

**Dissertation research: Ethnic identity switching among Latinos in Queens, NY**  
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**Project summary**

*Problem statement:*

As the nation's ethnic diversity continues to grow, things like the distribution of resources, ethnic conflict, and assimilation can not be understood in terms of neatly packaged identities in competition. Today, an increasing number of people regularly switch from ethnicity to ethnicity in normal discourse, in an attempt to maximize their economic and political interests. I propose to examine ethnographically and in depth the process of identity switching – that is, how people negotiate between *multiple* ethnic identities in everyday contexts – among Latinos in Queens, NY.

*Methods and analysis:*

From January to July, I will collect ethnographic data about ethnic identity invocation trends in the research communities, train a research assistant, select twelve participants for continuous monitoring and work closely with them for two weeks each. From August to September, I will train the research assistant further and use the knowledge gained from the ethnographic data phase to design and pilot test a household survey. Between October and December, this survey will be administered to a representative sample of 200 respondents. Using the data collected from these surveys, inferential statistics –odds-ratios, chi-square, and logistic regression - will be used to test the hypotheses.

*Intellectual merit:*

While ethnic identity has long been understood by anthropologists to be a contextual phenomenon, less is known about *how* the process of ethnic identity switching works. Through the in-depth study of everyday forms of ethnic identity invocation, the research will produce data with high internal validity crucial to understanding the process of ethnic identity switching. The research will also apply survey research methods to a large systematic random sample, contributing to the generalizability of the research findings. This study takes an integrative approach to anthropological research, applying methods and theory from both socio-cultural anthropology and anthropological linguistics.

*Broader impacts:*

This study has broader impacts on three main areas:

1) The research will also contribute to the doctoral training of a Latina doctoral student, as well as the research methods training of a Latino undergraduate student from Queens, New York. 2) Through an in-depth study of language choice patterns among Latinos, this research can make a contribution to educators interested in incorporating a bilingual approach in their classrooms. 3) The nation's growing diversity has implications for current methods for collecting and categorizing data on race and ethnicity, for example those used in the census. This research will contribute to an understanding of how people choose among identities in day-to-day contexts, and may shed some light on how (and why) people decide what to enter in socio-demographic questionnaires.

## Statement of the problem

As the nation's ethnic diversity continues to grow, things like the distribution of resources, ethnic conflict, and assimilation can not be understood in terms of neatly packaged identities in competition. Today, an increasing number of people regularly switch from ethnicity to ethnicity in normal discourse, in an attempt to maximize their economic and political interests. I propose to examine ethnographically and in depth the process of identity switching – that is, how people negotiate between *multiple* ethnic identities in everyday contexts – among Latinos in Queens, NY.

The literature on ethnicity provides many examples of people invoking (or hiding) their ethnicity to strengthen or weaken their ties to kin, community and the state and thereby to improve access to economic and political resources (Barth 1969; Horowitz 1975, 1985; Kelly & Nagel 2002; Patterson 1975). When translated to the societal level, the cumulative results of these decisions serve to fortify or deteriorate boundaries between ethnic groups (Barth 1966; Giles & Johnson 1981).

## Research question & objectives

The guiding research question is: under what conditions do Latinos in Queens, NY switch their ethnic identification? This involves the following specific objectives:

- 1) **to document the incidence of multiple ethnic identities among research participants.** This involves collecting life histories that focus on the ethnic background of informants and their experience with ethnicity.
- 2) **to determine the contexts under which people invoke their ethnic identity.** This involves collecting data on characteristics of the communities and social networks of participants. It will also involve prolonged *shadowing* observations of the participants (with their consent) in their day-to-day activities.
- 3) **to determine the resources acquired by invoking various ethnic identities.** This involves prolonged direct observation of verbal and nonverbal behavior and follow-up interviews to confirm observations. This will also involve the use of vignettes about the resources at stake in a number of hypothetical situations.
- 4) **to determine speech acts and behaviors associated with ethnic identity switching.** Along with direct observations, this involves analyzing participants' verbal interactions.
- 5) **to identify rules for invoking one ethnic identity over another.** As with objective 3, this involves the administering of vignettes that pose a number of hypothetical scenarios to assess the appropriate ethnic identities for a given situation.

