Latinx Identity Development in PK-5:

A Wake-Up Call for white Latinx

THESIS

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Abstract

The heightened awareness and denial of racism in the United States shines a unique light on the complexity of Latinx identity. Latinx people, specifically those that are racially white, need an identity reckoning in order to combat white supremacy that is both internalized and forced upon the community. This thesis will illustrate the complexity of Latinx identity in the United States, the necessity of identity development in primary education and, ultimately, address how we, Latinx people in the United States, can work to eliminate white supremacy that is steeped in our identity. Focusing on Latinx students in primary education can be considered a preventative measure against racism and illuminate how identity development scales could potentially unravel Latinx racial ambiguity that is historically, theoretically, and legally afforded to phenotypically white Latinx folx, but not to phenotypically Black and Indigenous Latinx folx (Daché, 2019; Fordham, 2010).

Dedication

Dedicated to my brother and all Brown and Black children that have been denied access to *their* education, heritage, language, and histories.

Acknowledgements

In a Zoom class with Dr. Tim San Pedro, I heard a recording of an interview with Dr. Leigh Patel where she said, “Knowledge is never an individual act.” The quote, along with the course, stuck with me. It takes a community to create and redefine how we understand ourselves and the world around us. It was Dr. Donna Y. Ford’s unapologetic, truth speaking (in both her publications and daily life) that helped develop this thesis topic and my identity as an educator. It was Dr. Peter Sayer’s openness and passion for translanguaging that allowed me and my mixed-up language to feel seen in higher education. It was Dr. Phillip T.K. Daniel’s wealth of legal expertise and availability to reel in my long-winded rants that shaped my understanding of educational law. It was Dr. Tim San Pedro’s courses and his ability to bring culturally revitalizing pedagogy to life through his own practice as an educator that helped me feel safe and secure as a student and professional. Nothing in academia is produced by one person, just as nothing in a PK-12 classroom is produced by one teacher. Thank you, Dr. Donna Y. Ford, Dr. Peter Sayer, Dr. Phillip T.K. Daniel, and Dr. Tim San Pedro for creating a safe space to explore my academic interests, connecting me with countless resources, and, maybe inadvertently, giving me the playbook for how to be a thoughtful, student-centered educator.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the aftermath of the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, George Zimmerman's ethnicity became a national conversation (Martin, 2012). Instead of focusing on the tragic loss of life of Trayvon, who was wearing a hoodie and innocently holding Skittles and an Arizona iced tea, Zimmerman's ethnicity in the relation to the justification of his actions became a fixation. Initially identified as solely white[1], Zimmerman's father made it known that he is a part of a "multiracial family" and, specifically, Spanish speaking (Stutzman, 2012). George Zimmerman's Latinx identity raised questions of whether racial biases were even possible given that he was a part of a minoritized community[2]. This conflation of the Latinx ethnicity as a racial category has a deep history in the United States (U.S.) whereby Latinx folx have become a racialized monolith that has been studied extensively. Zimmerman personifies one of the more insidious effects of this racialization by showcasing the racial fluidity inherent to *latinidad.* Racially white, and ethnically Latinx people gain privilege through easily slipping in and out of their whiteness (Daché, 2019). The community has benefited from what Gomez (2005) theorizes as an "off-white status", while also experiencing oppression from white supremacy that lies embedded in Spanish colonial cultural inheritances and through U.S. culture and institutions (p. 9). This duality of being racialized as an ethnicity, while also benefitting from whiteness, makes for a complex and confusing identity for Latinx in the U.S.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2022) defines race as, "any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of

[1] The racial category of white is typically considered a proper noun in English referring to people of Anglo-Saxon heritage. To decentralize the importance normally placed on white and whiteness, the author has chosen to keep the 'w' in white uncapitalized.
[2] It has been debunked that members of different minoritized communities can exhibit bias against their own or other minoritized communities. For the purpose of this thesis, these publications were not included because it was too far outside of the purview of the thesis.

shared ancestry" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/race). The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines ethnic as, "relating to races or large groups of people who have the same customs, religion, origin, etc." (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnic). Race is a social construct created to justify white supremacy (Bell, 1993; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). In the U.S., race and racism are framed in a White-Black binary (Perea, 1998, p.133; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). This binary has left Latinx people; particularly those that are phenotypically ambiguous, at a crossroads where they can either lean into the historically allotted whiteness or lean into their home-country culture and language. The former allows for the perpetuation of white supremacy through the acceptance of *blanqueamiento* and *mestizaje* passed on by Spanish colonial rule, as well as the legally afforded whiteness in the U.S. to avoid the treatment of being othered. The ladder (leaning into home-country culture and language) directly opposes white superiority and formulates a Latinx identity that is rooted in Brownness and collective power. Ultimately, the complexity of the identity is tied to the racism that is embedded within the community on top of the oppressive society practices that hinder Latinx communities from thriving which creates the perfect storm of confusion of Latinx identity. This confusion leaves the public arguing over the classification of the socially constructed concepts (race and ethnicity), acquitting racially white and ethnically Latinx George Zimmerman, while forgetting the humanity of young and Black Trayvon Martin.

The author believes that Latinx people, specifically those who are racially white, need an identity reckoning in order to combat white supremacy that is both internalized and forced upon the community. Educational scholars tend to focus on college readiness and addressing the disparities in test scores between Black and Latinx students and their white peers (Jimenez,

2020; U.S Department of Education: A First Look, 2016). This framework pins white students as the benchmark for success, instead of attempting to understand how public-school education owes minoritized students an educational debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The focus on achievement also crept its way into identity development theories, which exemplifies one of the many ways public education has contributed to not only the confusion around Latinx identity, but also white supremacy. Primary education[3] is the natural starting point not only because it is the first, systemic exposure communities have to white norming, but also because by the time children are entering kindergarten, they are already associating other children with high statuses and mirroring racialized beliefs that adults hold (Hawthrone, 2022). Focusing on Latinx students in primary education can be considered a preventative measure against racism, and illuminate how identity development scales could potentially unravel Latinx racial ambiguity that is historically, theoretically, and legally afforded to phenotypically white Latinx folx, but not to phenotypically Black and Indigenous Latinx folx (Daché, 2019; Fordham, 2010). Lastly, primary education has historically been a battle ground for language-based racism and Latinx activism that has further complicated identity for Latinx communities.

The author will first provide a historical overview of the terms used to classify and define *latinidad* in the U.S. using LatCrit theory and raciolinguistics. The evolution of terminology is used to understand the extent to which Latinx communities have been bamboozled into adhering to white supremacy, starting with Spanish colonization into U.S. public schoolings' founding, language exclusionary practices and, finally, into present day terminology. In this discussion, I will connect the positioning of Latinx children in the U.S. with the need for identity development

[3] Primary education will be broadly defined to include prekindergarten through the fifth grade in accordance with the Ohio Department of Education licensure band.

scales for PK-5 students that address anti-Blackness and disaggregate by race within Latinx ethnicity. I will, then, provide a systematic review of the literature on PK-5 Latinx identity development scales to determine whether Latinx participants are disaggregated by race and whether these scales address racism. These findings will show that very little is available for PK-5 Latinx children as a preventative measure against racism and toward an understanding of their own identity. Finally, I will offer suggestions for adding anti-racism perspectives to PK-5 Latinx identity development scales.

Problem Statement and Research Question

In the 2010 Census, 53% of people who self-identified as Hispanic/Latino (ethnically) also identified themselves as racially white (Humes et al., 2011). By the next census in 2020, only 20% of self-identified Hispanic/Latino ethnicity selected white (Jones, et al., 2021). Even more interestingly, the percentage of self-identified Hispanic/Latinos that selected 'two or more races' grew from 6% in 2010 to 32.7% in 2020, and those that selected 'some other race' grew from 37% to 42.2% (Jones et al., 2021). The 2020 Census has been widely criticized, given COVID-19 and turmoil of the Trump administration. While the Bureau itself claims the extreme shifts in identification are due to different questions and recordings techniques, this extreme swing between racial categories exemplifies a need for understanding ethnic identity in terms of its racial makeup.

Additionally, eight years after the murder of Trayvon Martin, the summer of 2020 racial justice protests made the state-sanctioned violence against Black communities' national conversation. As quickly as the people mobilized to address racism in policing and profiling practices, the teaching of racial inequities in public school became a politically partisan issue. As

the battle for racial/social justice plays out in the public schools, 42% of Republican Latinos say that increased public attention to the history of slavery and racism is ‘very good or ‘somewhat good’ (Pew Research Center, 2021). This speaks to a growing trend within the community of choosing the off-white benefits over addressing racial inequities. While Latinx folx tend to vote Democrat, Trump’s Latinx vote increased during the 2020 election. Regardless of Trump’s oppressive immigration policies and out right racist cantor on Latinx people, 36% of the Latinx population voted for Trump in the 2020 election, which was a 6% increase from 2016 (Rodriguez & Caputo, 2021; Shepard, 2021). The ability to vote outside the best interests for your community is, in the author’s opinion, a symptom of a lack of understanding of identity within the Latinx community and the ways whiteness invasively seeped into their identity.

Identity development is a lifelong progress, but scales can assist with unpacking and understanding the complexities that make us who we are. By naming the stage or degree to which one is close to their racial/ethnic identity can not only make people more aware of themselves, but also how they interact with and treat others. Ultimately, self-awareness of identity can assist with addressing and eradicating racism particularly when addressed early in life. Thus, the research questions are: *Do identity development scales exist for Latinx PK-5 students? Do identity development scale studies of Latinx populations in PK-5 disaggregate by race within the Latinx ethnicity and address anti-Blackness?*

Positionality

I was 19 when Trayvon Martin was murdered, just two years older than him. As I write this thesis, I am 28, the same age as George Zimmerman when he shot and killed Trayvon. Additionally, Zimmerman and I share the same racial and ethnic identity, white and Latinx, yet

the ways we use and exist in our identities cannot be more different. I often wonder how different I would be if I grew up like George Zimmerman using my ethnicity like a race card and how different my community (Latinx people) would be if we understood how we perpetuate white supremacy. My identity and experiences as a white Latina helped inform my research and are tied to my PK-12 schooling in Louisiana public schools. I was labeled as an "English Language Learner" in elementary school because I spoke both Spanish and English in my kindergarten classroom. That classification was quickly remedied by my white professor father who then advocated for my testing and eventual placement in a gifted classroom.

