Culturally Responsive Counseling With Latinas/os

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Dedication

To the millions of Latinas/os who will shape the future of the United States and to my Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, Latino Network, and National Latina/o Psychological Association familias.

—Patricia Arredondo

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To George, Nisa Pilar, and Jonathan, who affirm and transform my Puerto Rican roots.

—Maritza Gallardo-Cooper

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Dedicated to my professional familia (National Latina/o Psychological Association) and my children, Javi, Isa, and Gil.

—Edward A. Delgado-Romero

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I’d like to dedicate this to my dad, Emiliano Zapata, for instilling in me my Latino family values; my mom, Deborah Cornell, for always supporting and encouraging me; my sister, Elena Castellano, for being my rock; my nieces Lexus and Chloe for being my inspiration; and my partner in life, Brian Hicks, for believing in me and honoring my dedication to my work. Thank you for being an important part of my life—Te quiero mucho para siempre!

—Angela L. Zapata

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Muchisimas gracias to our “hija” Marisela López Flores, a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She made all of the detalles fall into place with great orgullo (pride).
# Table of Contents

Preface vii  
About the Authors xiii  

**Chapter 1**  
Who Are Latinos? 1  

**Chapter 2**  
Latino Worldviews and Cultural Values 15  

**Chapter 3**  
Acculturation and Enculturation Processes 31  

**Chapter 4**  
The Complexity of Latina/o Multidimensional Identity 41  

**Chapter 5**  
Education 61  

**Chapter 6**  
Employment, Economics, and the Psychology of Working 79  

**Chapter 7**  
Situational Stressors and Their Effects 101  

**Chapter 8**  
*La Familia Latina*: Strengths and Transformations 117  

**Chapter 9**  
Planning for Culture-Centered Assessment and Practice 145  

**Chapter 10**  
Latinas/os in Counseling 173  

**Chapter 11**  
Ethics and Organizational Cultural Competencies 197
# Table of Contents

**Chapter 12**
- The Future of Latina/o-Centered Counseling 205

**Appendix A**
- Culture-Centered Clinical Interview–Revised 221

**Appendix B**
- Latino Mental Health Resources 225
  - References 229
  - Index 269
Estimates indicate that in the year 2050 the Latino population will be 30% of the U.S. population, a demographic shift driven primarily by births and not immigration (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Census projections also indicate that ethnic minority individuals (persons of Black/African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American heritage) will be the majority, surpassing the White population. Many readers of this text may find that with each passing year, they are working with, teaching, counseling, advising, being taught by, and being led by Latina/o professionals in the workplace and perhaps have family members of Latino heritage. In a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the “browning” of America, Latinos are transforming the United States demographically, culturally, and politically. As reported in 2012, 1 out of every 4 children younger than age 18 in the United States is of Latino heritage, and 93% of these are U.S. citizens (P. Taylor, Gonzalez-Barrera, Passel, & Lopez, 2012). Thus, the future of the country is guaranteed to be Latina/o American.

School counselors are already on the front lines, working with children born in the United States to immigrant and second- and third-generation American-born parents. The parents of their students may be of different ethnic heritages, not speakers of Spanish, and, like others, trying to live out the American Dream. Thus, to be effective and client-centered, school counselors must have a breadth of knowledge about Latino families, cultural and bicultural values, gender roles and rules, and parents’ expectations for their children’s educational future. Counselors must be mindful of the trends in academic achievement for Latina/o students from kindergarten through Grade 12. Although the high school dropout rate for Latino students has historically been about 50%, with more children born in the United States, there will likely come to be less attrition and more individuals pursuing some form of postsecondary education.

Those who work on college campuses providing counseling, career counseling, or advising to students or military veterans need to appreciate how to promote Latina/o student achievement. The majority of new students will be the first in their families to attend college, and they will often be attending local institutions. Therefore, counseling professionals will need to be creative to engage commuters, residential students, honors students, less prepared students, and even parents. Consider that in 2012, Latinos became the largest ethnic minority group on 4-year
campuses (Fry & Lopez, 2012) and that Hispanic-Serving Institutions educate more than 50% of Latino students in the United States. These are just the current data; imagine the future data.

Some 20–25 years ago, counselors attending the conferences of the American Counseling Association lamented the fact that Latino families were “traditional,” monolingual Spanish speakers and immigrants, fatalistic, and otherwise resistant to counseling. This text challenges all of these myths about Latinos and Latino families. With roots in the territories of the U.S. southwest for centuries, contemporary Latinas/os have achieved bicultural socialization and reflect the multidimensional diversity of all other Americans in terms of sexual orientation, religious and political preferences, work ethic, desire to get ahead, and so forth.

The amount of information available on Latinos has never been greater. Our sources for this text are other authors, primarily Latinas/os who have published on topics such as educational trends, health beliefs and disparities, machismo, spirituality, acculturative stress, economic mobility, DREAMERS (young adults, most of whom are unauthorized, who would be positively affected by the passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act), immigration, gender role change, the academic achievement of first-generation college students, international counseling, and so forth. Then there are the scholars from multidisciplinary backgrounds—health and health care; community studies; elementary, higher, bilingual, and other dimensions of education; sociology; political science; history; international relationships; counseling and psychology, particularly from multicultural and Latino-specific perspectives; economics and consumerism; media; and so forth.

The Pew Hispanic Center is one of the most reliable sources of research on a range of topics relative to Latinos, including religion, politics, aspirations for life change, and demographic shifts in the country initiated by Latino mobility. The Southern Poverty Law Center is a social advocacy organization that champions the rights of all groups and individuals who experience discrimination and various forms of hate crimes. The National Institute for Latino Policy provides daily updates on matters involving and affecting Latinos on the mainland and in Puerto Rico. For example, the topic of pro-statehood versus remaining a commonwealth is discussed from multiple angles.

Finally, Latinos have not only increasingly become part of the mainstream media but have established their own media as well. NBC, Fox, and CNN have Spanish-language programming. NBC Universal produces daily human interest reports, news, and other updates targeting the U.S. Latino viewer. Today, most online networks have Spanish-language versions. Yet Univision has a worldwide audience that outshines any U.S. mainstream network in terms of viewership. We are beginning to see cultural shifts in the country. For example, soccer (or fútbol, as it is called in Spanish-speaking countries) broke the barrier with the World Cup in the early 1990s. Magazines such as People en Español, Latina, and Latino are popular and widely available. In academia there is the Hispanic Outlook on Education, Hispanic Business, and two academic journals with a Latino focus: Journal of Hispanic Higher Education and Journal of Latina/o Psychology. The American Counseling Association’s Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development is also an excellent multicultural resource that often reports on Latino-centered research. If all professional disciplines and forms of media are covering and coveting the burgeoning Latino population, it is essential that counseling professionals in all contexts become fully prepared through Latino-centered awareness, knowledge, and skills.