## Background

Most immigrants to the U.S. enter through major urban centers like New York. Today, New York is among the growing number of cities in the U.S. where national minority groups comprise the majority of the local population (Maharidge 1996). Many modern urbanites, then, are part of communities with shifting and elusive boundaries and identities (Rose 1996), and the people of these communities themselves have a number of identities. With the concentration of people from diverse racial, ethnic and national backgrounds, there are more opportunities for inter-ethnic and inter-racial unions. The children born from these bonds will be conversant with multiple cultures, languages, and norms and will assume the identity of either parent or some hybrid of the two – or even an entirely different identity (Spickard & Fong 1995).

Transnational actors have more control over their self-presentation as a way to fit into varying social contexts. They have at their disposal a number of ethnic identities

that are more or less salient depending on the situation (Nagel 1994; Sanders 2002). Each of the possible categories of identification that people can switch to and from, has associated with it rights, privileges and obligations, the invocation of which influences the interaction between two or more actors in a given domain. Within a household, for example, it might be expected that claims to ethnic group membership help establish a sense of common origin and of shared culture and values, thus strengthening family ties. Outside the family, the functions of invoking ethnic identity are less predictable. For example, a Puerto Rican living in the U.S. may de-emphasize his Puerto Rican identity and emphasize his American identity when interviewing for a job. His strategy within this context is to assert his suitability for the job by highlighting among other things, his comfort with the English language or his familiarity with American norms. Were he to do the same within the Puerto Rican community where he lives, his invocation of American identity might function to differentiate him from others who he considers to have lesser status. The aim of this research is to tease out these distinctions by examining naturally occurring instances of ethnic identity switching.

## **Literature review**

### *Ethnic identity switching*

The concept of ethnic identity switching, or *situational ethnicity* (Paden 1967; see Okamura 1981) traces to the work of Max Gluckman and his students in urban Africa. Evans-Pritchard (1937) had observed that among the Zande of Sudan beliefs in witchcraft were invoked according to what was situationally convenient. Building on this observation, Gluckman (1940, 1958) described what he called *situational selection*, in which people claimed membership in a group depending on the situation. Cohen (1974) noted that situational ethnicity can be observed in Africa when two or more people from different ethnic groups want to signify the differences between them, especially when the groups represent different socioeconomic scales. From my own experience as an urban Latina, situational ethnicity can also be observed when people from the same ethnic group want to emphasize the similarities between them.

Barth (1969) argues that the feeling of ethnic identity is the consequence of a complex process that includes ascription by others as well as self-categorization (see also Giles and Coupland 1991). This definition allows for the conception of ethnic identity as contextual, where one can feel a group member in certain situations and not in others. It is also compatible with a view of ethnic identity as emerging through a process of sustained interaction between two or more ethnic groups (DeVos & Suarez-Orozco 1990). In an environment like Queens, NY self-categorization may produce unique outcomes. On the one hand, the diversity of ethnic groups available for comparison may strengthen the salience of a primary ethnic identity (Turner 1985). On the other, it can create opportunities for inter-group relations (through marriage or joint business ventures, for example), potentially weakening the salience of a primary ethnic identity (Eshbach & Gomez 1998)<sup>H1</sup>. The result can be the emergence of multiple identities. This can be tested empirically by comparing the incidence of ethnic identity switching in a homogenous ethnic enclave versus in an ethnically mixed neighborhood.

There are economic and political consequences to contextual shifts in ethnic identification (Barth 1969; Cohen 1969; Haaland 1969; Kaufert 1977; Nagata 1974; Padilla 1984; Patterson 1975)<sup>H7</sup>. In a city, ethnic networks and the trust-based transactions based on those networks are crucial to the economic advancement of ethnic groups. To the extent that people can invoke ethnic identity to create and maintain bonds with others who share a similar identity, they can capitalize on the business

partnerships that materialize from these interactions (Bonacich 1973; Ooka & Wellman 2003; Patterson 1975; Sanders & Nee 1987)<sup>H7</sup>. For some Latinos, this means invoking a more inclusive, pan-ethnic identity (i.e. “I am Latino”, rather than “I am Dominican”) (Padilla 1984). At the intersection between state policies and personal goals, switching to a particular ethnic identity can also improve access to state resources (Fenton 1999; Friedman & McAdam 1992 in Nagel 1994; Nagata 1974; Nagel 1994; Ong 1999).

