# ABSTRACT

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| Title of Document: | BRIDGING CULTURAL BORDERLANDS OF IDENTITY: LATINA VETERANS ON NEGOTIATING DOUBLE MINORITY STATUS IN THE MILITARY |
| | Teresa D. Daniell, Ph.D., 2021 |
| Directed By: | Dr. Christine Mallinson, Language, Literacy & Culture |
| | Dr. Thania Muñoz Davaslioglu, Modern Languages, Linguistics, and Intercultural Communication |

Using a feminist methodology, via semi-structured interviews with 17 Latina veterans, this interdisciplinary study examines the experiences, feelings, and beliefs that help shape Latina veterans' sense of their intersectional identity. Drawing from Latina studies, veteran studies, intersectionality theory, borderlands theory, and the literature on mentorship I explore how participants describe their identity and self-awareness as Latina veterans and their perceptions of how others view them, which often involved stereotypes, ethnoracialization, and mismatched identity relating to their ethnicity/race, gender, and military status. These intersecting points of identity created borderlands bridging cultural divides between ethnic and military cultures and illuminated how ethnicity and gender were involved in participants' developing a sense of self as a double minority in the military. This study therefore extends Anzaldúa's concept of the borderland wherein self-awareness produces the new mestiza, and where conocimientos (knowledge) occurs beyond the borderland,

resulting in an expansion of the Latina cultural borderland to incorporate military identity. Finally, the study speaks to the need for more Latinas in leadership positions as role models, to help Latinas move from minority to normative status in the military.