My whiteness afforded me the privileges of a gifted education, yet it was simultaneously never quite enough. I was told by a teacher in middle school that the only reason I was placed in gifted classrooms was to adhere to diversity requirements. Female Latinx students only make up .73% of the Gifted and Talented enrollment in Louisiana when I was tested into the program in 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b). I was one of 179 Latinas in Gifted and Talented Programs in Louisiana. This increased to an even 3.7% by the time I graduated high school in 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). National statistics are not much better as 10% of Gifted and Talented students were Latinx in 2000 and this only increased to 17% in 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a; U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

At an early age, I embarrassingly hid my identity as a Latina by refusing to speak Spanish to straightening and highlighting my curls. I was successful in this escape from my heritage because I am racially white. In comparison, my brother, who is Brown (with more phenotypical Indigenous traits), could not hide his identity and experienced discrimination from teachers who criminalized his otherwise typical adolescent behaviors. Ford (2013) has written extensively on

racial and ethnic discrimination in gifted and talented education. She calls such discrimination a racial and ethnic pandemic. In other words, Latinx and Black students are contending with two pandemics, which take their toll on these students' achievement and identity (Hines et al., 2022).

I grew up in the predominantly Black city of New Orleans. I saw my peers code switching as they moved from the Black English Vernacular on the playground to White-Mainstream English (WME) in the classroom in the same way I was using Spanish at home and WME at school. In the gifted program, I was one of two minoritized identities in the classroom; my peer was a Black boy. Most memorably, we were excluded from participating in standardized testing because my teachers thought we would lower the average score, which Ford (2013) and Hines et al. (2022) view as far too common. It was at that point; a seed was planted. My research focuses on connecting the ways Latinx and Black communities can use collective action against white supremacy, particularly in terms of language and identity within public schooling, which has shaped my thesis.

Chapter 2: Defining and Dismantling *Latinidad* and Understanding U.S. Public Schools as Agents of White Supremacy

"Black erasure, sadly, is built into the concept of *latinidad*." (T. Flores, 2021, p.59)

Using LatCrit theory and raciolinguistics as a framework, this chapter aims to understand the historical influences of Latinx identity in the U.S. using the evolution of terminology as a guide. To begin, the author will review the forgotten or overlooked and ignored history of identity within Latin America, and how colonial influences have clashed in U.S. Southwest. Next, the author will provide an in-depth look at the foundation and perpetuation of public schools' involvement in the othering of Latinx identity through exclusionary language practices. Finally, this chapter ends with an overview of current terminology tied with the reasoning for racial disaggregation and anti-racist practices for Latinx children's identity development theories today.

The evolution of terminology (i.e., *latinidad* and Latin America, greasers, Mexicans, Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx and finally Latine) is a guiding parameter for laying the foundations for Latinx identity in Latin America and the U.S. LatCrit theory is fundamental to this chapter because it provides an understanding of how racial hierarchies are embedded in society, both during colonial times and today. Using Flores and Rosa's (2015) raciolinguistic ideologies, provides understandings of the socio-historical lack of access to language acquisition in order to connect how public schooling has racialized Latinx identity. Paying particular attention to primary education and the importance of early intervention, public schools have helped to position Latinx children in constant negotiation between leaning into whiteness/assimilation or toward equity (and, subsequently, exclusion due to backlash).

LatCrit as a Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a modern legal framework that examines how white supremacy is deeply institutionalized in U.S. legal and social contexts. "Critical Race Theorists have, for the first time, examined the entire edifice of contemporary legal thought and doctrine from the viewpoint of law's role in the construction and maintenance of social domination and subordination" (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xi). CRT intertwines racism with gender and class discrimination, and questions the paradigm of mainstream legal frameworks. Solorzano and Yosso (2011) illustrated "Critical race theory's family tree" as way of visually displaying how CRT takes from ethnic studies and women studies, cultural nationalism, critical legal studies, Marxist/neo-Marxist theory, and internal colonial theory to create the all-encompassing critical race theory (p.474). In its inception, mainstream legal scholars considered CRT to be fringe, "data-less" commentary on legal studies (Urrieta & Villenas, 2013, p. 522). For people of color, CRT offers an explanation and validation for their experiences with U.S. institutions. It highlights microaggressions that turn into discrimination and morph again into full and outright structural oppression. According to Urrieta and Villenas, as more people of color became integrated into predominantly white institutions, CRT branched out into LatCrit, FemCrit, AsianCrit, and WhiteCrit, OutCrit, and QueerCrit to address multiple perspectives in contrast to white supremacy.

LatCrit theorists also explore the ways racism is created and sustained through the legal system in the U.S., but moves away from the Black/White binary to address immigration, language rights, and multi-identities of Latinx communities (Anguiano et al., 2012; Delgado &

Stefancic, 2012; Martinez, 2000; Trucios-Hanyes, 2000). Like its parent theory, LatCrit recognizes race as a social and legal construct (Haney López, 2006). LatCrit exposes the constant push and pull between being a minoritized community that experiences oppression from white America yet being legally afforded an "off-white status" (Gomez, 2005, p. 9). The oppressive and racist immigration policies, language exclusionary practices and more are well documented, both historically and currently, using LatCrit theory. The theory also explains how Latinx communities were still able to assimilate and gain privileges/access as if they were solely white in a way Black and Indigenous people are not able to. Today, CRT is experiencing an extreme pushback from the conservative political right. Republicans have created a "CRT boogeyman" claiming critical race theory is being used in K-12 schools (Reyes, R.A., 2021, October 29).

Mainly white parents are storming their school board meetings across the nation demanding an explanation for why critical race theory is being taught to their children. These parents, with the guidance of politicians, are claiming that CRT is used to indoctrinate their kids and make white children feel ashamed of themselves by teaching that the U.S. is fundamentally racist. CRT, however, is taught in law schools and has only gained popularity in academia as a framework because of its usefulness in understanding educational inequities and psychological identity development theories, to name a few (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Zamora et al., 2019.) While there is no evidence of the widespread use of CRT in K-12, organizations like Southlake Families PAC are becoming cookie-cutter, political powerhouses of misinformation catering to parents that cannot see past coded, racist language (Hylton, 2022; Southlake Families PAC, 2021). The anti-CRT movement is so effective politically that Republican candidate for Virginia governor, Glenn Youngkin, campaigned on defending parents' rights against CRT in public

schools (Gabriel, 2021). Youngkin ended up winning and is now governor of Virginia. For this reason, the use of CRT (and in this case LatCrit) is not only a useful tool for the purpose of this thesis, but it is also a strategic tool to push back against misinformation.

Raciolinguistics as an Additional Framework

Outside of ethnic studies classes, Latinx history is largely left out of U.S. K-12 education because it directly contradicts whitestreaming (Mills, 2000; Urrieta, 2009). The term whitestreaming is a play on the words "white" and "mainstream" meant to illustrate how the norms within the U.S. schooling system are decided upon and forced by the white majority. Simply put, whitestreaming in education is an uncritical assimilation through curriculum and pedagogical reinforcements of White language, history, morals, individualism, and other U.S. societal norms. (Urrieta, 2009, p.47). This decision to erase parts of history that do not glorify whiteness willfully ignores how deeply rooted white supremacy is within society both in the U.S. and Latin America. Since its conception, public schooling was meant to preserve white (English) language, and morals as well as "Americanize" a growing "immigrant" population (Vallance, 1974, p.9). In fact, institutionalizing public school in the U.S. erupted in response to the white fears of a diversifying (highly immigrant) population that lacked a "homogenous national character" (Vallance, 1974, p.10). Raciolinguistics ideologies link the practice of "idealiz[ing] monolingualism in standardized national language as the norm to which all national subjects should aspire" (N. Flores, 2015). This is the emphasis of a language, like "Standard English," as a cultural symbol for a nation state and the way racialized people are further "othered" by perceived linguistic faults (N. Flores & Rosa, 2015; Silverstein, 1998).

Raciolinguistics ideologies is meant to be understood as challenging appropriateness-based approaches in language education and speaks to the way that white people perceive language deficits of racialized people of color. It takes a critical look at the white gaze's ears (framing white people as listening subjects) as further perpetuating white supremacy through social stratification of people of color's language use (Inoue, 2006; Morrison, 1992). The U.S. does not currently have a national language, but English-only movements combined with federal policies around English Language Learning are rooted in what Macedo (2000) calls "language-based racism." By combining LatCrit and raciolinguistic ideologies, we can understand the complexities and confusion around Latinx identity as both being racialized and benefitting from whiteness. This chapter will use LatCrit theory to expand upon Flores and Rosa's raciolinguistics ideology by connecting the socio-historical formation of Latinx's off-white identity that is tied to the practice of language exclusion in the U. S. as a dimension of racialization of Latinx identity.

For the purpose of this thesis, "native language" is used to refer to Spanish for Latinx communities. It should be noted that Spanish is a colonial language. For many people with ancestry in Latin America, their Indigenous or African languages were systematically forgotten by colonizers forcefully mandating Spanish.

White Settler Colonialism

Historical understanding of Latin America in K-12 settings is largely framed in the context of U.S. imperialism. While scholarship has addressed English white settler colonialism as an invasive and fundamental part of U.S. history, little scholarship investigates the ways Spanish and Portuguese colonization in Latin America have equally long lasting and racist

ramifications on Latinx people. For the purpose of this thesis, enslavement and subsequently colonialism is a starting point because it is European colonists that create the concept of race and perpetuate white supremacy that is the foundation of *latinidad*.

Latinidad means *conjunto de pueblos de origen latino que tienen en común aspectos étnicos, geográficos, culturales o lingüísticos*. In English, the word means, "conjoined communities of Latin origin that share aspects of ethnicity, geographic, cultural and linguistic features." Intended to be a unifying word for all people within Latin America, *latinidad,* as well as the concept of Latin America, oversimplifies an extraordinarily complex history of racism. *Latinidad* is inherently anti-Black and anti-indigenous (T. Flores, 2021; Rojas Mix, 1991; Tenorio-Trillo, 2017, p.18). Dr. Nikole Hannah-Jones' *The 1619 Project* illuminated the roots of enslavement by the English, but it was the Spanish over 100 years earlier who brought this atrocious, dehumanizing economic scheme to the Americas. Starting in the 1500s, Spain and Portugal extorted and stole African people into enslavement to predominantly Mexico and Brazil respectively. Spaniards created a race based legal and social system that categorized darker skinned people as inferior with the intent of exploiting the land and people for economic gain (Jackson, 1995). Unlike white, settler colonialism propagated by the English that relied upon the one-drop rule that creates this White-Black binary we see today, the Spanish developed racial caste system for which there were up to 16 distinct categories that were linked to your social and economic status. Though much like English white supremacy, one's closeness to whiteness was considered superior and blackness was of the least value.