As a basis for forging bonds with others, invoking different ethnic identities is a way of both strengthening and broadening ones social support network and improving social relationships. Among ethnically-mixed Latinos (i.e. their parents belong to different ethnic groups), Stephan & Stephan (1989) found that participants reported feeling one distinct ethnic identity when with the closest members of their social network, while more than one identity was salient in a number of other contexts<sup>H2, H3, H4, H5</sup>. It has also been observed that a person will often adopt the ethnic identity of a spouse or partner (Spickard & Fong 1995)<sup>H6</sup>. Similarly, Kaufert (1977) found that Ghanaian university students reported switching to a more inclusive ethnic identity that de-emphasized their ethnic ties to a particular town or dialect in order to facilitate their adjustment as newcomers to university life<sup>H2</sup>. Kaufert’s study also highlights the importance of location for determining what ethnic identity is most appropriate. A particularly revealing example of this was provided by Eschbach & Gomez (1998) in their study of switching among Latino high school students. They compared the survey responses of the students at two separate time periods, and found that those students who lived in communities that had a substantial Latino population were less likely to switch to non-Latino questionnaire categories than students who lived in communities with few Latinos<sup>H1</sup>.

#### *Markers of ethnic identity and ethnic identity switching*

Four factors that have been shown to be important components of ethnic identity (Phinney 1992, Rotherman & Phinney 1989) are: 1) self-identification through the use of labels, 2) ethnic behavior and practices, 3) affirmation and belonging, which assesses how much one accepts one’s ethnicity and, 4) ethnic identity achievement, or the degree to which a person is exploring and identifying with a distinct group. For purposes of this research I will focus on the first two factors as markers of ethnic identity, given that they can be directly recognized during observations. Identity markers are those social characteristics presented to others to support a claim to ethnic identity (Kiely et. al. 2001).

#### Self-identification through the use of labels:

The ethnic labels that people use tend to be more specific, or less inclusive, as people come into daily contact with members of their own ethnic group (Cornell 1988; Kaufert 1974; Nagel 1994). For example, a Cuban woman can use the more inclusive label of Latina when interacting with members of non-Spanish speaking ethnic groups, as Cuban to another Latina, or may use the more specific label of Marielito when addressing other Cubans (Nagel 1994). Those who identify primarily as Americans can, in a number of contexts, emphasize one or more of several ancestries (i.e. Irish, Italian, Jewish, or Mexican) (Alba 1990). For those who have parents that come from different backgrounds, they may choose to invoke a multiethnic identity or switch between either of the parents’ identities (Spickard & Fong 1995; Stephan & Stephan 1989)<sup>H5</sup>.

#### Ethnic behavior and practice:

Attendance at ethnically oriented events, membership in an ethnic organization, and participation in particular food and music traditions (Phinney 1989) are important ethnic

identity markers that will be examined in the proposed research. Chief among these behaviors and practices, however, is language. There are two reasons for this. First, because people invoke their ethnic identity in their interactions with others, switching will be most often detected within the context of verbal communication between two or more people. Second, language is a highly salient element of ethnic relations. It is often treated as criteria for membership in a group and can be an important cue for ethnic categorization (Fishman 1977; Giles & Coupland 1991). Some would argue that language is inextricably linked to ethnic identity (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985). In this research I will focus on language choice, language performance, and identity discourse.

*Language choice:* the choice of which language to speak in a given context may be related to linguistic abilities or to serve social functions (Auer 1998; Blom & Gumperz 1972; Gumperz 1976; Scotton & Ury 1977; Sebba & Wooton 1998). It is the social functions of language choice that are relevant to this project. When pursuing social goals, speakers can choose between two or more languages in one conversation, as with code-switching, or choose between languages across different settings.

Code-switching has been demonstrated to be a way to change the social distance between two speakers in interaction (Scotton 1976) and can serve to strengthen family and friendship bonds (Zentella 1990). Indeed, patterns of code-switching are influenced by a number of social network factors (Milroy & Wei 1992). Speakers use language choice to negotiate their wants about relationships, with different choices symbolizing different wants (Scotton 1983).