It has always been our contention that when counselors focus on specialty issues or groups not typically addressed in training, they learn about theories, beliefs,
and practices that can then be applied to other cultural groups. The Latino-based worldviews, child-rearing practices, beliefs about health and mental health, beliefs about identity development, and response to counseling discussed in this book will seem similar to, and a little different from, those of other individuals and cultural groups (e.g., White Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders). Regardless of the setting or the population being served, context and culture matter when it comes to being a culturally competent counselor. It is our hope that the knowledge provided in these chapters will inform and be adapted to counselor education, research, practice, and community engagement with Latinos and non-Latino groups as well. It has heuristic value.

Overview of the Book

This book applies Latino counseling competencies (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002) adapted from the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992) paradigm. Each chapter begins with a dicho (proverb) to illustrate a way of giving advice or guidance as it relates to a particular time in life or circumstance one is trying to manage. We attempt to use dichos that speak to the topic of each chapter and its content. Chapters 1–8 provide knowledge necessary for culturally responsive and ethical practices with individuals and families. Chapters 9 and 10 give more attention to interventions, although each chapter introduces case scenarios that are designed to stimulate analysis and considerations from multiple perspectives. Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the counseling profession. In Chapter 11, we discuss the role of the ACA Code of Ethics (American Counseling Association, 2005) in informing culturally competent practice informed by the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (D. W. Sue et al., 1992) and Latino-specific competencies. In Chapter 12, we provide a rationale for an intentional focus on Latino-centered counseling so that counseling professionals will be better prepared for this reality based on projected demographics. The case scenarios and examples throughout invite counselors to think about situations from a Latino lens and then use the knowledge they acquire to conceptualize the cases and hopefully discuss them in classroom or supervision settings. Each case study is based on real experiences but is deidentified and changed slightly to protect anonymity. Throughout the text we use Spanish words and terms as appropriate, and because Spanish is a romance language, the term Latina/o is used. Readers may walk away with increased personal knowledge of commonly used words that can facilitate relationship building or simply greater confidence in their cross-cultural counseling repertoire. Finally, Appendix A contains the Culture-Centered Clinical Interview–Revised, a tool for more inclusive and culture-centered data gathering with Latinas/os, and Appendix B provides a list of resources that can inform Latino-centered knowledge building.

Changes in the overall Latino demographic since 1990 and 2000 censuses have been dramatic. Annual updates from the Community Population Survey, published by the U.S. Census Bureau, have captured these population trends. Thus, in Chapter 1, “Who Are Latinos?” we go beyond data from the 2010 Census report to regular updates on various indicators—age, national heritage, geographic distribution, health and health risks, military service, fertility rates, and so forth. In 2013, individuals of Latino heritage, from 1st to 10th generation, made up 16.5% of the U.S. population. In Chapter 1 we discuss how the birth rate—not immigration—is the contributing factor to these demographic changes, with implications for education, economics, and employment discussed in later chapters. Chapter 1
also addresses historic and contemporary immigration and relevant legislation affecting immigrants and children of immigrants. A mindset of empowerment has emerged and is energizing Latino and other ethnic youth to advocate for self-determination and inclusion in the country they consider to be theirs.

The uniqueness of Latinos, their similarities to other cultural groups, as well as their within-group differences are discussed in Chapter 2, “Latino Worldviews and Cultural Values.” The contemporary Latino multicultural worldview has evolved from historical intersections of indigenous (e.g., Aztec, Mayan, Mixtec), African, and European beliefs and practices. Culture as a way of life was shaped in the New World by religious and spiritual beliefs, family and community values and practices, economics, work ethic, and environmental factors. *La raza cósmica* (Vasconcelos, 1925), or the “cosmic/universal race,” best describes the complex Latino culture. Latinos have drawn from many sources of influence over the centuries, throughout eras of conquest and diasporas, to core beliefs about family-centeredness, interdependence, the role of a higher power, cultural pride through the arts and literature, and many manifestations of self-determination. This chapter discusses core values as anchors but not limitations; with each generation, values and beliefs are modified and lived out differently.

Chapter 3, “Acculturation and Enculturation Processes,” builds on the first two chapters with further discussion of the shaping of individuals based on beliefs and value orientations as well as the role of acculturation as a phenomenon of change for individuals and *familias* (families). For too long acculturation has been viewed as a process of Americanization. Scholars now admit that acculturation is not an A equals B phenomenon but rather a complex process involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes. Enculturation, or the process of becoming more knowledgeable about one’s Latino heritage, can also lead to identity change and renewed worldviews. Because acculturation is a form of socialization and change, stressors are always part of the journey. For example, a Latina and a Caucasian first-generation college student will experience acculturation in the new college environment in similar and different ways. On a predominantly White campus, the Latina is in the minority, which adds stress to her acculturation process. The White student will likely experience stressors, but not necessarily because of her national heritage. Thus, what we learn about Latinas/os from concepts typically applied to them, like acculturation, will be useful for counselors working with heterogeneous populations.

A plethora of research has addressed identity development among Latino adolescents, which is often coupled with processes of behavioral acculturation, ethnic pride, and intergenerational conflict. Chapter 4, “The Complexity of Latina/o Multidimensional Identity,” provides many examples of the intersections of different dimensions of identity for Latinas/os as well as the heterogeneity of Latino identity across different natural/cultural groups (i.e., Cubans, Puerto Ricans, those of Mexican heritage). There is a discussion of how color, economics, citizenship, immigrant status, geographic residence, and other individual differences influence self-identity. In a color-conscious society, there are more challenges for acceptance and inclusion for Latinos who are brown and black. Speaking with an accent in a country where there are political arguments for English-only policies and anti-bilingual education, individuals experience further marginalization, confusion, and self-doubt. A further conundrum is that of gender, sexual orientation, and religion. The Latino worldview tends to be conservative and traditional on these three dimensions of identity. Thus, knowledge about these biases will be useful for counselors working with clients who are examining their identity concerns and relationships with family members in particular.
Education has long been the determinant for advancement for immigrant and low-income families. In Chapter 5, “Education,” we discuss the presence of Latinos in record numbers in K–12 schools and higher education. For example, it was reported that in 2012 approximately 1 in 4 elementary students (24.7%) were Latino and that among prekindergartners through 12th graders, 23.9% were Latino (Fry & Lopez, 2012). For the first time in history, Latinos have become the largest ethnic minority group on 4-year campuses (Fry & Lopez, 2012). This chapter focuses on examples from across the United States, where counselors make a difference in educational settings.

Drawing on empirical research studies, we report on interventions with students, parents, and counselors that can guide the work of all counselors. Furthermore, with the number of first-generation college students increasing, it is important to examine factors that enable and limit academic success. Fortunately, research is under way in universities on intersecting issues such as marginalization, the power of identity groups such as fraternities and sororities, and the effects of high school achievement on college performance. Attention to research-based data will be of great value to practitioners.

Chapter 6, “Employment, Economics, and the Psychology of Working,” introduces interrelated topics related to the advancement of Latino families in U.S. society and Latinos’ historical contributions to the country’s economy in some of the lowest paying yet necessary work roles. Latinos are represented in the agricultural, service, and construction industries, more so than other cultural groups. Low wages and the exploitation of undocumented immigrants have led to approximately 47.1% of Latino families earning less than $20,000 a year, according to the 2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). In spite of obstacles introduced by legislation, discrimination, and other structural barriers, the need for self-determination is a psychological driver for Latinas/os in the workforce. In fact, in 2012 Latinos expressed confidence in their personal finances and the direction the country was moving. They too are pursuing the American Dream.