The three broad groups were *español* (Spanish/European or white), *indio* (indigenous or Brown) and *negro* (African or Black); expanding from these groups were groups of racial

mixtures with the most used terms being *mestizo* (white and indigenous) and *mulato* (white and Black). The more someone was mixed with whiteness, the higher in socioeconomic stature. One of the main symbols of socioeconomic status was ownership of land. The Spanish established land grants in present day New Mexico and Texas during the 1600s and only allotted ownership to *español* or *criollos*. *Criollos* were a subgroup, slightly lower than *españoles* because they have some Indigenous ancestry though are mainly of European heritage. *Criollos* also tended to be American born instead of European born, though for all intents and purposes were racially white. Those working the land were often *indio* or *mestizo* (Au et al., 2016, p.85). By the end of the 1800s, between 90-95% of enslaved Africans were brought to Central and South America as well as the Caribbean (T. Flores, 2021). The rationale for this dehumanizing and horrific practice is rooted in the social creation of race. As these colonial powers, the English, Spanish and Portuguese, brought enslaved Africans, diseases, and entitlement to land, indigenous populations quickly died off or were included in the enslavement structures. Enslaved Africans were used and abused like property, while indigenous people were murdered by foreign diseases and pushed out of their lands. The exploitation and inhumane history of Black and Brown people in Latin America is the root of what was becoming a newly formed Latin American identity. To downplay this history in relation to Latinx identity would remove a fundamental piece of the puzzle.

The narrative of a Latin America formed by white colonists was first formally propagated by French colonizer, Napoleon III (Gott, 2007; T. Flores, 2021). When he was imagining this repurposed land as European owned the term *Latin* America is meant to pay homage to the colonizer's languages of Spanish, Portuguese and French (all of which are Latin in origin).

Renaming the region with a stamp of European language dominance plays into the language hierarchies we see today. Geographically, Latin America often does not include the Caribbean, Guyana, Surname, French Guiana and oftentimes Brazil which have majority Black or *mulatto* populations. This is no accident. The Haitian Revolution of the 1791 into 1804, and subsequent backlash from colonizers can be thought of as an integral part to the formation of Latin America's anti-Black roots. White colonizers were the minority in Latin America with communities and settlements built largely around the coastlines. The Haitian Revolution was an enslaved people's uprising against white colonizers that ultimately resulted in the freedom of enslaved people and the creation of an independent Haiti. It is at this point European colonizers begin to openly make the distinction between white, mixed people (a.k.a. Creole; broadly belonging to any of the racial caste's sub-categories that include white and any other race) as "Latins" and Black representing what Latin America is not (T. Flores, 2021, p.60; Mignolo, 2002, p.86; Rojas Mix, 1991, p.348). As Tatiana Flores notes in "Latinidad is canceled," the removal of blackness from *latinidad* was done by way of language and geography and ultimately erasing indigenous and Black people from *latinidad*.

Indigenous people were ethnically cleansed by diseases like smallpox and influenza or by being pushed out of their land during colonization. There is a great deal of stories of indigenous women raped by colonizers that mirror the historical treatment of enslaved Black women of the time (Hardin, 2002). Indigenous and Black people were, during most of the colonial era, the majority in Spanish colonies. They were largely ignored by the small European minority and regarded as simply non-existent. To push Latin American identity past the extensively violent histories of enslavement of Black people and massacres of indigenous people, *mestizaje* gained

popularity in the early to mid-1800s during independence from colonizing countries. As a socio-political tool, *mestizaje* means “the process of interracial and/or intercultural mixing” (Martinez-Echazábal, 1998).

A colonial relic of white supremacy, *mestizaje* perpetuated the idea that Latin Americans were so racially mixed that they no longer needed racial identities and instead should rely upon ethno-national identities. Hand in hand with *mestizaje* was *blanqueamiento*. *Blanqueamiento*, as described by Duany (2005), is “...the whitening in the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America [which] influenc[ed] Latinx and people of Latin decent within and outside of the U.S. to distance themselves from their African ancestry and take-up White supremacist thinking, practices and behaviors.” Translated to whitening, *blanqueamiento* is most clearly displayed in the Spanish racial caste system whereby one’s mixing with European (white) ancestry produces higher socioeconomic status. Most insidiously, the author can recall family members using *blanqueamiento* mentality to speak ill of other members of the family dating and marrying darker skin partners. The ways *mestizaje* and *blanqueamiento* are ingrained in Latinx communities is a deliberate tactic to ignore colonial histories and continue to perpetuate white supremacy. It causes Latinx people to not be able to discuss racial socio-political and economic divides that kept white colonists in positions of power after independence.

As a majority, the new set of Latin American politicians, like Bernando O’Higgins in Chile, were of European descent. They would go down in history as being glorified for their fight for independence. Ultimately, this only solidified a ruling, racially white class that aimed to mirror Western liberalism both economically and politically. *Mestizaje* was, as political scientists say, a rally around the flag tactic that emphasized one’s national identity against colonial powers.

Today, we see this history play a role in identity for Latinx people both in the U.S. and within Latin America when people choose nationality identifiers over racial or even ethnic ones as well as the overall confusion over where Latinx people fall in the Black/White binary in the U.S. *Blanqueamiento,* while not being outwardly propagated, is a byproduct of white supremacist rule over the region and plays out in the ways Latinx people in the U.S. have used their racial whiteness to gain privilege.

From One Colonizer to the Next

As an independent Latin America began maturing their version of modern-day racism under the guise of national identity, the U.S. was outwardly professing its sense of racial superiority with the cultural and land seizure dubbed Manifest Destiny. Riding off the coattails of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, whereby the U.S. gained California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, and part of Colorado after the Mexican American war, white settlers believed that the U.S. was destined by God to spread democracy and capitalism. This sense of entitlement is a cornerstone of expansion of the U.S. and, often, at the detriment of others. The push westward to conquer present day mid-west and western U.S. came with the forced removal of indigenous people and expansion of slavery as a means of economic growth.

The repossession of present-day California's resources by white settlers is commonly known as the Gold Rush. What is not commonly discussed is how Mexican, Peruvian and Chilean labor was a backbone of the U.S. 's Manifest Destiny in California and how this history lays the foundation for the social and political practice of lumping peoples from any Latin American country. As early as 1823, the term "greasers" was used as a derogatory word for Mexicans but expanded to include Peruvians and Chileans miners during the Gold Rush

(Hayes-Bautista and Chapa, 1987). Not to be confused with the 1950s teenage style idolized in the film *Grease*, "greaser" was used to undermine Latin Americans' contribution to the economic growth of the U.S. Mexicans, Peruvian, and Chilean miners were skilled mining laborers. Yet white settlers degraded their work by calling them "greasers" because of greasing the axle wheels of mule carts that carried gold, but also the physical labor of mining the gold (Hayes-Bautista and Chapa, 1987; Nasatir, 1974). "Greaser" was also used because Latin American miners were often of olive skin tone with black hair that looked "unkempt" in comparison with white settlers. This would later become a stereotype of people from Latin American countries as being simultaneously lazy and forever foreigners taking jobs and opportunities from whites.

Much like today, (and relying upon *mestizaje* ideology) nineteenth century Mexicans, Peruvians and Chileans saw themselves as district groups, but white, settler colonists' policies and society did not. One of the first anti-immigrant policies targeting Latinx people in the U.S. was the Anti-Vagrancy Act of 1855, colloquially known as the Greaser Act (Mirandé, 2020, p.7). This relatively unknown history tied to the Gold Rush, a common topic in most K-12 history classrooms, is a starting point to the confusion and complexity of Latinx identity in the U.S. The term "greaser" is not only a seed for the stereotypes that would follow foreign, and U.S. born Latinx communities in the U.S. but offers an example of formation of a racialized monolith identity unwillingly stamped on Latinx people. This small bit of history also showcases the ways white supremacy was so ingrained in the foundation of the U.S. and clashes, nonsensically, with Latin America's own racist identity.

Peruvians and Chileans comprised a small portion of the population and it is unclear how many stayed after the Gold Rush died down due to the treatment by white U.S. settlers (Nasatir, 1974). As the U.S. continued to grow both geographically, economically, and politically, federal agencies began implementing stricter, race-based immigration policies. These policies attempted to keep non-white people from migrating to the U.S. The Latinx communities that did stay were majority Mexican and Mexican American not only because it was formerly Mexican land, but because the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo made any Mexican still in present day Texas and New Mexico officially U.S. citizens. Faced with the choice to stay or go back to Mexico depended heavily on access to resources/land. Since Indigenous people worked the land for *Criollos*, it can be reasonably assumed that darker skinned people were likely forced to stay in the U.S. Southwest without the resources to be able to leave. This reality lays another fundamental piece to Latinx identity in the U.S. Legally, Mexicans Americans were granted whiteness in a time when immigration policies and practices were largely anti-people of color because of Mexican Americans' citizenship status. This "off-white status" placed Mexican Americans and subsequently any Latin American (since the distinction was not important to white settlers) above indigenous and Black people, but it did not protect them fully from white supremacy. These communities were beginning to negotiate between assimilation and preservation of one's own culture and heritage against white norming.

Public Schools and white Supremacy

The same time Mexicans were granted citizenship in the U.S., because of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Common School Movement was working to institutionalize public schools in the 1830s and 40s. The Industrial Revolution was drawing to a close and cities were

now a new hub of society. The white elite began framing non-white people as endangering their social structure. The white colonizers were no longer satisfied with the “patchwork” educational institution that relied upon private, religious or public endeavors (Vallance, 1974, p.19). Even though most immigrants were phenotypically white (from European countries) or Chinese, U.S. white settlers were becoming increasingly more anti-immigrant. To combat this growing population and reinvigorate nationalism, the white elite focused on building an institutional public schooling system with the goal of “Americanizing” by way of English language acquisition (Vallance, 1974, p.19). A federal system of schools offered a vision of national unity for whites linguistically and culturally and an answer to the growing diversity.

Public schooling as an institution was deliberately crafted as an agent of white supremacy. Indigenous and Black children were not included in this vision. Indigenous children were taken from their land and communities and whitened in boarding schools and Black children were still enslaved. In Indigenous boarding schools, vocational training and English language instruction was integral to the curriculum. Indigenous children were literally stripped from their families and communities. White teachers cut these children's hair and pushed assimilation. Black schools, on the other hand, did not begin to form until after the end of slavery. Black children's schools were funded and run by community members not state or federal institutions. Famously, Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald financially supported over one-third of Black schools in the South. It should be noted that while Rosenwald provided the seed money for these schools, it was Black community funding that made up the majority of the budget and maintenance. The foundation of public schools, the way that we

understand it now with state and federal funding and progressive grade-levels starting as early as six years old, was created for white colonizers and those communities they deemed as white.