Language choice across settings has been shown to conform to what Gumperz (1982) calls a *we/they code paradigm*. This refers to the tendency for the ethnically specific, minority languages to be regarded as ‘we-code’ and become associated with informal activities, particularly in the domestic and community domains, and for the majority language to serve as the ‘they code’ associated with the more formal and less personal out-group relations, such as in the workplace (Gumperz 1982; Sebba & Wooton 1998; Zentella 1990). Given that ethnic identity and language are closely linked, it is possible for a person to have one identity associated with the ‘we-code’ and another associated with the ‘they code.’ If this is the case, one ethnic identity will be more salient in informal contexts, for example at home where the ‘we-code’ is spoken more regularly, while another identity may be more relevant in formal contexts, like at work where the ‘they code’ is most prevalent<sup>H8</sup>.

*Language performance:* Many aspects of language performance, including accents (Waters 1994) and ethnically distinct speaking styles (Labov 1966), can be acquired and modified developmentally and situationally. Therefore, language is potentially a stronger cue to a person’s sense of ethnic belongingness than inherited characteristics (Giles & Coupland 1991). Banks (1987) argues that for Latinos in Anglo-American organizational settings, switching from non-normative speech styles to the more standard forms associated with the dominant group is important for moving from low to high managerial positions<sup>H7</sup>. The concept of ethnic identity switching lends itself well to examining more subtle shifts in language use, for example those occurring at the phonological or grammatical level. Such an analysis, however, requires extensive linguistic training and will not be addressed in-depth in the proposed research project.

*Ethnic identity discourse:* This has to do with what people say *about* their ethnic identities, expressing their felt identity in a given moment. Identity discourse goes

beyond the use of ethnic labels and can draw on metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) and humor as identity displays (Boxer 2002).

### **Hypotheses**

The literature on ethnic identity switching suggests at least the following testable hypotheses:

1. People who live in an ethnically heterogeneous community are more likely to switch between ethnic identities than are those who live in an ethnically homogeneous community
2. People who have an ethnically heterogeneous social network are more likely to switch between their ethnic identities than are those who have an ethnically homogeneous social network.
3. Social network attributes will be more highly correlated with the incidence of switching than will community attributes.
4. The identity that people invoke most frequently will be positively correlated with the primary ethnic identity represented in their immediate social network.
5. People whose parents are from different ethnic backgrounds, are more likely to switch between identities than are those whose parents are both from the same ethnic background.
6. People whose spouses or partners are from an ethnic group different from their own are more likely to switch than are those whose spouses or partners are from the same ethnic group as they are.
7. In situations where people seek access to a resource, they will invoke the identity that best aligns with that of the individual who has the access.
8. People will be more likely to invoke an exclusively Latino identity in situations where Spanish is the main language, than in situations where English is the main language spoken.

### **Research location and research participants**

This project will take place in the New York City borough of Queens. Out of roughly 2,200,000 people who reside there, just over one million, or 46% are foreign born, non-citizens (New York State Census 2000). Many neighborhoods in Queens are well-established enclave communities, while other communities are ethnically very diverse. In Corona Plaza, for example (hereafter Corona), Latinos constitute the majority of residents there (ibid; also Sanjek 1998). Next door in Astoria, less than ten minutes by subway, there are several well-established ethnic communities, including Latino, Greek, and South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi). These two communities allow me to test Hypotheses 1. My fluency in English and Spanish will facilitate the investigation of ethnicity switching (especially code switching as a marker of ethnicity switching) among Latinos and my insider status will facilitate the recruiting of research participants.

### **Research plan overview**

#### Phase 1: Ethnographic data collection (January – July, 2005)

I will be a participant observer in various community events (i.e. neighborhood meetings and festivals) in Astoria and Corona to map general trends in when people invoke this or that ethnic identity. During this phase I will train a research assistant, select twelve participants for continuous monitoring and work closely with them for two weeks each.

### Phase2: Survey design and test (August – September)

Using the knowledge gained from Phase 1, I will design and pilot test a household survey to be administered in the third phase. Phase 2 will also involve further training of the research assistant, and mapping out routes to access participants.

### Phase3: Survey data collection (October – December)

A research assistant and I will administer the survey designed in Phase 2 to 200 respondents.