Currently, many Latinos are confronted with multiple life challenges. Immigrants in particular, both authorized and unauthorized, have more barriers to negotiate on a daily basis. Thus, Chapter 7, “Situational Stressors and Their Effects,” addresses the types of stressors faced by Latinos, including negative portrayals in the media, stereotype threat, and acculturative stress. The Latino paradox as it relates to health is discussed as one example of resilience. Freedom University is introduced as a collective resource for unauthorized students and an example of how concerned educators can help to combat unjust legislation, ensure social justice, and model resilience.

Chapter 8, “La Familia Latina: Strengths and Transformations,” includes multiple discussions about the evolution of Latino families over the centuries. Counselors need to learn about the Latino life cycle across the life span; the transformation of families because of individual differences; mobility, forced and chosen; stressors; plans; and the persistence of the value of familismo across generations. Latinos need to be recognized as people of strength, constancy, and persistence. After all, who else could do the back-breaking work of agricultural workers, toil in the kitchens of the best restaurants, and work two or three jobs to make ends meet? Latinos are goal-oriented, and parents transmit this expectation as they apply the dicho (proverb) De padres sanos, hijos honrados (From well-centered parents emerge honorable children).

Chapter 9, “Planning for Culture-Centered Assessment and Practice,” is very instructive and pragmatic. Examples describe the role of Latino perspectives in making clinical assessments and the cultural syndromes most applicable to
Latino groups. Furthermore, there is discussion about the role of interpreters and culture-bound diagnoses. Finally, readers are reminded how to apply Latino cultural values sensitively, effectively, and ethically when they work with children and families.

Building on the previous chapters, Chapter 10, “Latinas/os in Counseling,” addresses various scenarios that may occur when Latino individuals and families engage in Western-style counseling. The focus on spirituality is noteworthy insomuch as immigrants and second-generation Latinos may seek solutions to difficult life situations in their belief system and also with indigenous spiritual support. The use of language in counseling is examined as well, and readers are reminded that ethnic match is not a factor in successful counseling. Discussions of strengths-based models that acknowledge resilience and other demonstrations of self-determination are woven throughout the chapter. Counseling with Latinas/os is a growing specialty area within the profession, and counselors must be prepared to deliver culturally appropriate and ethical services.

Chapter 11, “Ethics and Organizational Cultural Competencies,” examines the ethical basis for multicultural competence with Latino populations. In this chapter, we also identify professional associations and other resources counselors can turn to to expand their awareness, knowledge, and skills related to Latinos.

Throughout the text, considerable data are reported about the increasing Latino-heritage population in the United States, particularly children. Given these facts and other data about the multidimensional Latino population and its impact on education, the workplace, the economy, and other systems in the country, it seems reasonable to conjecture about the implications for the counseling profession. Chapter 12, “The Future of Latina/o-Centered Counseling,” considers how the profession will shift and adapt to Latinos through teaching, research, service, and clinical practice. Moreover, there will be opportunities for international educational collaborations with Spanish-speaking nations to the south, enriching the practices of individuals and educational institutions from Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, and other countries. Comas-Díaz (2012) speculated that the new generation of Latinos will be futuristas, a group that synthesizes Latino and U.S. values into a community-focused society. The 2012 Presidential elections underscored this sentiment.

We hope that this comprehensive volume about Latinos will inspire and propel counselors to embrace the multifaceted, changing, and complex reality of Latinos in the United States. The future of the United States is tied to the future of the Latino people as they grow in number and influence, and counselors, guided by the ideal of social justice, can help to ensure that this future is inclusive and promotes the well-being of all people. Adelante siempre—always moving forward, porque “Sí se puede”—because yes we can.
Dr. Patricia Arredondo has contributed to the counseling profession for more than 35 years through her extensive scholarship and leadership in multicultural counseling competencies, counseling Latinas/os, organizational diversity, women’s leadership, and social justice advocacy. Her scholarship, leadership in professional associations, and mentorship of hundreds of students and emerging professionals are extensive. She is a past-president of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the National Latina/o Psychological Association, the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45) of the American Psychological Association, and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development. Dr. Arredondo was named an ACA Living Legend and an American Psychological Association Fellow. She received her EdD in counseling from Boston University. Dr. Arredondo is the president of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Chicago Campus.

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Dr. Maritza Gallardo-Cooper has been a mental health practitioner for the past 35 years in the private and public sector. She has been a clinician, a director of outpatient and residential treatment programs, and a coordinator of school-based consultation and treatment programs. Her practice has focused on marriage and family therapy, school psychology, clinical supervision, training, program development, and the effectiveness of service delivery. Her involvement with Latino mental health issues began in 1978 when she was a member of the Hispanic Task Force of the President’s Commission of Mental Health. She is an active member of the American Counseling Association and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development and is a past-vice-president of the Latino Concern Group. She is also a member of the National Latina/o Psychological Association and the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45) of the American Psychological Association. Dr. Gallardo-Cooper teaches graduate courses in clinical supervision at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala and is a respected author in the areas of bilingual counseling and multicultural family therapy. Dr. Gallardo-Cooper holds a doctorate from the University of Florida.

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Dr. Edward A. Delgado-Romero is a professor and director of training for the counseling psychology PhD program at the University of Georgia. He is a founding member and past-president of the National Latina/o Psychological Association and a Fellow of the American Psychological Association through the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45) and the Society of Counseling Psychology (Division 17). His doctoral degree is from the University of Notre Dame. He is the proud father of Javier, Isabel, and Guillermo.

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Dr. Angela L. Zapata is a therapist and the diversity coordinator at the Marquette University Counseling Center. She earned her doctorate in counseling psychology from Arizona State University with an emphasis in multiculturalism and diversity. Angela is a member of the American Counseling Association, the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, and Counselors for Social Justice. She teaches a social justice course for students housed in the Inclusive Leadership Learning Community, is the cochair of the Division of Student Affairs Diversity Committee, and is the cofacilitator of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer-Questioning and Ally Student Discussion Night. As an adjunct faculty member in the College of Education, Dr. Zapata teaches classes in the counselor education, counseling psychology, and educational policy and leadership programs. She has a passion for social justice and encourages her students to become future leaders in diversity and social justice.

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Chapter 1

Who Are Latinos?

Una raza mestiza, una mezcla de razas afines, una raza de color—
la primera raza síntesis del globo.
The cosmic race, a fifth race embracing the four major races of the world.
(Vasconcelos, as cited in Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 75)

Objectives

• Provide 2010–2012 data on persons of Latino heritage in the United States.
• Discuss multiple variables that describe Latinos.
• Familiarize the reader with legislation of relevance to work with persons of
  Latino heritage, particularly immigrants.

Sabías que/Did you know that . . .