Mexican Americans were more included in the schooling movement since they were considered citizens with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. These schools, however, were mostly Catholic affiliated (thus not uniformly public schools), segregated and focused on vocational training and English language acquisition. The focus on vocation training and English language was to not only assimilate the population, but also retain cheap labor from Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Southwest (Au et al., 2016, p.93). Widespread access to these schools did not begin until the late 1880s (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). A key to the curriculum in these schools were "... intense deficit-curriculum approaches to Americanization designed to remove those qualities and cultural practices deemed Mexican" including Spanish and native languages" (Au et al., 2016, p.94). People of Spanish speaking ancestry were framed as having a "language deficiency" which justified outright exclusion from public school and later segregation (González, 1990). These practices would end up spreading West (into present day California) as U.S. white settlers invaded and stole more land (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990). Additionally, these curriculums became more outwardly discriminatory. Rosiek and Kinslow (2016) wrote about segregationist curriculums in this period and described how Southwest schools removed all Mexican culture and history from curriculum. These curricular advocates also helped to close down Mexican Catholic schools. Since Mexican Catholic schools are privately funded, they had more freedom with curricular choices and thus emphasized Mexican culture and history. Segregationist curriculum writers and advocates rallied around the closure of

these Catholic schools to prevent access to native language and history for Latinx children in a blatant attempt to further whiten youth.

By 1895, the first English-only bill was passed through Congress, vetoed by President Cleveland, then overridden by the House of Representatives. This bill almost passed, but the Senate did not act on it after the House of Representatives overrode it. Some states already had an English-only law, like California who passed an English-only bill in 1855, Texas in 1858, and New Mexico in 1891 (Au et al., 2016, p.94; Herenández-Chávez, 1995). Ironically, just as the U.S. annexes Puerto Rico in 1898, there was a substantial spike in language-based racist, laws targeting immigrants. The Nationality Act took into effect in 1906 and required immigrants to speak English to become naturalized citizens. This federal policy codified anti-immigrant sentiment and highlights the ties between discrimination and use of nondominant language in the U.S. With the continued codification of language-based racism, sterilization laws came into effect in California and mass deportations were occurring across the Southwest. By 1917, yet again, Latinx people are granted legal granted whiteness, but with strings attached. Puerto Ricans gained citizenship with the Jones Act. There were many restrictions that included commonwealth status (unless Puerto Ricans move to the mainland) and a 50-year struggle to impose English in Puerto Rican schools and society (Morris, 1996). Almost immediately, just as schooling on the mainland was focused on Americanizing, policies towards Puerto Rico prioritized making the people “civilized” through assimilation (Trías Monge, 1997, p. 32). Shortly thereafter the Department of the U.S. Bureau of Education mandated schools only teach in English in 1919 (Baker & Wright, 2001). Mexican American community in Texas challenged language-based,

segregation in 1930 with the *Independent School District v. Salvatierra* case. The decision only further solidified legal whiteness and segregation on the basis of language.

Terminology Explosion and Legacy of Segregation in Primary Education

Official records in the U.S. defining *latinidad* as a racialized monolith did not appear until the 1930 census. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget designated Mexican as a categorical race to define all Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. (Martinez, 2000; Rodríguez, 2015). It is reasonable to assume that people of Mexican ancestry were the largest population of the Latinx people in the U.S. during the start of the twentieth century, but there were also Cubans, Dominicans, Central and South Americans and, of course, the entire island of Puerto Rico and any Puerto Ricans on the mainland. The implication that one was either Mexican or simply not counted explicitly codifies long standing discrimination against Latin American migrants and, on an international scale, symbolically puts the rubber stamp of approval on *mestizaje*. Mexican Americans, along with the Mexican government, mobilized to eliminate the racial category Mexican because of fears of deportation and stigmatization. Activists also understood that having the option to be categorized as white afforded the community legal protections particularly in regard to deportation practices. Mexican as a racial category was eliminated by the next census in 1940 because of the mobilization by Mexican Americans with the support of the Mexican government (Parker et al., 2015; Mora, 2014; Nobles, 2000).

The same year that "Mexican" appeared as a racial category, the Court of Civil Appeals of Texas, San Antonio ruled in *Independent School District versus Salvatierra* that segregation of Mexican American children in public schools was only partially illegal. An elementary school within the Independent School District of Del Rio, Texas was placing Spanish speaking and

Mexican Americans children in a two-room building for separate instruction from white students. The sub-school was designated "Mexican" or "West End" because it housed predominantly Mexican students (and other Spanish speaking students) and its location on the school's campus (*Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra*, 1930). The superintendent, at the time, explained in a deposition that the Spanish-speaking students were working on cotton fields and ranches and would start attending mid-way through the fall semester. The superintendent claims that a separate school was necessary so as not to overload classrooms and to address "... the language difficulty with which the overwhelming majority of [Spanish speaking and Mexican American] children are hampered…" despite knowing that "...generally the best way to learn a language is to be associated with the people who speak the language" (*Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra*, 1930). Additionally, the superintendent acknowledged that white American students were also arriving late in the school year, but they were not sent to the "Mexican" school because of their proficiency in English. The appellate court's decision set a precedent by stating that Mexican American children cannot be separated from "...other White races, merely or solely because they are Mexican" (*Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra*, 1930; Martinez, 2000). In essence the court said that Mexicans cannot claim racial discrimination because they are categorically white. Thus, segregation of Latinx students was justified because the schools were segregating because of a perceived curricular need. As the court notes segregation on the basis of "linguistic difficulties and migrant farming pattern" is still acceptable (Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra, 1930).

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA), passed in 1958, was the first time the federal government acknowledged the importance of foreign language instruction in developing

a well-rounded education. NDEA was designed to teach foreign languages to native English speakers, not to provide English instruction for non-native speakers (Baker & Wright, 2001). This practice of prioritizing native English speakers' acquisition of a foreign language over native Spanish speaker maintenance continues today in bilingual schools. One of the critics of bilingual education is the reliance these schools have on white, English-language parents to "buy-in" in order to reach enrollment. Paralleling Dr. Derrick Bell Jr's theory of interest convergence that explains how the rights for Black people only advance when their interests align with white interests (Bell, 1980), Latinx communities' potential access to native languages (particularly Spanish) in public school was only granted when there was a shared interest in language acquisition by the dominant language users (i.e., white, English speakers).

On a microscale, public schools for Latinx did not change much until the passing of *Brown v. Board of Education* though not because of lack of effort by Latinx communities. In 1931, *Roberto Alvarez v. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District* was the first successful desegregation ruling for Mexican Americans (R. Alvarez, 1986). Lemon Grove Grammar School in Lemon Grove, California was a relatively small school with only 169 students enrolled. 44% of the enrolled students were Mexican Americans. After six months of planning by the school's board of trustees and under their direction, the principal, Jerome Green, stood in front of the school's entrance and did not permit Mexican American students to enter. Those students were redirected to a two-room building separate from Lemon Grove Grammar School. Instead of entering the building which was nicknamed, "La Caballeriza" or barnyard in English, the children went home, and their parents took the board of trustees to court. One of the

Mexican American students was chosen to head the suit, Roberto Alvarez, because “he was an exemplary student and spoke English well” (Alvarez, 1986, p. 6). This quote

Again, in court transcripts, questions around whether language is better learned around other native speakers was brought up. Unlike the superintendent in *Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra,* defendants (Lemon Grove Board of Trustees’ lawyer) stated quiet (Alvarez, 1986, p. 10). When the judge asked if American (e.g., referring to white children, since both Mexican American and white children were citizens) students were falling behind in class were they segregated, and the response was that white students were just held back a grade level. Interestingly, both *Alvarez v the Board of Trustees of Lemon Grove Sch. Dist.* and *Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra* used racial discrimination as an argument, yet *Alvarez* won. A win in state court, however, does not necessarily equate to a win in national or even state educational practices. Segregation would continue until *Brown v. Board of Education.* Though a change in legal strategy would end up being the divisive factor that brings about *Brown v. Board of Education.*

The practice of placing Spanish speaking students into designated Mexican School for elementary years (K-4) was rationalized by the need to Americanize Spanish speakers to become English speakers. In 1947 in Westminster, California, the Mendez family had enough of low-quality Mexican Schools and decided to file suit against Westminster School District. Instead of relying upon racial discrimination and understanding the legal whiteness afforded to the community, attorneys for Mendez argued discrimination based on ancestry and supposed language deficiency which in essence relegated Mexican American children as second-class citizens which is a violation of the 14th amendment (Strum, 2010). This ruling in favor of

desegregation would end up assisting *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954 because of its reliance on 14th amendment violations.

Subsequently, in the 1940s and 50s Mexican Americans that could not (or refused) to identify and benefit from the white category reclaimed the term *Chicano*. Chicano was used as a racial slur, but young, working-class men in El Paso, Texas, *pachucos*, worked to reclaim the term to denounce white settler colonialism that took Mexican land, address white privilege, and denote their Spanish dialectic difference (Macías, 2008; Saldívar, 1990). *Boricua*, a term for Puerto Ricans, also emerged around this time with the same radical pushback against whiteness. Puerto Ricans are the second largest population of Latinx people and had a long history of U.S. colonialism even into the present day. The terms *Chicano* and *Boricua* would not gain popularity until the 21st century because of their association with the working class, "radical" identity.

Between 1940 and 1970, the Bureau found other ways to track Latinx people. The census asked questions about place of birth, parents' place of birth and even "mother tongue" (Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987). The Bureau eventually stored a list of Spanish last names for some states (Mora, 2014). It was not until the early 1970s, under the Nixon administration, that a term emerged, 'Hispanic' (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; García, 2020). Companies like Spanish-speaking Telemundo and Univision pushed major ad campaigns that promoted this term as encompassing all Spanish-speaking people living in the U.S. (García, 2020; Salinas, 2015). This Americanized term is derived from the Spanish term *Hispania*, referring to Spain's colonial name (García, 2020). The reference to colonial Spain makes a clear connection to European whiteness whereby people from Latin America are assumed to have European ancestry. The definition also makes a point of not including non-Spanish speaking people in Latin America

which excludes Indigenous people whose native language is already pushed aside. Language and its use was increasingly becoming a hot topic again in U.S. white dominant culture. By 1968, the construction of "English Language Limited" education under the Bilingual Education Act (known as Title VII or BEA), an amendment to Elementary and Secondary Act, established separate classes as a remedial practice to prepare non-English speakers to be able to join dominant English classes.

BEA is traditionally considered a major victory for bilingual education, but it actually undermines the long standing legal and social battles forged by Latinx communities beginning just thirty years prior. It should come to no surprise that after witnessing a period where the people were not only self-identifying in opposition to whiteness (using terms like *Chicano* and *Boricua*), but also legally fighting for inclusion in white dominant schools (i.e., *Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvatierra*, *Roberto Alvarez v. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District*, and *Mendez v. Westminster School District*) that BEA be enacted. Acting almost as a backlash to progress or possibly another example of white eraser of history, BEA's "liberal multiculturalism" recognizes Spanish as a tool for Latinx communities while also framing Spanish as a "handicap" (García & Sung, 2018, p.324; San Miguel, 2004).