## **Sampling**

Phase 1: Continuous monitoring requires a considerable investment of time. I anticipate being able to work closely with only six informants at each site, so choosing the right sample is important. I will select these informants using the cultural consensus model (Romney et al. 1986). Handwerker and Wozniak (1999) argue that fewer informants are required for testing cultural knowledge than for estimating the population parameters of individual characteristics because cultural knowledge is, by definition, shared. The cultural consensus model (Romney et al. 1986) measures the extent to which knowledge of a particular cultural domain is shared. Weller and Romney (1988:77) show that, with average cultural consensus scores above .8, six informants can, in fact, provide valid data for a particular cultural domain. To apply the consensus model in selecting informants for this phase of the work, I will first collect free lists, from a convenience sample of 30 Latino informants on “Things that people do to express their ethnic identity.” I will select 40 items from the aggregate results of the 30 lists and will ask prospective participants in the continuous monitoring phase to rate, on a scale of 1-to-5, the importance of each item in expressing one’s ethnic identity. Participants for the rating task will be recruited through flyers around Astoria and Corona, a newspaper ad, and word-of-mouth. The rating data will be analyzed with the cultural consensus procedure (Romney et. al., 1986) to identify six people in each site (Corona, Astoria) as participants in the continuous monitoring phase.

When conditions of the theory of consensus are met, the model distinguishes people who are experts in a particular cultural domain – in this case, things one can do to express ethnic identity. There are, to be sure, problems associated with this method of selecting participants, but it is systematic and replicable, and as such, it is a potential advance in the selection of ethnographic informants for a specific domain. I will report in my dissertation and in a separate publication the results of my efforts to apply the consensus model for selecting ethnographic informants.

Phase 2: Next, I will develop and pilot test on a convenience sample of 30 respondents, a survey instrument to test the hypotheses in this research. Participants will be recruited from community centers, word-of-mouth contacts, and recruitment flyers.

Phase 3: The survey will be administered to a representative sample of 200 respondents, 100 in Corona and 100 in Astoria. These numbers are based on the sampling needs of Hypothesis 1 and the resources (time, money, personnel) that will be available to test that hypothesis. Given that both the dependent variable (presence or absence of switching) and the independent variable (living in either Astoria or Corona) have bivariate response categories, a sample of 200 will give me enough statistical power to detect differences, should they exist. Using a standard power analysis at the 95 percent level of confidence and assuming the most variance among these variables, a sample of 100 would yield a 10 percent margin of error. In fact, I expect the variability of these variables to be less than the maximum, and therefore the same sample of 100 should yield a margin of error less than 10 percent. I do not expect the variance of the

variables in the other hypotheses (for example, social network attributes) to be radically different from the primary variables in Hypothesis 1. The sampling frames for Phase 3 will be purchased from a professional sample provider. For both Astoria and Corona, the names will be drawn from census tracks that have high proportions of Latinos. These proportions will vary between Astoria and Corona. Overall, the census tracks in Corona have higher proportions of Latinos than do those in Astoria. With an expected response rate of about 75%, I will need a list of approximately 150 names ( $100 / .75 = 133.33$ ) from both Astoria and Corona, for a total of 300 names and addresses. Households will be visited a maximum of five times before being established as unproductive and participants will be compensated for taking the survey. The surveys will be administered to the member of the household whose name appears on the sample list. Participants must all be over the age of 18. If that person is not available or unwilling, the next person over the age of 18 in the household whose birthday falls closest to the time of visit will be asked to take the survey.

### **Data collection**

Phase 1- Ethnographic data: The purpose of phase 1 is to gather rich data with high internal validity. The knowledge gained from these data will be applied to the careful design of a survey in Phase 2 that will in turn be used to test the hypotheses in Phase 3. During the first four to six weeks of the project I will be a participant observer in neighborhood meetings and special events in both research sites. Whenever possible I will video-tape the interactions of people in the neighborhoods. The purpose of these preliminary observations is to get a general sense of patterns of ethnic identity invocation in the communities and to make contacts with community members who may be willing to participate in later stages of data collection.