• According to the 2010 Census, the Hispanic population grew 43% between
  2000 and 2010 and contributed to 56% of the growth in the overall U.S.
  population (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011).
• The Latino population is projected to increase to 29% of the overall U.S.
  population by the middle of the 21st century, an increase driven primarily by
  births and not immigration (Passel & Cohn, 2008).
• Puerto Ricans are American citizens but cannot vote in Presidential elections
  if living in Puerto Rico.
• Of Latino youth younger than 18, a total of 93% were born in the United
  States. Approximately 800,000 Latinas/os turn 18 each year (P. Taylor,
  Gonzalez-Barrera, Passel, & Lopez, 2012).
• The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program is based on a policy
  enacted June 15, 2012, that allows unauthorized Latinas/os younger than
  age 30 to remain in the country.
Case Scenario

Alice, a former middle school math teacher, was now a high school counselor in a primarily White and African American community. She had grown up in a small town in a historically White community in the Midwest. When she had graduated from college, Alice had decided to move to the state capital to launch her teaching career. She had always enjoyed helping others, and in college and high school she had volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club tutoring African American students. For her, this was a way of giving back to her community. She said that her decision to become a school counselor was an extension of her desire to make a difference in the lives of young people. Alice’s school counseling practicum had been in Lincoln, Nebraska, and her new position as a high school counselor was in Omaha. The cities were very different in terms of their industries and community demographics.

An immigration policy in a neighboring state had led many immigrant families, primarily of Guatemalan and Mexican heritage, to move into Omaha and its school district. Local churches, Catholic Charities, and other civic groups supported the family settlement. Alice heard that many families contended that they had their citizenship documents, but the local police and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement profi led them as being illegal. The children enrolled in the high school were highly diverse, much to Alice’s surprise. That is, some spoke English fairly well, others were monolingual Spanish speakers, and yet others needed someone to translate from their Mayan language into Spanish. Alice also noted that these students dressed like most other teenagers.

Several students had visited Alice’s office to establish a school schedule. She was surprised to learn that at least 10 sophomores had been born in the United States and had lived in multiple states, according to their families’ work journey. Most had parents in the agricultural industry, moving across the Midwest following the crop season and/or working in the dairy industry. Omaha was known for meatpacking, and some students shared that their families had found employment in this industry. Although students in the first group Alice met with, who were from Guatemala and Mexico, seemed to have the paperwork they needed to enroll, they exuded a cautionary and somewhat timid demeanor. Alice considered herself to be open and helpful, but the students responded with terse responses. She wondered whether they were being rude, withholding information, or just nervous.

Alice had never worked with Latino children and families and confided to her colleagues that she felt out of her league. Some of the teachers had been at the high school a while and had had Mexican, Guatemalan, and other Latino-heritage students in their classrooms. They warned Alice that the children may be gone by the end of the semester, depending on the work situation in town and their parents’ legal status.

The arrival of the new immigrants was front-page news. Alice listened to national coverage of the legislation in the nearby state and was shocked at what she now characterized as inhumane. Families could not rent if they did not have proof that they were in the United States legally. Employers had to report their unauthorized employees. Public hospitals were required to check residency, and even schools had been asked to check whether students were living in the school district legally. Alice had prepared to become a school counselor in a program that had prided itself on social justice advocacy but was beginning to feel confused and powerless. Reports on current state demographics also surprised her. She had no idea Latinos were the fastest growing population in the United States.
It is often said that numbers don’t lie, so it behooves counselors and other helping professionals and administrators to know the data and projections on the largest ethnic group in the United States and the implications these data have on their work. The diversity among Latinas/os, as among any other ethnic group, is complex and often challenging, and Vasconcelos’s (1925) quote about Latinos being the cosmic race is illustrative of this complexity. The rainbow metaphor often used to describe the ethnic/racial panorama of people in the United States can also be applied to individuals who fall under the umbrella term Latina/o. Stereotypes of Latinos in terms of visible or physical markers often fall short. Consider that Latinas/os hail from more than 19 Spanish-speaking countries in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, Central America, and the Caribbean and that such a national heritage may still signal a multiracial heritage (mestizo, mulato) because of conquest, slavery, and transnational relocations. Thus, it is reasonable to understand why knowledge about the within-group differences and collective or shared cultural factors of Latinas/os is a starting point for counseling professionals.

In this book, the focus is on Latinos in the United States with ancestry in Spanish-speaking countries, including Puerto Rico, a commonwealth of the United States. Individuals of Brazilian heritage are not discussed in this book. Although they may consider themselves Latinos, their mother tongue is Portuguese. In addition, Spaniards from Spain are not included in U.S. Census data.

The 2010 Census provided a definition for Hispanic or Latino origin people: “‘Hispanic or Latino’ refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race” (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011, p. 2). Specific to the definition, the 2010 Census categories were as follows:

1. No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
2. Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
3. Yes, Puerto Rican
4. Yes, Cuban
5. Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

For Selection 5, individuals were invited to specify that origin, with prompts for Colombian Dominican, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.

National Origin Reporting

Of the approximately 50.5 million respondents to the 2010 Census (16% of the U.S. population), three quarters self-reported being of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban heritage, in that order. There was an increase from the 2000 Census in the number of individuals from Central America, primarily El Salvador (152%) and Guatemala (180%), and the Caribbean, notably the Dominican Republic (85%). A recent report indicated that 1,827,200 people are of Salvadoran heritage, slightly less than the number of people of Cuban heritage, 1,888,599 (Humes, Jones, & Ramírez, 2011). The number of individuals from South America grew by 105%, from 1.4 million in 2000 to 2.8 million in 2010 (Humes et al., 2011).

Hispanic or Latino is not a racial category because Latinos have multiple ethnic and racial heritages. Thus, another question in the 2010 Census inquired about origin and race. The majority (53%) of respondents selected White (26,735,713) or some other race (18,503,103). The other categories selected,
in descending order, were Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and some other race (Humes et al., 2011).

Within-group differences account for the self-reporting about race, with 85% of persons of Cuban heritage specifying White alone versus Black alone (5%) or multiple races (4%). Persons of Dominican heritage had a contrasting reporting profile: White alone (30%), Black alone (13%), “some other race” alone (46%), and multiple races (10%; Ennis et al., 2011).

Many Census 2010 reports are available for review from the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, updated demographics are published by the Community Population Survey. Another valuable source for specific reports on segments of the Latino population is the Pew Hispanic Center.

In addition to national heritage data, other demographic factors to consider when working with Latinas/os include geographic distribution, age, gender, family size, motherhood and fertility, marital status, intermarriage and divorce, citizenship, English proficiency, military service, and health indicators. More detailed data on education, employment, classism, careers, Latinos and the criminal justice system, and religion and political affiliation are discussed in subsequent chapters. References to immigrants are included in all chapters, from demographic data to other considerations, such as immigrants as first-generation college students and as clients in therapy.

Chapter 4 provides a holistic view of Latinas/os and their various dimensions of identity (e.g., sexual orientation, religion). These data are essential to counselors and other helping professionals in various work settings because they provide context and possible starting points for engagement with individuals and families. Acquiring this information can inform culturally responsive and ethical practice.