By the 1980s and into the 90s, the term "Latino" started to gain popularity after *Chicano* and *Boricua* were considered too radical. Latino is derived from Latin America and intended to be understood as defining the group of people with ancestral lineage in the Latin American and Caribbean region regardless of language or race. Since Latinx people saw themselves as racially mixed and understood Latino as not specifying language, but rather geography, the term became more widely acceptable. Term also uses a masculine 'o' ending in line with Spanish orthography

(Salinas, 2015). Even though a majority of now self-identifying Latinos would rather use national identity, Latino became a way of unifying the community as having a shared experience in the U.S. This framing forgets a critical detail. As discussed, the term Latin America was created by French intellectuals and refers to colonial powers and Latin languages. While Latino seemed to fit for immigrant and nonimmigrant, white, Black, or Indigenous people with ancestry in Latin America, it only does so if we conveniently forget the root of term Latin America and its history with white settler colonialism. By the early 1980s, as the pendulum swung again towards whiteness in terminology of Latinx people, language-based racism was sparking a fuse.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan was quoted in the *New York Times* saying, "It is absolutely wrong and against the American concept to have a bilingual education program that is now openly, admittedly, dedicated to preserving their native language and never getting them adequate English so they can go out into the job market" (Cline, 1981). Within the same year, Senator Hayakawa introduced a constitutional amendment that would make English the official language of the U.S. Together with John Tanton (an ophthalmologist), they formed a social/political group called "U.S. English" would assist in the socio-political sentiment rejecting non-English communities (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p.148). "U.S. English" led a major campaign to make English the official language of the U.S. The organization was dissolved only when counter-movements claimed leaders of the organization of being racially biased (Donahue, 1995). According to Donahue, internal U.S. English documents argued that "…speaking Spanish causes racial tensions and low economic achievement." There has been an insidious political and cultural tendency to disparage languages and cultures that are outside of White norms of schooling long before "U.S. English."

The U.S. census added Latino to the Hispanic category of ethnicity in 2005. The terms now coexist and are defined as anyone with “Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.” If someone selects Hispanic/Latino, they can also self-identify into presubscribed racial categories created under the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards (i.e., Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and White) as well as national identities (US Census Bureau, 2022; The Executive Office of the Present of the U.S., 2004). Unsurprisingly, there are still some preferences in the community to identify more strongly with national identities than a racial or ethnic group. Additionally, in a Pew Research Center report it was found that 30% of older adults self-identified as “White” in the 2010 census and only 15% of younger adults self-identified as “White” (Pew Research Center, 2016). This suggests the younger populations are moving away from self-identifying as white. Nonetheless, the Census Bureau, and its predecessor the Office of Management and Budget have been extensively criticized in academia for being a contributor for the confusion around race and ethnicity as well as being too limiting to represent the growing diversity within the country (Costanzo, 2015; Schor, 2005; Wolf, 2006).

As academia on Latin American communities living in the U.S. expands, the term Latinx, Latin*, Latin@, and finally Latine evolved in the 21st century. Gender fluid and nonconforming identities are systematically left out of the Spanish language. As LGBTQIA+ communities gained visibility in the mainstream, the term Latinx, Latin*, and Latin@ emerged to move away from heteronormative binary. The heteronormative is a term used to describe the ways heterosexual relationships are engrained into society as being the norm. The binary, in this term,

refers to the male and female gender roles that play out to make up a typical heterosexual relationship. The LGBTQIA+ community is so often marginalized in society and has historically experienced similar oppression due to white supremacy. Latine is the latest evolution of an inclusive term to describe all people regardless of gender with a Latin American ancestry living in the U.S. Latine has been argued as the preferred term because of how easy it is to conjugate in Spanish.

For the purpose of this thesis, as demonstrated thus far, Latinx will be used to describe all people regardless of gender with a Latin American ancestry living in the U.S. Being able to conjugate in Spanish is not necessary for this thesis and Spanish is, yet another white, colonial language forced upon the Latinx community. In line with the above-mentioned reasoning for not capitalizing white, this thesis does not aim to emphasize whiteness, but take a critical lens to the ways white supremacy is engrained in Latinx identity. Where possible, I will instead emphasize race as it plays a vital role in the livelihood of persons with the Latinx identity. Additionally, the 'x' forces a writer, and subsequently the reader, to use 'people' or 'community' when discussing more than one person. People and community are essential to understanding identity and by emphasizing the collective there is a symbolic acknowledgement of the power collectivity can weld. Ideally, another word should be created that does not have ties to white supremacy or language hierarchies.

Why Identity Development Scales

There exists a duality in Latinx identity of being both white and not white enough, while always benefitting off their "off white status" (Gomez, 2005, p. 9). Thus, the question of who gets to be Latinx in the U.S. and use this legal protection depends on one's closeness to

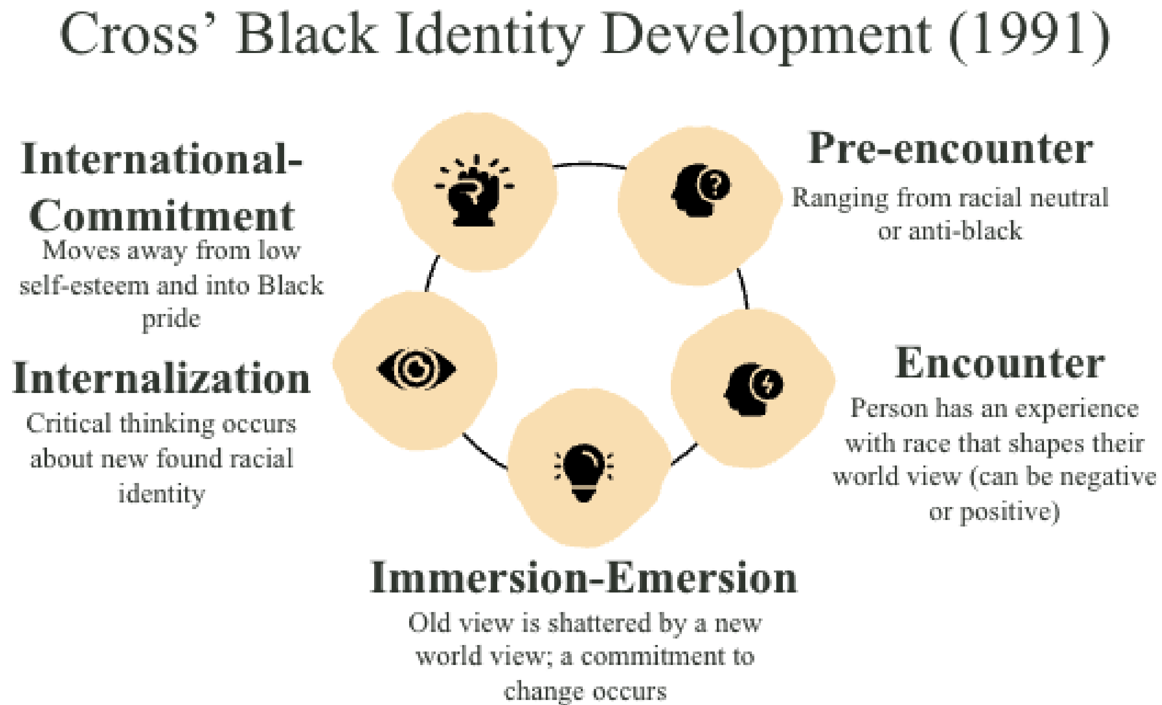
whiteness, phenotypically and linguistically. The terminology to categorize Latinx people has been coded with colonial relics and ultimately white supremacy. The clash of two versions of white supremacy, Spanish colonial rule and U.S. institutional racism, has created the internalization of whiteness within the community through *mestizaje*/*blanquemiento* and historical use of whiteness to avoid othering. The trajectory of federal immigration policies shows how the legal whiteness is never quite enough for Latinx communities within the U.S.; particularly if they are not phenotypically white. The court cases discussed, all brought through primary education, exemplified how Latinx communities are afforded whiteness yet othered through the language exclusion practices. All of which offers a glimpse into the deeply rooted acceptance and preference of white, Latinx as a defining identity.

The interplay between race and identity is complex and in constant negotiation with inherited family values or customs, local community histories and people, friends and workplace influences, and one's own lived experiences in their skin. Unpacking these multileveled understandings began in the field of psychology. For minoritized communities, the focus was on the internalization of negative stereotypes. Most prominently, the Clark doll study (1947) was the first academic publication that illustrated how racism is not only pervasive in the way the white people view Black people, but also how these stereotypes are internalized by minoritized communities. Doctors Kenneth and Mannie Clark's study examined race perceptions using four dolls identical in all aspects except color. Participants in the study were a group of Black and white children from three- to seven-years-old. The doctors asked which doll the children preferred and why. The children overwhelmingly chose the white dolls and gave these white dolls positive characteristics, while describing the brown dolls with negative characteristics. The

Clark doll study played an integral role in the passing of *Brown v Board of Education* though its authors had no intention of being a part of legal history (Blackside, Inc., 1985). The Clark doll study was conducted and published 14 years prior to the case and the doctors intended as Kenneth says in an interview for film Eyes on Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954-1965, "... We did it to communicate to our colleagues in psychology the influence of race and color and status on the self-esteem of children" (Blackside Inc., 1985, para 6).

The legacy of the Clark doll study cannot be understated. Besides making an appearance in the landmark case, *Brown v Board of Education*, the question of how race affects self-esteem would help guide the psychology field for decades to come. William Cross Jr.'s Nigrescence theory was the next seminal scholarship that took the idea of race's impact on self-esteem and shaped it into an identity model. Cross' Nigrescence theory (1971), and later revisions (1991), describe five stages of Black identity that eb and flow with one's experiences and life changes (Figure 1). Cross' theory relies on lived experiences and self-reflection to guide race identity development in an era where empirical research depended on eugenics, and subsequently white supremacy, in academia.

Figure 1
Illustration of Cross' final version of Black Identity Development (1991)



Created by referring to Cross, et al., 1991 & Ritchey, 2014.

In the 70s and 80s social/cultural/developmental psychologists were taking from race identity models and developing measurements for conceptualizing ethnic identity development. These measurements were questionnaires that were studied on homogenous ethno-national identities, like Mexican and/or Mexican American alone. These early ethnic identity measurements tended to also focus on acculturation (assimilation) and/or awareness of ethnicity, but also self-esteem (Atkinson, et al., 1983; Bernal et al., 1987; Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Rodriquez & DeBlassie, 1983). Bernal and colleague's study on Mexican preschoolers establish a long-contested theory that young children have limited to no ethnic identity (Bernal et al., 1987). By the 90s, Jean Phinney famously developed the Multidimensional Ethnic Identity

Model (MEIM). Phinney's scale is a questionnaire that was administered to 417 high school students and 136 college students. of the 553 participants, there were 134 Asian Americans, 131 African Americans, 89 Hispanics, 41 students of "mixed backgrounds," 12 Whites, and 10 "other." In line with current research trends, this ethnicity scale focused on older students (high school or college aged). Interestingly, Phinney did not elaborate on the specifics of "mixed backgrounds" or "other" categories. MEIM is a 14-question measurement that contains three sets of questions that target: (1) positive ethnic attitudes and sense of belonging with 5 questions; (2) ethnic identity achievement (exploration and resolution of identity issues) with 7 questions; (3) ethnic behaviors and practices with 2 questions.

