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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the journal was made possible with the assistance of Antonie Dvorakova, Stephanie AL Molholt, Melissa Isaacs Fisher, Dianne Reyner, David Querner, Denise Lajetta, Regina Toshavik, and Paula Courtney, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Word Processing Center, in addition to the Editor and Associate Editor. Thank you.
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Miskitu Identity in the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras

Laura Hobson Herlihy

"We are sambos, mestizos, and mulattos, we are mixed. We are Miskitu because we speak Miskitu” (Enemecia Ferrera, Kuri).

Abstract

This article examines how Miskito individuals construct their ethnic identity in the inter-ethnic relations of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, an internationally designated protected area in Honduras. The field research focuses on the ethnic terms of reference and stereotypes that Miskito speakers use to distinguish between themselves and Others. The presented data illustrate the situations in which Miskito individuals manipulate cultural markers to define themselves as “Sambos” (stressing their Black ancestry) or “Indians” (stressing their Amerindian ancestry). Conclusions suggest that the Miskito people’s ability to construct situational ethnic identities during social interactions, while remaining essentially Miskito, may be a key factor in the success of their population group within and beyond the reserve.

The bi-national Miskitu peoples reside along the Miskito Coast (Moskitia). Their historic homeland extends from Black River, Honduras, to just south of Bluefields, Nicaragua. While other Latin American Native Peoples have