National Geographic Data

The Latino population increased in all 50 states and the District of Columbia from 2000 to 2010, and Latinos accounted for more than 58% of the growth in 33 states (Passel & Cohn, 2011). (The remaining 27 states are home to 8.7 million Latinos.) Significant population growth in the border states of Arizona, California, and Texas is not entirely surprising because these three states were part of Mexico until 1846, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed.

Moreover, in 2010 roughly 75% of all Latinos (37.6 million people) lived predominantly in eight states with populations of 1 million or more: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. Arizona, Colorado, California, New Jersey, Illinois, and Texas had a combined Latino population of about 30 million, constituting 31% of the Latino population in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2011).

Regional Growth

Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population doubled in eight southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. South Carolina’s Latino population grew the most, from 95,000 in 2000 to 236,000 in 2010, a 148% increase (Ennis et al., 2011). This population growth is not accidental. Employment continued in the agricultural, manufacturing, service, and health care industries in these states. However, the majority of work was entry-level or unskilled work that paid little. A state-by-state analysis reveals specific types of employment for Latinos. For example, in Kentucky Latinos work in
horse-breeding and horse-racing businesses. Alabama and Arkansas have extensive food-packing and poultry industries that require employees willing to do hard work for long hours and often in undesirable conditions.

Hawaii has also witnessed a growth in its Latino population. Puerto Ricans historically arrived to the islands to work on sugar plantations, similar to work opportunities on the island of Puerto Rico. Maui and the Big Island of Hawaii have experienced the greatest growth, with more and more newcomers being of Mexican descent (Essoyan, 2012). The draw has been the service industry. Because the islands are a holiday destination, there has been growth in the number of hotels and golf courses. In addition, on the Big Island there are coffee plantations and other agricultural businesses.

There are also regional differences in the distribution of highly diverse Latino-heritage groups. Some of the distribution follows historic settlement patterns, such as the distribution of Mexicans in the Southwest and West. Puerto Ricans have been in the Northeast for many years and have been joined primarily by Dominicans and Ecuadorans. Nearly 100,000 Ecuadorans live in Queens County, New York, and 241,000 Dominicans live in Bronx County, New York. The largest settlement of Cubans (48%) in the United States is concentrated in Miami-Dade County, as are the largest communities of Colombians, Hondurans, and Peruvians. Individuals of Salvadoran and Guatemalan heritage reside primarily in Los Angeles County, California. However, the largest Latino-heritage group in Washington, DC, is the Salvadorans (Ennis et al., 2011).

Clearly, all of these demographic changes across the country have implications for counselors in K–12 settings, college counseling centers, counselor training programs, and community health and mental health centers as well. How can these new population scenarios be conceptualized for best practices?

Gender and Age

To inform reading and analysis of cases in future chapters, here we introduce data on gender and age distributions. Men represent 50.7% of the Latino population in the United States (25,722,250) and women, 49.3% (25,007,020). The data on age are more compelling when compared to the data for White non-Hispanics, as reported by the Pew Hispanic Center based on the 2010 American Community Survey. Whereas 33.6% of the Latino population is aged 18–90, 39.65% of the White non-Hispanic population is in that age group. According to Motel (2012), among 55- to 59-year-olds, 2,443,693 are Latino and 15,263,487 are White non-Hispanic. Among 20- to 24-year-olds, 4,356,125 are Latino and 12,491,370 are White non-Hispanic. The largest distribution is in the under-18 age group: 17,181,535 are Latino and 39,637,206 are White non-Hispanic. Latinos 18 and younger make up 16.9% of the U.S. population; White non-Hispanics 18 and younger make up 10.05% of the population. These are remarkable statistics with implications for future generations of Americans. According to Passel et al. (2011), it is children and grandchildren of immigrants, primarily born in the United States, who will fuel the population growth in the country.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the median age of the U.S. population is 37.3 years. The median age of Latinos is 27.6 years; Whites, 42.3 years; Blacks, 32.9 years; and Asians, 35.9 years. There are also within-group differences with respect to age. Persons of Mexican heritage have the lowest median age, 25 years, whereas persons of Cuban origin have the highest median age, 40 years (Motel & Patten, 2012b).
Culturally Responsive Counseling With Latinas/os

Implications of Population Growth

Some of these trends may be surprising; however, these data are very instructive for planning in different counseling contexts and regions of the country. For example, counselor educators in the eight southern states in which the Latino population has doubled need to be mindful of their geographic location and the opportunities for counselors-in-training to have real-life experiences with Latinos in those areas. Because of the significant increase in the percentage of Latinos over a 10-year period in South Carolina, many more immigrant Latino families may reside there and someday seek counseling services. Furthermore, counselor educators need to know the national origin of the Latino families they work with and how long they have been in the community. Alternatively, they should know whether they are long-term residents, as is the case in many California, Texas, and Arizona border towns and in the 30 largest metropolitan areas where Latinos reside. The growth in the Latino population, particularly in the number of children and youth, suggests the need for strategic planning in all counseling settings. Planning will have to take into account different strategies for families with longer histories in the United States, immigrant parents and children born in the United States, and multiple-heritage couples and families. There are more involved discussions of counseling approaches in Chapters 9 and 10.

Fertility and Motherhood

Overall, the number of ethnic minority births surpasses that of White births. In fact, on July 1, 2011, 50.4% of the country’s population was children aged 1. Of this total, Latinos accounted for 26.3% of the population aged 1 and younger; Whites, 49.6%; Blacks, 13.7%; and Asians, 4.4% (Passel, Livingston, & Cohn, 2012).

Whereas in the past, immigration was the primary reason for the growth of the Latino population, today it is childbirth, principally by women of Mexican and Mexican American heritage. According to Passel et al. (2012), the fertility rate is 2.4 among Hispanics, 2.1 among Blacks, and 1.8 among Whites. The youthfulness of the Latino population is a factor. The percentage of Latinas between the primary childbearing ages of 15 and 44 is 4%, whereas for White non-Hispanics it is 3.1%. Within-group differences found in a 2009 Pew survey are also noteworthy:

- Nearly two thirds (64%) of Puerto Rican women aged 15 to 44 who had given birth in the 12 months prior to the study were unmarried. That was greater than the rate for all Hispanic women (45%) and the overall rate for U.S. women (38%; Motel & Patten, 2012a).
- More than one half (53%) of native-born Latinas, less than three fourths (73%) of Black women, and more than one fourth (29%) of White women who had given birth in the 12 months prior to the study were unmarried.
- Less than 1 in 10 (6%) of Cuban women aged 15 to 44 had given birth in the 12 months prior to the survey. That was less than the rate for all Hispanic women (8%) and the overall rate for U.S. women (7%; Motel & Patten, 2012b).
- For women of Mexican heritage, the rates of childbirth are far higher. “From 2006–2010 alone, more than half (53%) of all Mexican-American births were to Mexican immigrant parents” (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). Also, consider that immigrant women are younger than native-born Mexican Americans.
- Interracial relationships lead to multiracial babies: In 2010, 9% of Whites married someone who was Latino or of another race (Wang, 2012).
- Most Asian and White mothers are college educated.
• The size of the Latino family is decreasing. The average family size is 3.14 persons (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010c), down from 3.93 in 2000.