As the psychological field grew, educational psychologists became fixated on the academic achievement of minoritized communities in relation to their white counterparts in school. Psychologists like Adriana Umaña-Taylor, Deborah Rivas-Drake, and Stephan Quintana, focused on how ethnic identity development in Latinx adolescents ties into academic achievement and later psychosocial and mental health. Primary education, specifically PK-5, studies became less popular as there continued to be mixed results from scholars using identity development scales on young children. More recently, however, extensive research has shown children can identify and associate with their race and even experience racism much earlier than adults are having conversations about race in the U.S. (Anzures et al., 2010; Bar-Haim et al., 2006; Dunham et al., 2013; Marcelo & Yates, 2019; Newheiser et al., 2014; Olson et al., 2012; Sullivan & Wilton, 2020). Studies have shown racial biases are prevalent in babies as young as three to six months old (Craig, 2017; Kelly et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2016, 2017).

In recent publication by anti-racist educator, Britt Hawthrone, using the most recent research on racial identity, illustrated the stages of antiracism awareness for different age ranges (see Table 1). This table breaks down a child's understanding of race from two years old into adolescents. As young as two, children are noticing differences between skin color and even using race as a reason for behavior choices. By three and four, children are aware of prejudice and curious about their physical traits (i.e., hair color, and skin color). The ages of three and four is also the beginning of confusion about racial group names and the actual color of their skin. Knowing this in relation with how the Latinx identity, as demonstrated, is confused by their multiple names and contains such a diverse racial speaks to the importance of identity development take targets PK-5. Much of the confusion around identity has a clear opportunity to be addressed between three and four years old because children are already asking for clarity. By the age five, Hawthorne found that research shows Black and Latino children show no preference toward their own group, yet white children are bias towards whiteness. This is interesting to note because Latinx children can be racially white which further demonstrates the need for preventive antiracist identity development especially when, as the table notes, children can change racial attitudes as quickly as one week.

Table 1
Hawthorne's Antiracism Awareness for Different Age Ranges (2022)

Twos	Threes and Fours	Fives
Notice differences in skin color	Continued curiosity about racial differences	Can begin to understand scientific explanations for differences in skin color, hair textures, and eye shape
Curious about differences in hair textures	Aware of prejudice toward skin color and other racial characteristics; becoming aware of societal bias against darker skin and other physical differences	Can understand more fully the range of racial differences and similarities
Use nonverbal cues to signal noticing differences; may react with curiosity or fear	Want to know how they got their hair color, skin color, and other characteristics	By five, Black and Latino children in research settings show no preference (prejudice) toward their own groups compared to white children; white children at this age remain strongly biased in favor of whiteness
Overgeneralize common characteristics such as skin color	Aware that getting older brings change; may wonder if their skin, hair, and eye color remain constant	By kindergarten, children show many of the same racial attitudes that adults in our culture hold–they have already learned to associate some groups with higher status than others
Use race to reason about people's behavior	Expressions of racial prejudice often peak at ages four and five	Explicit conversations with five- to seven-year-olds about interracial friendships can dramatically improve their racial attitudes in as little as a single week
By thirty months, most children use race to choose playmates	Confusion about racial group names and actual color of their skin	

Elementary (typically ages 5-12)	Adolescence (typically teen years)
Can identify and critically think about interpersonal dynamics of racism, sexism, and classism, and other forms of -isms	"The search for personal identity intensified in adolescents: vocational plans, religious beliefs, values and preferences, political affiliations and beliefs, gender roles, and ethnic identities" Dr. Beverly D. Tatum
Understand scientific explanations for phenotypes and adaptations	Aware of negative stereotypes and still may uphold these stereotypes
Understand the nature and harm of stereotyping and how to verbally interrupt them	Possible academic disinterest in school due to cultural and ethnic erasure in the curriculum
"After age 9, racial attitudes tend to stay constant, unless the child experiences a life-changing event" (Aboud, 1988)	Can be perceived as egocentric when really they assume their lived experiences are the same as their peers
	When an individual identifies with a group as part of their social identity and that group is stereotyped in negative ways, the person is at risk of lower performance relative to the stereotyped dimension of that identity

By the time children are starting kindergarten, they are already able to understand explanations of phenotypes and the harms of stereotyping. In fact, by age nine racial attitudes remain unchanged unless there is a major life change (Aboud, 1988). Meaning by the time children are in the 4th grade, they are likely not to change their racial attitudes. By the time children are becoming adolescents and we more outwardly see their personal development, children are already well versed in biases and stereotypes and may still uphold them. The adolescent stage is also when we see the negative effects of stereotyping begin to shape performance in school. PK-5 is a moment of fast paced change for children in regard to racial identity, which makes the study of identity development at this stage crucial. These scales cannot just target Latinx children uniformly because the ethnicity is racial diverse and phenotypically white, Latinx children may have completely different understandings than those that are phenotypically Black. In short, in order to combat the pervasive nature of white supremacy

embedded in the Latinx identity the use of identity development scales in PK-5 is the most impactful.

Chapter 3: Methods

Systematic Review

A comprehensive systematic review of ethnic identity development scales targeting racially diverse, Latinx in PK-5 was conducted to analyze the prevalence of anti-racist theories available to youth.

Systematic methodology was utilized to identify up-to-date, relevant research on ethnic identity development scales for PK-5 Latinx students that addressed five criteria. The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions (Higgins et al., 2021) was used to develop and implement the protocol for this systematic review. In the following sections, I will discuss the eligibility criteria, exclusion criteria, extraction process, coding procedure, reference review procedure, and finally discuss the publications found.

Eligibility Criteria

The publications selected for this review had to meet the following six criteria. First, the publication had to be conducted within the U.S., to support replicability with similar populations within the U.S. educational system and due to the fact that the U.S. born, Latinx population now surpasses the foreign born, Latinx population in the U.S. (Funk & Hugo Lopez, 2022). Second, the publication had to target Latinx populations or contain Latinx participants. Third, the publications had to include a racial or ethnic identity development scale. Even though the research question addresses a review of an ethnic identity development scale, the researcher expanded the search to include racial identity development scales because the Latinx identity is often categorized as a race, with literature using the terms almost interchangeably. To meet the fourth criterion, the publications must focus on PK-5 age students in a school setting. For the

fifth criterion, the publications had to disaggregate the Latinx identity by race. For the final criterion, the publication had to address racism.

Exclusion Criteria

Publications were excluded if the target population was not U.S. based Latinx participants, did not include target age (5-10 years old) or school grade (PK-5), and did not include a racial or ethnic identity scale. Additionally, publications were excluded if they did not disaggregate for race within Latinx identity or address racism.

Extraction Process

An initial search was conducted, utilizing the PRISMA Flow Diagram model (Page et al., 2020), as a framework to search the Web of Science. The following search terms were used: "Latin*" AND "identity*" AND “ethnic*" AND "rac*" AND "student*." To reduce publication bias, the keywords were exclusively searched within the “Topic” field across the database, to include publications that might not have contained the keywords within their abstract or publication titles. The rationale for this decision is based on this review’s purpose. By isolating the “Topic” field within the search tool of both databases, this also aided the researcher in the extraction and abstract review process.

The initial search resulted in a total of 330 publications. A week after the initial search, the reviewer conducted a second search using the parameters described above, and the results increased to 347, suggesting that the search terms were generating more publications because the topic is gaining academic interest.

The total publications (n=347) were assessed by reviewing abstracts to eliminate any publications that did not include PK-5 students, resulting in 10 publications that met the

eligibility criteria. These 10 studies underwent a full-text review, specifically reviewing titles, abstracts, methods, and results sections. After this review, one publication was excluded due to its focus on African American students exclusively (Smith et al., 2009). Seven additional articles were excluded because these articles did not use a racial or ethnic identity development scale (Bondy et al., 2017; Coker et al., 2021; Núñez & García, 2017; Reisner et al., 2021; Ruck et al., 2011; Strambler & Weinstein, 2010; Wasserberg, 2017). The remaining two publications were excluded because, while they did include an ethnic identity development scale, they did not disaggregate by race (Brown, 2011; Hernández, 2014). It should be noted that none of the above-mentioned articles included a disaggregation of race. Three publications did address racism though not by name, but rather framing racism as perceptions of discrimination, biases, and racial exclusion (Brown et al., 2011; Coker et al., 2021; Ruck et al., 2011). Only one publication addressed racism explicitly (Núñez & García, 2017). These exclusions resulted in a total of one publication included in this study. See Table 2 for a visual representation of the systematic search.

Table 2
Search results using PRISMA Flow Diagram model

Identification	Records identified through database search (WOS, n=347)	
Screening	Records Abstract Screened (n=10)	Records excluded (n=337)
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n=0)	Full-text articles excluded based on eligibility criteria (n=10)
Included	Studies included in systematic review (n=0)	

Coding Procedures

Variables were chosen based on the study's research questions and coded into an Excel spreadsheet. Using the Web of Sciences' "refine results" feature, the research narrowed the results to only include U.S. publications. The variables were then coded as follows: (1) demographics including target population or percentage of Latinx inclusion, and grade; (2) methodology, whether the publication includes a racial or ethnic identity scale (Y) or does not include (N); (3) Latinx ethnicity is disaggregated by race (Y) or Latinx racialized (N); and (4) does the publication address racism or anti-racism (Y) or does not (N).

Summary of Findings

A systematic review was used to analyze the findings of this study. Specifically, the PRISMA model (Page et al., 2020) and Cochrane guidelines (Higgins et al., 2021) were used as the framework for this analysis to promote replicability and reduce publication bias. By using this systematic approach, synthesizing the resulting articles allowed for an analysis of the outcomes of ethnic identity development scales for Latinx students in PK-5 that disaggregate by race and address racism. There were no publications that fit the criteria. This finding adds to the under researched literature base on ethnic identity theories for primary school aged Latinx youth. This study highlights the emergent need of research on identity development for a growing, racially diverse, population of Latinx youth in the U.S. particularly within early childhood and primary education. The results suggest there is no relevant academic scholarship/understanding of how Latinx youth comprise and exist within a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds in PK-5 settings.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will discuss the results of the systematic analysis and attempt to answer the proposed research questions. With no publications found for a true systematic review, the author examined the 10 publications addressing PK-5 to further demonstrate the need for more research on Latinx ethnic identity development for PK-5 that disaggregates by race. Since Smith et al. (2009) only included Black participants and Reisner et al. (2021) focused on sexual orientation identity development, both publications were not included in the results section as they were too far out of the parameters of the author's systematic review. Leaving the results section with eight publications that helped to highlight the need for ethnic identity development scales for diverse Latinx PK-5 students.

