

Book Review: Daisy Verduzco Reyes, *Learning to be Latino: How Colleges Shape Identity Politics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0813596464 (paperback). 167 Pages. \$26.95.

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Given shifts in the racial demographics of college students, as well as larger discussions about the barriers that students of color often face while adjusting to college, there is a need for research that untangles how the college context shapes the experiences of diverse racial groups. Latinos have the largest projected growth in undergraduate education enrollment, and much of the previous research has focused on the experiences of other groups of students of color. *Learning to be Latino: How Colleges Shape Identity Politics* by Daisy Verduzco Reyes offers a much-needed corrective.

Reyes investigates how undergraduate institutions shape the culture of Latino campus organizations, as well as the experiences of those Latino students. She does so through a comparative ethnographic study of six Latino student organizations at three institutions of higher education: a private liberal arts college, a public research university, and a commuter-based regional public university. At each campus, she observed and interviewed members of one political Latino student organization and one explicitly non-political Latino student organization (such as cultural groups and pre-professional clubs). A detailed discussion of each of the three campus environments, the demographics of their student body, and the student organizations observed on each campus are featured in chapters two through four.

The fifth chapter explores how students respond to ethnoracial ascription and identification given their unique campus contexts. Latino students at the liberal arts college report experiencing culture shock, tokenization, and microaggressions when they first arrived at their predominately-white campus environment. Given their own feelings of isolation, they understood Latinidad as expansive and inclusive within their club, by problematizing activities that might be seen as too Mexican-

centric and exclusive, for example. These students also were likely to identify as Latino due to its nature as an umbrella term. The Latino students at the public research institution did not recount experiences of microaggressions, but instead of being overwhelmed with the large nature of their institution and thus the student organizations fulfilled a desire for a campus “home.” At the regional public university, the nature of a commuter campus and its status as a Hispanic-serving institution left students with no experience of culture shock or need for a counterspace. Instead, they deemphasized the importance of race on campus, identifying based on national origin, such as Mexican or Salvadoran.

Chapter six explores how these student groups practiced Latino political action. For example, students at the liberal arts college were concerned with on-campus politics and institution-making, as shaped by the close-knit nature of their campus, whereas the non-residential nature of the regional research institution led students to be active in issue-oriented politics and discussion that took place off-campus. These students joined a local protest within their larger community, as politics was not associated with or formed within campus boundaries

The next chapter explores how these students envisioned mobility for Latinos writ large, given their membership within these specific student organizations. Whereas members in the nonpolitical groups at the two larger universities expressed meritocratic narratives that downplayed the importance of race in favor of personal responsibility, students within the political groups at those same universities expressed what Reyes terms implicit oppression narratives, understanding the disadvantaged position of Latinos in society, though without discussing the historical or societal context that formulated it. Students at the liberal arts college also utilized oppression narratives, but used more explicit language to tie disadvantage into larger conversations of institutional and systemic racism, a byproduct of the educational context of their small institution that allows for opportunities for small courses that encourage considering complex terminology to explain social inequalities.

Overall, *Learning to be Latino: How Colleges Shape Identity Politics* provides a nuanced view of the ways in which institutional context can influence racial ideology and social movements. By highlighting the role of campus racial climates on Latino student development, Reyes showcases the importance of campus life in shaping the identity, experiences, and connections of the student body. She also draws attention to the variation of experiences and identification within ethnoracial groups. The book would be a good fit for courses on race and ethnicity, education, and social movements.