English Proficiency

A persisting perception is that Latinas/os do not speak English or speak it poorly. With the number of native (U.S.) births now higher than the number of foreign births (62.9% vs. 37.1%, respectively; U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.), a greater percentage of Latinos will be proficient in English or bilingual at best. According to a report from the Pew Hispanic Center, “Nearly two-thirds (65%) of U.S. Hispanics, ages five and older either speak only English at home or speak English very well” (Motel & Patten, 2012b, p. 1). Alternatively, foreign-born Latinos will speak primarily Spanish at home.

There are also within-group differences with respect to language proficiency. Data from the American Community Survey (Motel & Patten, 2012a) indicate that the groups with the highest rates of English proficiency are Puerto Ricans (82%), Mexicans (64%), Colombians (59%), and Peruvians (59%). Groups with the lowest English proficiency are Guatemalans (41%), Hondurans (42%), and Salvadorans (46%). Also, less than 50% of the population aged 5 and older is proficient in English. Various explanations can be considered. First, Latinas/os from these Central American countries have a shorter history in the United States, certainly in comparison to persons of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritages. Second, the greatest percentage of immigrants is from agricultural or rural backgrounds. Guatemalans may speak Spanish as their second language and their native or tribal language as their primary language. Finally, many of these newcomers live in ethnic, Spanish-speaking enclaves and work in settings with other immigrants, reducing their need and opportunity to master English.

Citizenship

Another common perception about Latinas/os has to do with their citizenship status. This of course will change in the next 20 years with the increase in the number of native versus foreign births. The 2010 Census reported that 74% of Latinos, or three out of four, are citizens compared to “93% of the entire U.S. population” (Motel & Patten, 2012b, p. 10). Within-group differences also parallel historic and political relations with the United States. For Puerto Ricans, citizenship is a birthright. There is a 1% difference between Cubans (74%) and Mexicans (73%) with respect to citizenship status. Similar to data regarding English proficiency, Hondurans (47%), Guatemalans (49%), and Salvadorans (55%) have lower rates of U.S. citizenship. Again, their eligibility is affected by the number of years they have been in the United States.

Latinos in the Military

“Latinos in the Military, 1946-Present” (Jones, 2004) provides a comprehensive report on the participation of Latinos in major wars: World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and, more recently, the conflict in Iraq and other 21st-century wars. Latina/o veterans have historically been overlooked in media accounts. In 2007, the National Council of La Raza, the largest Latino civil rights group in the United States, took Ken Burns to task for overlooking the role of Latinos in World War II in his documentary The War (Burns, Novick, & Ward, 2007). The omission of the voices of Native Americans and female veterans was also noted by other advocacy groups. Few know that nine Mexican Americans and one Puerto Rican soldier were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their service in the Korean War. Moreover, 13 Mexican Americans and 2 Puerto Ricans were recipients
Culturally Responsive Counseling With Latinas/os

of the recognition for their role in the Vietnam War. All together, Latinos received the highest proportion of Medals of Honor than any other ethnic minority group.

Since 9/11 there has been a deliberate focus on the military recruitment of Latinos, and with the promise of education and good salaries, their numbers have increased. Another motivator is the opportunity for immigrants to become naturalized citizens. The first U.S. soldier to die in the 2003 Iraq war was José Gutierrez, a Guatemalan immigrant, and another early casualty was José Angel Garibay, an undocumented immigrant. The projected increase in the Latino population (1 out of every 4 Americans in 2050) suggests that more Latinos will become part of the armed forces.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program allows individuals who serve in the military to provide evidence of their service as another pathway to becoming authorized to stay in the United States. This legislation is discussed in the section on Latino immigrants later in this chapter.

With the return of more military personnel from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, counselors will find themselves treating active military personnel, veterans, and/or their families in different contexts, from college campuses to mental health centers. How Latinos in the military cope with trauma or other issues may be related to their cultural values and religion and to other circumstances, such as dropping out of school. On being discharged, and emotionally burdened with the experiences they witnessed, veterans have a difficult transition reentering civilian life. Gone is the structure of military life with its clear roles, rules, and responsibilities. Latino men are expected to be strong and exude macho behavior. In other words, the expectation is that Latinos assume responsibility for their families and/or contribute to their parents’ needs and not ask for help. Because the majority of military veterans are men, counselors must appreciate the masculine attitude toward help seeking and how this might prevent Latinos from receiving the health care and mental health care benefits they deserve.

Latino Health and Health Risks

Among Latinos, heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries (accidents), stroke, and diabetes are among the leading causes of illness and death. Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, HIV/AIDS, obesity, suicide, and liver disease are other health conditions and risk factors for Latinos. Unfortunately, Latinos also have higher rates of obesity than non-Hispanics, particularly among second- and third-generation groups (Office of Minority Health, 2012d). One figure that stands out is the obesity rate among women. According to the Office of Minority Health (2012d), “From 2007–2010, Mexican American women were 40% more likely to be overweight, as compared to Non-Hispanic Whites.”

The incidence of heart disease is lower among Latinos than White non-Hispanics (5.2% vs. 6.6%, respectively), and Latinos are less likely than White non-Hispanics to die of heart disease. The percentage of Mexican American men with high cholesterol is almost the same as the percentage of White non-Hispanic men with this condition. Also noteworthy is the lower incidence of cigarette smoking among Latinos compared to White non-Hispanics (see Table 1.1). Health disparities affect Latino subgroups differently. For example, “While the rate of low birth weight infants is lower for the total Hispanic population in comparison to non-Hispanic Caucasians, Puerto Ricans have a low birth weight rate that is 60 percent higher than the rate for non-Hispanic Caucasians” (Office of Minority Health, 2012c). Puerto Ricans also have higher incidences than other Latino groups of asthma, HIV/AIDS, and infant mortality, and Mexican Americans
Who Are Latinos?

“suffer disproportionately from diabetes” (Office of Minority Health, 2012b). The incidence of Type II diabetes among Mexican Americans has been well documented for the past 20–30 years (see Table 1.2).

The data on the incidence of HIV/AIDS among ethnic minority groups in the United States are alarming, as these groups accounted for “almost 71 percent of the newly diagnosed cases of HIV infection in 2010” (Office of Minority Health, 2012b). In 2010, “84 percent of children born with HIV infection belonged to minority groups” (Office of Minority Health, 2012b). Among Latinos, HIV/AIDS has spread at a rapid rate, with Latinos accounting for 20% of AIDS cases but representing only 16% of the U.S. population. More specific findings indicate that Latinos are almost three times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS than Whites. Hispanic males were also 2.3 times more likely to die of AIDS than their non-Hispanic White counterparts, and Hispanic women were 3.4 times more likely to die from AIDS. (Office of Minority Health, 2012a)

These data are particularly noteworthy for counselors working in community-based health centers and correctional institutions. Counselors will also have to be mindful of reasons for contracting HIV/AIDS and the shame associated with HIV/AIDS in the Latino community as a whole.