Research question 1: Do identity development scales exist for Latinx PK-5 students?

To begin, of the 347 articles found, an overwhelming 49% were focused on university/college students (see below Table 3 for full breakdown). Even if all PK-5 publications fit into the parameters of the systematic review, the literature available on Latinx ethnicity identity development scales are slim. Only 3% of the total publications addressed primary education. The focus on higher education students could be attributed to a couple of factors. Early scholarship on identity development was conducted on higher education students. Higher education is a transitional period for identity between secondary education and adulthood. Higher education also assists in socializing and developing adults for the workforce and has developed student affairs departments and degree programs that center around identity development (Ritchey, 2014).

Table 3
Breakdown of publications found in literature review by educational status or age.

K-12, Post-Secondary, Adult, or Other	# Publications	% Total publications
PK-5th grade	10	3%
6th-8th grade	48	14%
9th-12th grade	64	18%
University/college enrolled students (post-secondary)	169	49%
Adults (not enrolled in university/college)	33	9%
Other (literature review, PK-12 policy analysis	23	7%

Both Brown and colleagues (2011) and Hernández and colleagues (2014) were the only articles that used ethnic identity development scales. While both articles failed to disaggregate by race within the Latinx participants, the selected scales do illuminate what is available for Latinx PK-5 students. Brown et al. (2011) used two types of daily diary measures and three types of individual interview measures. The two daily diary measurements included:

(1) daily identity centrality (ranking eight self-descriptors from one to eight with eight being the least important which is a scale used by Alvarez et al., 2001) and

(2) daily identity salience (students were prompted to recall their days, period by period, in their diary. The researchers counted the number of times gender and ethnicity were mentioned).

Daily diaries are an interesting choice in that there is numeric value, but a dependence on human experience is often left out of the identity scale publications that rely more heavily on quantitative research. Under the interview measures, the researchers used Pfeifer and colleagues' (2007) ethnic identity measure (a combination of Phinney, 1993 and Harter, 1985), a gender

identity measure, and Ramsey's (1987) awareness of ethnic and gender bias questions. Of interest was Pfeifer and colleagues' (2007) ethnic identity development scale.

As mentioned, Pfeifer and colleagues' (2007) ethnic identity scale is an adaptation of the iconic *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (MEIM) developed by Jean S. Phinney (1992) and Harter's (1985) *Self-Perception Profile*. Phinney's 2007 is designed for older students, so Pfeifer used aspects of Harter's *Self-Perception Profile for Children*. Harter's scale measures a sense of self-worth and self-competence within academic skills. While this is a popular method of obtaining ratings on ethnic identity development scales (i.e., using one's perceptions of academic ability in relation to self-awareness), it fails to capture the ways children understand their ethnicity in relation to how their race plays out in the real world. Neither scale targets Latinx people specifically, but rather attempts to numerically decipher closeness to one's own ethnicity using diverse participant groups. Additionally, there is much debate over the validity and reliability of multiple factors structured scales (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The main criticism of these scales is that they fail to capture the nuances of values, attitudes, and behaviors that are embedded in one's ethnicity and even race (Cokley, 2007). Certainly, with the Latinx ethnicity being so racially diverse and, as mentioned in previous chapters so heavily dependent on whiteness, there is room for one Latinx person to score wildly different from another because of the way they are treated or have internalized treatment on the basis of their melanin. Nonetheless, Phinney and Harter's measures remain a cornerstone of ethnic identity development scales and shaped Pfeifer and colleagues' (2007) scale.

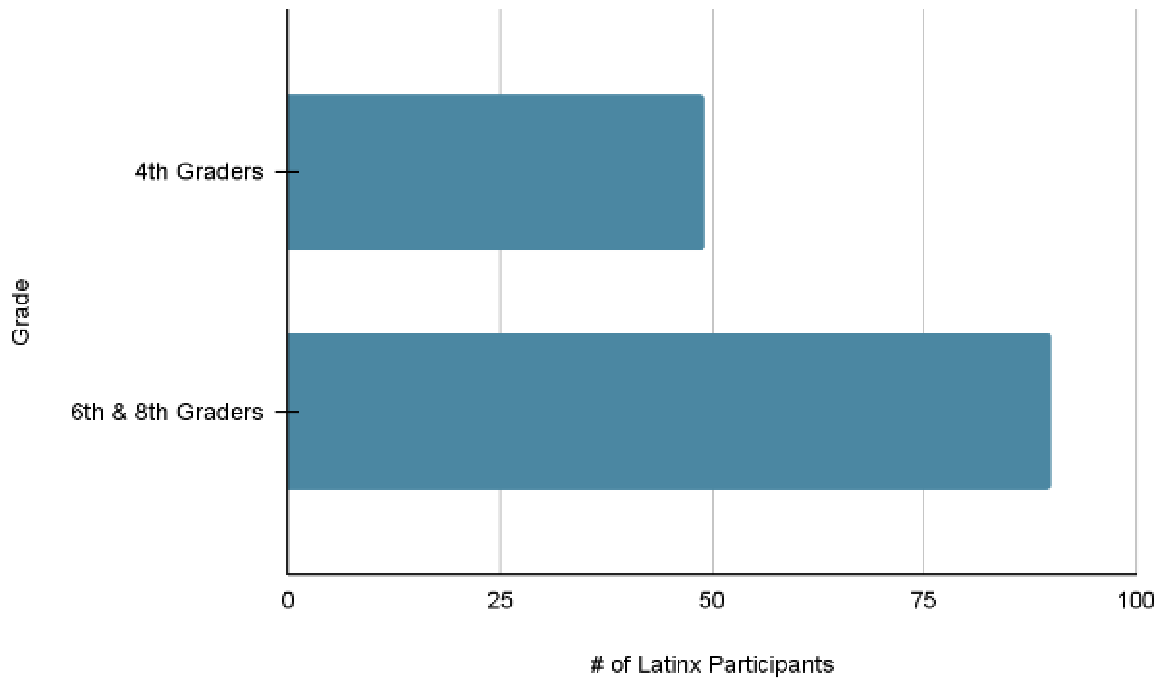
Hernández et al. (2014) created their own adaptation of two measures: five items from Bernal and Knight's (1993) measure, and four items from Knight and colleagues' (2010)

measure. Both measures were explicitly designed for Mexican American cultural values and juxtapose Mexican American culture against white culture. Since Hernández and colleagues' scale was limited to Mexican American ethno-nationality, it was simply too narrow because this thesis aims to look at Latinx identity in the U.S. as a whole.

It should be noted that, of the 10 results for PK-5 publications, three publications included participants outside of PK-5 (Bondy et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2011; Ruck et al., 2011). Bondy et al. used the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2022 administered by Research Triangle Institute for the National Center of Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education, which included data on elementary and secondary students combined. Thus, results produced were not specifically PK-5 focused. Brown et al. looked at 350 4th, 6th, and 8th African American, Latino, and European American students. Of the 350 total participants, 109 were 4th graders from three elementary schools. Of the 109, there were 49 Latino 4th graders included in the study, making the majority the ethnic group of 4th graders. The 4th grade Latinx participant breakdown for Brown et al. (2011) is displayed in Table 4. While 4th grade Latinx participants make up a sizable portion of the Latinx representation in this study in comparison with 6th and 8th graders, the majority of Latinx participants are from middle school, which is not within the author's parameters of understanding PK-5 (primary and elementary) aged children's identity development.

Table 4

Latinx grade breakdown in Brown et al. (2011).



Research question 2: Do identity development scale studies of Latinx populations in PK-5 disaggregate by race within the Latinx ethnicity and address anti-Blackness?

All publications fell short in disaggregating by race within the Latinx ethnicity. Only four publications addressed racism at all, though not always directly (Brown et al., 2011; Cocker et al., 2021; Núñez & García, 2017; Wasserberg, 2017). Brown and colleagues (2011) investigated gender and ethnic bias among 4th, 6th, and 8th graders, but do not explicitly talk about racism or anti-Blackness. Coker and colleagues' publication directly addressed racism by examining the association with mental health and perceived racial/ethnic discrimination among 5th graders. Latinx participants made up the majority of the 5th graders, although there was no disaggregation by race. Additionally, the measures included two racial/ethnic discrimination questions, 32 questions addressed mental health (specifically the *Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children*

Predictive Scales), and ‘other measures’ (which were demographic data on children's parents). Unfortunately, without disaggregation by race, ethnic identity development scale, and given that the focus was parental support that can mitigate mental health concerns due to perceived racial/ethnic discrimination, little information was relevant for the purpose of this thesis.

On the surface, Núñez & García’s (2017) publication seemed to be the most promising. The researchers replicated the Clark Doll Study (1947) using LatCrit theory as a theoretical framework. Thirty-five Latinx 2nd to 5th grade students between the ages of 7 and 11 were randomly selected from three school districts. The children were asked a series of ‘yes,’ ‘no’ or ‘both’ questions in two different scenarios ranging from intelligence, behavior, preference to attending school, and likelihood of going to college. The first scenario hypothesized that, “In the race scenario, the White doll would be perceived more favorably than the Latina doll” (p. 3). In the second scenario, researchers hypothesized, “The Latinx doll would be seen as more favorable than the Latino male doll” (p. 3).

The results of the publication mirrored the Clark Doll Study (1947) in that the Latinx children tended to prefer the white doll over the Latina doll, indicating racial preference to white. Additionally, the study found that the Latino male doll was overwhelmingly more likely to be described as “dumb” and as “gets in trouble at school” over the Latina female doll (p. 6). The Latina female doll was more likely to be “well liked in school” and “to like school” itself.

A major flaw, and the reason it was not picked to be included in the systematic review, was that the researchers purposefully excluded Afro-Latinx students. The authors reasoned that because the study’s focus was strictly on “Mexican-American or Latin American descent” and since most of the participants were Mexican or Mexican American (either first or second

generation in the U.S.), Afro-Latinx participants were systematically not included. Núñez and García (2017) study, whether intentionally or not, further perpetuated the erasure of Blackness from the Latinx ethnic identity. Their study could be modified to include Afro-Latinx students and disaggregate by race within the other Latinx participants included, which would allow for an understanding of racism within Latinx children. With that change, it would also be interesting to ask questions around which doll Latinx children identify with and see if Latinx children self-identify with the phenotypic doll.

