juntos y hablar acerca de sus experiencias vividas y cómo podemos ser útiles en todo lo que tiene que ver con la crianza de un hijo dominicano en los estados Unidos.

Párrafo Introductorio: Nosotros estamos interesados en saber cuál ha sido su experiencia vivida como madre aquí en los Estados Unidos, particularmente en Providence. Para nosotros es importante saber que cosas le han favorecido y que cosas no le han sido de provecho a usted en la crianza de su hijo dominicano en Providence. Por ejemplo, queremos saber cuáles papeles juegan la comunidad, la sociedad, el gobierno, el alcalde, los centros de salud, los centros culturales, las leyes, y el sistema escolar de Providence en su trabajo como madre. Nosotros entendemos que todos esos elementos basados en sus experiencias vividas definirán más a fondo lo que para usted significa la identidad dominicana de su hijo. Nuestra meta es contribuir y ayudar bien con esta experiencia vivida suya. ¿Quiénes son las personas más adecuadas para indicarnos como ayudar? ¡Ustedes, las madres dominicanas!

Greeting: We would like to thank you for having decided to take part in this study. We would like for you to know that we are here to work with you and to speak together about your lived experiences and how we can be useful in all aspects of raising a Dominican child in the United States.

Introductory Paragraph: We are interested in knowing what has been your lived experience as a mother here in the United States, particularly in Providence. For us is very important to know which things have favored you and which things have not been productive for you as you raise your Dominican child in Providence. For example, we would like which roles do the community, society, government, the mayor, health centers, cultural centers, the laws, and the Providence Public Schools District play in your job as a mother.

We understand that all those elements, which are based on your lived experiences, will define more in depth the meaning of your child’s Dominican identity from your perspective. Our goal is to contribute and help the right way with your lived experience. Who would be more appropriate to indicate to us how to best help?

You all, the Dominican mothers!
Appendix H
DOMINICAN-IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR U.S.-BORN CHILDREN

Ecological Model: Conceptualization of the Influential Factors

Dominican-Identity - Agents

Negotiations

Challenges and Successes

Socio-political confrontations, Socio-cultural reactions, Socio-emotional issues

Macro-System Factors

Neighborhood, Bilingual program education, Member in a church community, Dominican Mayor

Micro-System Factors

Dominican friendships in childhood, Local connections with relatives

Strong connections with the Dominican Republic, Strong base and foundation, Dominican culture fostered at home

DOMINICAN IDENTITY

Individual-System Factors

Mothers, Dominican Roots, Spanish Language, Good example

Exo-System Factors

Dominican Festival, Independence Carnival, Juan Pablo Duarte Day

Emergent Themes

Dominican friendships adolescence

Low social exposure

Gender roles in Spanish Language use

Solidarity

Fathers’ resistance for bilingual education

Incongruent cultural clubs

Dominican citizenship

Equal rights and privileges in schools

Socio-political confrontations, Socio-cultural reactions, Socio-emotional issues

Negotiations