*Two-week close monitoring of verbal and nonverbal behavior:* A key feature of the proposed research is to identify and document instances of ethnic identity switching in naturally-occurring conversations and interactions. I will schedule 5-8 hour periods of daily continuous monitoring (Bernard 2000) with the twelve participants, for two weeks each. I expect that two weeks will allow participants time to become accustomed to my being with them and to become less self-conscious. I also expect that when interacting with others whom the participant knows, the social obligations among them will lead participants to disregard the fact that they are being monitored (Gumperz 1972). I will work closely with participants to develop an observation schedule that represents times when they are most likely to interact with others and that also do not impose too many inconveniences on them. These scheduled observations will take place at home and in school or at work or at church, if appropriate (Boxer 2002). Participants will be asked to wear a digital audio recorder (Zentella 1997) during these observations. (Their interlocutors will be informed and will have the right to ask the research participant to shut down the device.) Audio recordings will be supplemented by detailed field notes taken throughout the monitoring. At the end of each week I will interview the participants to talk about any interesting and important observations made during the week. Prior to the two-week monitoring each participant will be asked to provide three kinds of background information:

- *Personal social network*, (H2 and H3): These data will be collected using Egonet (McCarty 2003). Egonet collects data on network composition (for example, percentage of network that is of a particular ethnic background) and network structure (for example, the percentage of people in an informant's network who know each other).

- *Socio-demographics*, including: gender, age, income, education and occupation, as well information about the ethnic background of parents (H4) and spouse or partner (H5), if appropriate, plus whether the informant lives in Astoria or Corona (H1) and the city and country in which they grew up.
- *Life-history interviews*: These interviews will identify life experiences that contributed to the formation of ethnic identity. For each identity mentioned by the participants I will elicit a list of things that they consider to be definitive features of that identity. At the end of each life-history interview I will have a list of identities and their defining characteristics, provided by the participants themselves, to guide the two-week long monitoring.

Phase 2 - Survey design and test: data collection in this phase will be limited to 30 surveys to identify weakness in the survey design.

Phase 3 – Survey data: The purpose of Phase 3 is to test the hypotheses and achieve greater external validity. The surveys will be administered on a lab top computer and responses may be entered by the participants themselves. If the participant is not able to use the computer, I or a research assistant will enter the responses provided by the participants. These surveys will be available in both English and Spanish and may take up to two-hours to administer. The survey will consist of three parts:

- *Social network questionnaire*: identical to that described for Phase 1 (H2, H3 and H4),
- *Socio-demographic questionnaire*: identical to that described for Phase 1 (H1, H5, and H6), and including a checklist of all the possible ethnic identities they may possess, and one question that asks people to indicate which identity checked from the list they consider to be their primary ethnic identity. Respondents will be able to indicate if their primary identity is a multi-ethnic identity.
- *Vignettes* (Rossi & Noch): This component of the survey will comprise ten vignettes of hypothetical situations in which respondents are assumed to be interacting with (a) another Latino or not, (b) someone of the same language group or not, (c) people who are perceived to be of the same ethnicity or not, (d) people who have access to some resource or not, and (e) people who are economically disadvantaged, compared to them, or not. The participants will be asked to read one vignette at a time. After reading each vignette, they will be asked to give a brief oral response explaining what their felt ethnic identity would be in that given context. This response will be hand-written onto a data entry form. This method will allow me to determine which factors (variables) are significant to the invocation of a particular ethnic identity (H7 and H8).

### **Data analysis**

Phase 1 data: Field notes, interviews and audio-recorded verbal interactions will be transcribed by the research assistant as they are collected. I will conduct discourse analysis, in the ethnography of communication tradition (Hymes 1962), on the verbal interaction and interview data. I will code the transcribed texts for themes according to a code list that I will develop in the course of the fieldwork. Using text management software (Atlas/ti), I will test for the occurrence and co-occurrence of themes. I will use multi-dimensional scaling and matrix displays (Miles and Huberman 1994) to identify patterns and possible causal links among themes. I will also code the behavioral data. Ethnic identity switching will be operationalized in those data as a binary variable where switching will be noted if two or more distinct sets of identity markers (i.e.

language use, self-identification through labels, attendance at an ethnically oriented event), each corresponding to a particular ethnic identity, were invoked at any point in the two-week observations. For the social network and socio-demographic data, Egonet automatically creates datasets. For the twelve participants in the behavioral monitoring component, I will perform descriptive statistics on incidence of switching, as well as on the independent variables in H1-H6.

#### Phase 3 data:

The oral responses for the vignettes will be coded onto an Excel spreadsheet as follows:  
H7: a one or zero depending on whether they invoke an identity similar to that of the person with access to a resource, or not.

H8: a one or zero depending on whether they exclusively invoke Latino identity or not.