Wasserberg's article (2017) on stereotype threat effects on African American and Latina/o children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade did address racism, but failed to use an ethnic identity scale. Wasserberg looked at domain identification measures (created by Smith & White, 2001), reading test performance, and anxiety measures to understand how stereotype threat affects achievement. Latinx students only comprised 17% of the participants. Interestingly, in the discussion portion of Wasserberg's publication, racial identification of Latinx people was addressed as a shortcoming and avenue for future research. Wasserberg, then, highlighted articles by Fergus (2009), Logan (2003), and Suárez and colleagues (2009) as citations for the rationale for breaking down Latinx participants by race.

Ruck et al. (2011) examined African American and Latino 4th, 7th and 10th graders. Going against participants' self-identification of two or more racial/ethnic categories, Ruck et al. added a third demographic category of 'biracial'. 9% of the participants self-identified as either African American and Latino or African American and European-American, but the researchers lumped these participants together as biracial. Likewise Núñez and García (2017), whether

purposefully or not, perpetuate the conflation of Latinx people as a racial category by further demonstrating a need for publications to disaggregate by race for Latinx participants.

In Stambler and Weinstein's (2010) publication, the authors examined psychological disengagement as predictors of achievement and teacher-rated behavioral engagement. The study was done explicitly on Latino and African American students, within one elementary school in California, between the 1st and 5th grades. The authors took:

- achievement measures (standardized math and English scores from two academic years),
- a behavioral engagement measure (trimester teacher ratings; 1-3, with 3 being highest or an excellent rating),
- indicators of psychological disengagement (a 15-item questionnaire, with a scoring method by Harter, 1982),
- Wentzel's (2002) negative teacher feedback scores (a 4-item scale ranging from not at all true to very true on questions about students' perspectives of whether teachers like them),
- Skinner and Belmont's *Teacher Care* measure (1993) (a 4-point scale ranging from not at all true to very true that is similar to Wentzel's (2002) measure, but with different statements), and
- A psychological sense of school community measure (14-item scale by Developmental Studies Center, 1988-2005).

They ran the measures through an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). While the article does not contain an identity development scale, it does contribute to growing research on the importance of solidifying a connection between teacher and student relationships to avoid psychological disengagement. It also adds to the growing literature on the effect academic

devaluing has on achievement for Black and Latinx students (particularly in the early years of schooling). The article notes that these two populations experience bias earlier than white and Asian students, as a part of the rationale for the study (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). The article also finds that Black students had higher alternative identifications (meaning identifications such as being popular or athletic rather than academically inclined) than Latinx students. The article does not, however, disaggregate by race within the Latinx sample. Comparing an ethnicity with multiple racial groups against a singular racial group (Black) produces questionable results. Had the Latinx students been disaggregated by race, there may have been disparities between phenotypical white, Brown, or Black Latinx participants.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In the U.S. context, being Latinx and who gets to claim the identity with ease, depend heavily on one's closeness to whiteness, even though the population contains Indigenous and African lineages. This racially ambivalent, "off-white" status granted to Latinx people has been challenged, but the population continues to be racialized by the Census, scholars, and even the community itself. The overwhelming focus in scholarship and educational literature refers to Latinx populations as if they were a monolith; this has ultimately racialized this ethnic group, particularly if they are phenotypically Brown or Black, and especially if they do not speak mainstream English (Rosa & Flores, 2015).

While identity development scales exist for Latinx PK-5 students, there are no scales that both address racism and disaggregate by race. This illuminates a huge gap in the literature about understanding the identity of racially diverse, Latinx ethnicity. There is some hope, however, that disaggregation by race and addressing racism are priorities in academic literature of identity development. This chapter will discuss the implications of the literature review, some limitations of the review, as well as delve into future directions for the author.

Implications

Simply put, disaggregating for race is not a common practice in the literature on Latinx identity development. This contributes to the racialization of the population and does little to assist in the understanding of the Latinx identity. By not disaggregating by race, the academic community is playing a part in the erasure of Blackness. There is some hope, however, that this is a changing practice. As previously mentioned in chapter three, the author made two searches in the Web of Sciences. In the second search, 17 more articles were included, which gave the

review a total of 347. In light of there being no publications within PK-5 and in hopes of an increase in results (meaning that there were newer publications available), the author did a title review. In this title review of the 347 publications, the author searched the terms, “afro,” “indigenous,” and “skin” to reduce researcher bias. The hope was to find relevant research that disaggregated for race within the Latinx identity and addressed racism, but within other grade bands that still targeted Latinx populations with racial or ethnicity identity scales. The title review produced an additional 26 publications. A full systematic review of the 26 publications was not completed; however, there were a few articles of note: one overlap found from a citation in Wasserberg’s article (Fergus 2009), Cherry (2015), García-Louis (2021), and Sánchez (2021).

Within the 26 publications, two articles by Fergus were found: “Understanding Latina/o students’ schooling experiences: The relevance of skin color among Mexican and Puerto Rican high school students (2009) and “Because I’m Light Skin… They think I’m Italian’: Mexican students’ experiences of racialization in predominantly White schools” (2017). Both articles were studies conducted on racially diverse Latinx high school students and examined how race plays a role in their daily lives and identity. While neither include an identity scale, Fergus’ relatively new publications illuminates the critical piece of this thesis: race does matter for Latinx identity, and is at least being studied in older students within PK-12.

Cherry (2015) and Garcia-Louis (2020) both address the erasure of Afro-Latinx people from Latinx identity. Cherry conducted a study on Afro-Latinx middle schoolers and revealed “... ideologies grounded in a lack of awareness and misconceptions about race, ethnicity, and nationality” (p. 1). García-Louis directly challenges the issue of educational research not disaggregating by race within the Latinx community. She highlights the experiences of

Afro-Latinx undergraduate students and how their racialization impacts their experiences in higher education. She also addresses ways to decolonize African lineage within the Latinx identity. Lastly, Kovats Sánchez (2021) examines curricular erasure of Indigenous Latinx peoples within Historically Hispanic Serving Institutions. He also highlights how ethnicity, race, and nationality are conflated, and how *mestizaje* is pervasive within the Latinx identity and "... issues of racialization and Indigenous misrepresentation within Latinx-centered curricula and programming and the ways participants engaged in fugitive acts of learning to claim new forms of visibility on campus" (p. 1). Clearly, academic research is beginning to publicize the issues with Latinx identity brought forth in this thesis. Even with the expanded search, none of the articles highlighted delve into primary education which speaks to the need for studies that investigate racial diversity within the identity development of Latinx in PK-5 students.

Limitations

The most pronounced limitation of this systematic review is in the use of peer reviewers. According to the Cochrane (2021) *Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*, a systematic literature review is best done by using more than one database and with a peer reviewer. The reviewer would enter the same search criteria and should, ideally, come up with the same results. Additionally, only one database (Web of Science) was used to conduct the systemic literature review. While ideally one database would include all publications, the Cochrane guidelines advise the use of two or more databases for a more comprehensive examination of the topic of interest.

A deep dive into Indigenous and Asian histories/identities within the Latinx ethnicity was not discussed at length or at all. Asian ethnicity suffers a similar predicament as Latinx ethnicity

in that it is racialized and framed as a monolith. Asian-Latinx people are very much present and are largely overlooked in academia. Indigenous Latinx communities have suffered similar histories and experiences as Black Latinx people, particularly in terms of their experiences within colonial rule. Even now, little is done in Latin America and the U.S. to adequately make Indigenous people visible and heard.

Future Directions

In researching the topic of identity development, the author hoped to find scales that were disaggregated by race within the Latinx identity and addressed anti-Blackness, but also framed Latinx identity as ebbing and flowing with life experiences like Cross' (1991) Black identity development. Outside of the literature view, the author found identity development theories across academic fields. Many of them drew upon psychology's established racial/ethnic identity development scales, but Gallegos and Ferdman's (2011) Latinx Orientations/Lens stood out. They conducted a study on Latinx adults in the workforce. Instead of using a scale or measurement, Gallegos and Ferdman developed orientations/lens through interviews with Latinx people. These are not linear stages or clear-cut scores. The Latinx Orientations/Lens depend upon life experiences, one's closeness to whiteness, and the understanding of the complexity within the identity.

"Latino integrated" is comparable to Cross' (1991) "International-commitment" in that in this stage there is a clear understanding of race as a construct and that there needs to be a challenge to whiteness. "Latino identified" understands that there are races, but self imposes Latino as one's identification. As Figure 2 displays, as the numbers increase so do the closeness to whiteness. These lenses are not fixed, which allows for the complexity of identity to be better

captured. “Subgroup identified” refers to an identification of Latinx as being of multiple races and more closely adhering to national identity. “Latino as other” understands that Latinx people are othered in the U.S. context but attribute this otherness to a mixed heritage. “Undifferentiated” and “White identified” sit closely together. The distinction is that “Undifferentiated” is a lens of little self-esteem and understanding of racial constructs, while “White identified” simply rejects the Latinx identity altogether and prefers whiteness.

Figure 2
Visual representation of Gallegos & Ferdman’s Latinx Orientations/Lenses.

Gallegos & Ferdman (2001) Latinx Orientations/Lens

01	02	03
Latino integrated understanding of racial constructs and ability to challenge them	**Latino identified** acceptance of the races Latino and white and identification with Latino	**Subgroup identified** identification of multiple Latino races and identification with a regional subgroup
04	**05**	**06**
Latino as other identification as a generic Latino due to mixed heritage	**Undifferentiated** color blindness, adherence to dominant culture, and tendency to attribute failure to the individual rather than racial constructs and systems of oppression	**White identified** acceptance of white and Latino races and identification with white and rejection of Latino

As a primary education educator, using Gallegos and Ferdman’s (2001) lenses in a primary education setting could illustrate a great deal about how Latinx children from diverse racial backgrounds understand their identity. Aspects of Brown and colleagues’ (2011) diary entries would assist in the interview process of PK-5 students, as well as oral ethnographies. Moving away from numerical value attributed to identity development scales, Latinx

Orientations/Lens could provide a less restrictive framework for understanding the complexities of identity and how it is displayed in young children. Participants would, of course, need to be disaggregated by race in order to get a clear picture of identity in Latinx PK-5 populations. This could also give way to interventions that assist with antiracism within identity development. This could also be conducted with Latinx teachers to capture how their identity development can influence Latinx students' own identity.

Threaded through Latinx identity is the experience of immigration. While the majority of Latinx children are U.S. born, there is room for understanding the dual experiences of Brown and/Black children as they move through immigration processes and public schools' disciplinary systems. During the author's time in the classroom, there have been more than a few cases of students that were being objectified by the U.S. immigration system, while also being subjugated to oppressive disciplinary practices (i.e., suspension and expulsion). To disaggregate by race in these cases could further illuminate racial disparities in how Latinx children are treated by the federal government on the macroscale and also their public schools on the micro scale.

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