Health care disparities are compounded by a lack of access to preventive health care and health insurance, language and cultural barriers, and a lack of proximity to health care services. Counselors are encouraged to refer to the Surgeon General’s report on health and mental health disparities of 2001 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Although it seems dated, it was the first compilation of health care disparities for ethnic minority groups.

Latino Immigrants

The topic of the immigration of Latinos, especially from Mexico, has become a battleground for many politicians and activists in favor of and against the historic stream of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries. As consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White</th>
<th>Hispanic/Non-Hispanic White Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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of information from many forms of media, counselors need to have an informed understanding of Latina/o immigrants across the life span, for, as the previous sections on demographics indicate, it is likely that counselors will engage with Latino individuals and families at some point in their careers. In this section, we discuss historic and contemporary data as well as terminology for categorizing immigrants.

**Historic Events That Made Latinas/os Foreigners on Their Own Land**

In Chapter 4 we discuss *mestizaje* and *mulato* identity and other self-attributed descriptors of national identity as a result of colonization and oppression and how colonization and oppression resulted in the diversity of those who are today considered Latinas/os. There are many historic starting points for the continuous and contemporary status of Latino immigration, and we discuss a few of these here.

In 1846, Mexico and the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, whereby Mexico ceded territory to the United States that included the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. As a result, Mexican nationals became foreigners on their own land, losing property rights and other benefits of their Mexican citizenship.

The Spanish-American War between Spain and the United States in 1898 led to another change in political autonomy and affiliation for Cubans and Puerto Ricans. As a result of this war, Cuba gained its independence from Spain and Puerto Rico became a commonwealth, not a state. This status continues to this day, giving Puerto Ricans the right to vote in U.S. Presidential elections when they live in the United States, join the military, pay taxes, and so forth. However, Puerto Ricans do not have representatives in Congress. Their status as U.S. citizens opened the doors to a steady flow of Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland for educational and economic opportunities following World War II. Other Spanish-speaking countries, such as Cuba, have a different storyline that is described further in Chapter 5.

**Contemporary Demographics**

Latinos make up nearly half (47%) of the country’s 40 million immigrants (Motel & Patten, 2012a). However, between 2000 and 2010, there was a decrease in the number of new arrivals, and today births of Latino-origin children outnumber arrivals due to immigration. For example, as a result of births, the Mexican-origin population grew by 7.2 million between 2000 and 2010, and “from 2006–2010, 53% of all Mexican-American births were born to immigrants” (Jordan, 2011, p. A3). As the demographics evolve, both increasing and decreasing in different regions of the country, it is predicted that Latino-origin immigrants and their children will contribute to the projected population growth through 2050.

Nine countries are cited as contributing the most to U.S. immigration from Spanish-speaking countries: Mexico, Cuba, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, Ecuador, and Peru (Motel & Patten, 2012b). All are considered democracies, except Cuba. Although Puerto Rico is the second greatest contributor to the overall Latino population in the United States, it is important to keep in mind that Puerto Ricans are American citizens, even though they may be seen as immigrants because their experiences in the United States may be more like those of other immigrants.

**Children of Unauthorized Immigrants**

Immigrants, both legal and unauthorized, are younger than the population in general and made up 15.7% of the adult population in 2009 (Passel & Taylor, 2010).
Younger people are associated with higher fertility rates, and indeed data indicate that immigrant adults are more likely to have children younger than age 18. In fact, unauthorized immigrants are parents of 23% of all children younger than age 17, and 85% of the children are born in the United States (Passel & Taylor, 2010). Disaggregating the data further reveals differences in fertility rates for various groups of unauthorized immigrants. Latinas/os in the United States are on average younger than members of other ethnic groups and also have higher fertility rates.

**Unaccompanied Minors**

To leave violent conditions in their homeland and/or to reunite with parents in the United States, many children make the journey *al norte* (up north). In a heartbreaking biographical account, Nazario (2007) followed the travails of Enrique, who rode on the rooftops of the dangerous train cars from Honduras to find his mother in the United States. More recently, as reported in *The New York Times* (Preston, 2012), there have been many complications and hardships relating to the legal situations faced by unauthorized children who are caught by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Preston (2012) described the story of Juan, age 6, alone in the United States without a parent or a lawyer and facing deportation on his own. Juan and other children generally do not comprehend what is going on and yet must appear in court, sometimes with legal representation and other times with court-appointed public defenders. The problem is that no parent or family member is present, indicated Preston. There is also double jeopardy for the parents of the children if they are unauthorized as well. In the case of Liliana, who arrived in the United States with someone else’s documents and was detained, her parents were of no help. Furthermore, as Preston reported, lawyers are reluctant to take Liliana’s case because of her parents’ status. Counselors need to be aware of the existence of these children because they may end up requiring court-ordered assessments or perhaps even make it into a classroom because they somehow dodged the immigration net. Rather than affixing blame, counselors need to do some role play: *How would it be if I had been on my own in a foreign country at age 10?*

**Immigrant-Related Terminology and Legal Positions**

Immigrants in the United States are individuals who were born in another nation and on their arrival in this country are ascribed that nationality (e.g., Korean, Jamaican, Irish, Mexican, Romanian). For example, someone may be called an *Irish national*. A label of *Irish American* signals that the individual was born in the United States and is of Irish heritage. The same applies to Mexican Americans.

Lawful U.S. residency is evidenced by a United States Permanent Resident Card, formerly termed an *Alien Registration Card* and informally known as a *green card*. This signals permanent residency. Unlike U.S.-born citizens, immigrants are expected to carry their green cards to show evidence of their lawful or legal status.

Many labels, often inflammatory, are ascribed to unauthorized Latino immigrants. These include *illegal* and *illegal alien*. Although the term *undocumented* is also used, among social justice advocates the term *unauthorized* is preferred. When unauthorized immigrants stay in the country to seek or maintain employment, they take on unauthorized status. Individuals hold unauthorized status because they have entered the country without the proper documents or have overstayed their tourist, work, and/or student visa(s). Although Mexican-heritage workers have historically been brought to the United States on work permits, it is expected that when these expire they will leave the country. When they stay to seek further employment without the proper papers, they take on unauthorized status. Further discussion about contract workers can be found in Chapter 6.
Refugee-Related Legislation

Protection for individuals seeking asylum is granted in international human rights standards promulgated by the 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (Gzesh, 2006). Refugee status is granted to individuals to protect their safety and lives, in general. The Refugee Act, “a humanitarian law intended to expand eligibility for political asylum in the United States” (Gzesh, 2006), was enacted in the late 1970s at the end of the Jimmy Carter Administration.

