

Professional Thesis Presentation

Part I of Professional Exam

Thesis Director: Dr. Louisa Greathouse Amador

Jury President: Dr. Raúl Bringas Nostti

Jury Secretary: Dr. Leonard Bruguier

Where Ebony Meets Poverty:  
Black Identity Politics as a Force for  
Development in Mexico

LaKai E. P. Dill

# Framing the Study

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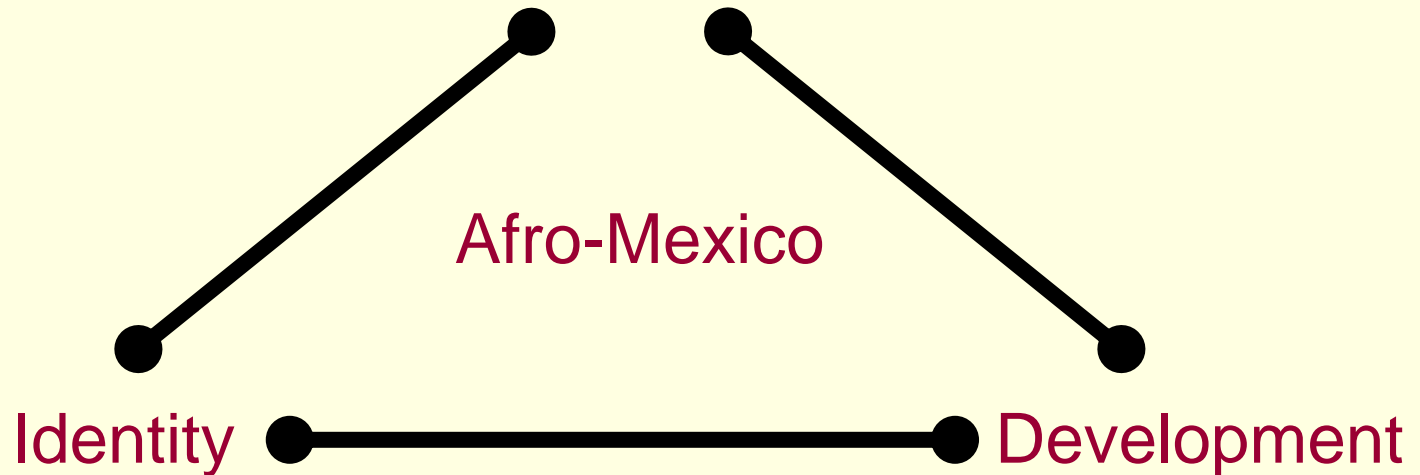
- How is the **postcolonial imperative** of exploring the contours of Blackness and Black identity in Mexico originated?
  - Idea of roots and routes
  - Coherent experience of Black selfhood
  - Counterdiscourses of the African Diaspora
  - Historical negation of Blackness in Mexico

# Framing the Study

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- Focal point of study

Mobilisation of Black identity politics



# Hypothesis and Sub-hypotheses

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- General hypothesis

The persistent consolidation of a **public Black identity** in Mexico may act as a catalyst for significant growth for the country's population of Afro-descendants by positively **impacting the socio-economic development** of their communities.

# Hypothesis and Sub-hypotheses

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## ■ Sub-hypotheses

(a) The **historic problem of *mestizaje*** (race mixing) in understanding Mexican national identity has perturbed the ability of the population of Afro-descendants to appropriately engage the **quest of Black consciousness**.

(b) The **utilitarian nature** with which Black identity is frequently asserted in Mexico has served to **prejudice the intent of actively stimulating Black consciousness** as a means to invite the active participation of Mexico's Black population in the interactive, discursive exchanges of the African Diaspora.

# Costa Chica of Oaxaca and Guerrero



- Acapulco to Puerto Angel, 50 km inland
- Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Coahuila...
- 200,000 African slaves
- 450,000 Afro-Mexicans

# Map of Veracruz



# Organisation and Structure

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- Chapter One: Identity Politics Matter
  - Theoretical framework
  - Concepts of identity, race, ethnicity, African Diaspora
- Chapter Two: The Black Other in Mexico: An Historical Analysis
  - Foreignness of Blackness
  - Academic and nationalist discourses surrounding Blackness
  - *Mestizaje* and national identity
- Chapter Three: The Black Subject in Mexico
  - Local negotiation of Blackness and Mexicanness
  - Ethnicity and sense of belonging
  - Discrimination and marginalisation



# Central Arguments

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- Identity as politically salient and resilient
  - “Process of meaning making”
  - “Legitimate” vs. “spurious” identities
  - Epistemic privilege of oppressed peoples
- Black subject status from Diasporic negotiation
  - Race, ethnicity, intellectual traditions
  - Transformative politics
  - Racial purity and victimisation

# Central Arguments

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- Incongruence of Mexican conceptualisations of Blackness
  - Shortcomings of *mestizaje*
  - Perpetuation of colonial past
  - Negotiating sense of belonging and Indianness
  - Self-defeating notion of identity

# Central Arguments

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- Birth of Afro-Mexican studies
  - Africanness, *Nuestra Tercera Raíz*, and folklorisation
  - Black consciousness-raising and *México Negro*
- Dynamics of identity and development
  - Discrimination as governmental neglect
  - Discrimination and poverty

# Final Considerations

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- Community solidarity and common development strategies
- Amelioration of Black/Indian relationships
- Continued elimination of social ills
- Pedagogical issue, not merely political

~ Thank you for your attention ~

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***Proceeding to...***

**Part II: Period of Questioning**

***Finishing with...***

**Part II: Deliberation and Qualification**