I will use odds-ratios to measure the association between ethnic identity switching and ethnic identity invocation and what community they live in (H1, H3), parents' ethnicity (H5), spouses/partners' ethnicity (H6), ethnicity of key actor holding access to resource (H7), and language spoken (H8). I will use chi-square to test for the strength of the association between the respondents' primary ethnic identity and the primary ethnic identity of the immediate social network (close family and friends) (H4). I will use Pearson's product moment correlation to test the relationship between the ethnic composition of the respondents' networks and ethnic identity switching (H2, H3). A dummy variable will be created using SAS for the presence or absence of ethnic identity switching based on whether across all the hypothetical conditions posed in the 10 vignettes, participants used two or more distinct ethnic identities. I will then run logistic regression with this dependent variable and the independent variables from H1 (community), H2 (social network), H5 (parents' ethnicity), H6 (partners' ethnicity) to determine if any of these variables predict ethnic identity, and if so, identify the variables that most strongly predict ethnic identity switching.

#### **Research competence of the student**

I have acquired a solid four-field education in anthropology over the last seven years, including training in anthropological theory and methods. In terms of theory, the coursework relevant to this research includes racial and ethnic group relations in the U.S. with Dr. Joe Feagin; national identity, ethnic groups and the state, and the role of the state in regulating immigration flows with Dr. Brenda Chalfin; ethnogenesis and ethnic group conflict with Dr. Paul Magnarella; culture and history of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean with Dr. Gerald Murray; and linguistics with Dr. Ann Wehmeyer. With regard to methods, I have taken coursework in research design and cognitive anthropology with Dr. H. Russell Bernard. In the summer of 2004 I attended a course taught by Dr. Eben Wietzman on qualitative data analysis and interpretation at U. of Michigan Summer School for Survey Research Methods.

I have initiated three independent research projects during my 3 ½ years so far at the University of Florida. In these projects I gained hands-on experience with the logistics of participant recruitment and data-collection, sampling, questionnaire design and interviewing. I have been a research assistant at the University of Florida Survey Research Center for two years. During that time I oversaw several large health-related telephone surveys for the state of Florida and have coordinated and monitored the data collection for two projects that examined the relationship between social networks and a range of outcome variables, including smoking, depression, personality, and racial and ethnic identification.

I have a strong and well-rounded background in quantitative and qualitative data analysis and interpretation. I have taken five courses in statistical methods and have effectively applied these methods both in my own research and in my work as a data analyst at the UF Survey Research Center. My experience working with texts, (from interviews for my MA thesis, as a coder for a study about women crack users, with narratives elicited from network visualizations and with e-mail samples) has strengthened my skills in working with qualitative data.

### **Significance of Proposed Research**

#### *Intellectual merit*

While ethnic identity has long been understood by anthropologists and other social scientists to be a contextual phenomenon (Barth 1969; Cohen 1969; Gluckman 1958; Horowitz 1985; Paden 1967), less is known about *how* the process of ethnic identity switching works. Contemporary studies of ethnic identity switching among individuals have relied on self-reports of switching. The proposed research aims to capture naturally-occurring instances of ethnic identity switching and to document how identity translates into behavior. Through the in-depth study of everyday forms of ethnic identity invocation, the research will produce data with high internal validity crucial to understanding the process of ethnic identity switching. The research will also apply survey research methods to a large systematic random sample, contributing to the generalizeability of the research findings. This study takes an integrative approach to anthropological research, applying methods and theory from both socio-cultural anthropology and anthropological linguistics

#### *Broader impacts*

The broader impacts of the proposed research are on three main areas:

- 1) The research will contribute to the doctoral training of a Latina doctoral student, as well as the research methods training of a Latino undergraduate student from Queens, New York.
- 2) This study focuses on language use as an ethnic identity marker. With the Latino population continuing to increase, bilingualism in schools will be an enduring issue. Through an in-depth study of language choice patterns among Latinos, including an understanding of its social functions, this research can make a contribution to educators interested in incorporating a bilingual approach in their classrooms.
- 3) As the nation grows more ethnically diverse through immigration and intermarriage, a significant number of the population will have multiple ethnic identities. This has implications for current methods for collecting and categorizing data on race and ethnicity, for example those used in the census. This research will contribute to an understanding of how people choose among identities, and may shed some light on how (and why) people decide what to enter in socio-demographic questionnaires.