For Latinos, the most vivid example of refugee-related legislation begins with the Cuban Refugee Program, initially authorized in 1961 in response to the flight of Cuban people from Castro’s communist regime. The programs established by this legislation provided child welfare services, medical care, loans for education, and adult education. After the creation of these programs, Cuban refugees continued to arrive via boatlifts (in 1963 and 1965), the most notable being the Mariel boatlift, which brought more than 125,000 individuals to the United States in 1980. Because of its proximity to their homeland, most Cubans settled in Florida (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Two terms often used interchangeably, asylum and refugee status, refer to protections granted to individuals who must leave or have left their home country for their own safety. According to U.S. immigration law, an individual’s status depends on where he or she is at the time the petition is made: Specifically, one must be outside the United States to apply for refugee status and already in the United States to apply for asylum. To be eligible for this protection, individuals must demonstrate that they are unable or unwilling to return to their home country because of past persecution or a well-grounded fear that persecution will happen again if they go back. Grounds for possible persecution include one of the following: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion (Bray, n.d.).

Examples of refugees are Russian Jews who were allowed entrance into the United States in the mid-1970s and Vietnamese people who fled the war in their home country. As a result of civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s, many individuals and families fled through Mexico to the United States and petitioned for asylum based on human rights violations in their respective countries. Returning to their homeland meant certain death. The controversy around granting these individuals asylum status dragged on for nearly 15 years because the Ronald Reagan Administration wanted to classify them as economic migrants and denied that their home governments were violating their rights. Another confounding issue was U.S. support of governments that were indeed oppressing their own people. Finally, in 1990, Congress passed legislation and President George H. W. Bush granted Temporary Protected Status for groups “in need of a temporary safe haven” (Gzesh, 2006, p. 5).

Unfortunately, criminalization of the refugees was at the center of the debate because of their unauthorized status. However, it was religious groups, the activism of the Sanctuary Movement, primarily in the Southwest, and litigation by the American Baptist Churches on behalf of the asylum seekers that led to a fair and humane outcome for the refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala.

However, for counselors working with Latinos from El Salvador or Guatemala and other Central American countries (e.g., Honduras, Nicaragua), this historical context may be relevant because of the legacy of loss, trauma, and other psychological fears that was imprinted on their parents or on them.
Immigrants and Immigrant-Related Legislation

Legislation dating back to 1924 was designed to control immigration and the rights of immigrants, both authorized and unauthorized. In this section, we address more recent federal and state legislation of the past 10 years.

Two months after the horror of September 11, 2001, terrorist acts, President George W. Bush signed into law the USA PATRIOT Act, commonly known as the Patriot Act; President Barack Obama extended the law by 4 years in May 2011. Though it is well-intentioned legislation meant to protect Americans, it has proven controversial. According to Roberta Baxter (n.d.),

The Patriot Act remains to control, change and restrict American life as never before September 11, 2001 activities happened. Some law enforcement actions are given more breadth because of the Patriot Act while citizens and visitors alike are scrutinized in many areas.

Following 9/11, Latino immigrants, U.S. citizens, and others perceived to be of Middle Eastern heritage became targets of hate crimes. See Chapter 9 for more information on stressors such as discrimination and hate crimes against Latinos.

Senate Bill 1070, enacted in Arizona in 2010, became the lightning rod for anti-Latino behavior, and other states, most notably Alabama and Georgia, also enacted legislation modeled after Arizona’s. Many restrictions were applied to unauthorized immigrants, including making it a crime not to have legal documents in one’s possession if stopped by law enforcement officers. Furthermore, the law allowed officers to stop individuals they perceived as being illegal. Although many sections of the legislation were overturned by the Supreme Court in July 2012, appeals persist. In support of the Supreme Court rule, the California Senate passed what became known as the anti-Arizona immigrant legislation.

New immigration policy signed on June 15, 2012, by President Obama allows unauthorized immigrants younger than age 30 to remain in the country and work legally, go to school, and apply for a driver’s license (Jordan & Kesling, 2012). Thousands of young people were brought to the United States as infants and are not aware that they were born in Mexico or elsewhere. For them, the United States has always been their homeland. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program allows unauthorized Latinas/os younger than age 30 to apply for driver’s licenses, get work permits, and otherwise come out of the shadow of un-authorization to more fully participate in their country. The shortcoming of this legislation is that it is not a pathway to citizenship. With the reelection of President Obama in 2012, it is possible that this limitation will be lifted.

Proposed bipartisan legislation that has waned for two Presidential cycles is the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. It was first introduced in the Senate on August 1, 2001, but has failed to receive the support of the full Congress. The act provides a pathway to citizenship by granting conditional permanent residency to individuals who satisfy certain criteria. These include being of good moral character, graduating from a U.S. high school, having arrived in the country as a minor (younger than age 16), and having 5 years of continuous residence in the country. There are other provisions for individuals who have served in the military or graduated from a 4-year institution; further details are provided in “DREAM Act” (n.d.). Critics argue that the act would create an amnesty program and would give social and economic benefits to those who are here illegally. In other words, critics contend that unauthorized immigrants would be rewarded.
Let’s go back to Alice with more knowledge in hand about Latinas/os in general, immigration laws, and the conditions that have put individuals and families in jeopardy. Put yourself in Alice’s shoes. She is in a new role as a high school counselor working with Latina/o students, a role that is not part of her previous personal or professional experience. The *ACA Code of Ethics* (American Counseling Association, 2005) states, “Association members recognize diversity and embrace a cross-cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts” (p. 3). Working from this broad statement, how will Alice be able to bridge relationships with her students, their families, and community groups?

According to the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (P. Arredondo et al., 1996; D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992), to be culturally responsive counselors must know themselves, their values and assumptions about others, and the worldview that informs their assessment of others’ behavior as well as their own. Consider the following inquiries, paraphrased from “Operationalization of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies” (P. Arredondo et al., 1996):

- Can Alice identify the culture(s) to which she belongs and the significance of these memberships on her relations with others of different groups or even of her own heritage groups?
- Does Alice have a positive assessment of her own heritage, and, if so, how might this affirmatively or negatively affect her assessment of the Latino students and families she has never known before?
- How will Alice gather the resources and data about the new students to whom she needs to be culturally responsive? Who will be her Latino-specific informants, coaches, and guides?
- It is quite possible that Alice is experiencing both cognitive and emotional dissonance. Her counselor training and practicum did not provide her with the live knowledge and contact that would lessen the surprise of working with Latina/o students and their families. Is she having a cultural freeze, or is she able to readily adapt to the population in a nonjudgmental way? One should not assume that Alice will not be culturally sensitive or responsive; however, the Multicultural Counseling Competencies cited regarding personal biases, assumptions, and knowledge cannot be taken for granted. Ultimately, it is these factors as well as Alice’s sense of emotional confidence that will influence her decisions about how to be an advocate for and educational support to her students. Consider the Latino-centered competencies that apply in this situation: “Culturally skilled counselors can identify biases and assumptions, both positive and negative, they have about Latino clients and their families that may affect a counseling relationship” (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002, p. 19).
- Culturally skilled counselors have an understanding of “regional, situational and sociopolitical contexts that have influenced Latino clients” (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002, p. 20).
- Culturally skilled counselors seek knowledge and resources to inform their engagement with Latino populations in specific contexts.