

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE LATINX TO YOU?": AN  
ANALYSIS OF OREGON LATINX STUDENTS AND THEIR  
ETHNIC IDENTITY

by

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A THESIS

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## **An Abstract of the Thesis of**

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An analysis of Oregon Latinx Students and their Ethnic Identity

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The current study uses inductive thematic analysis to derive themes from responses to an open-ended question. This study was set in Oregon where 23% of k-12 students are Latinx (Gill et al., 2019). Data for the present study, collected in spring of 2019, is written responses to the question “What does it mean to you to be Latina/o/x?” Participants were 495 Latinx high school students attending a one-day leadership conference. Thematic analysis generated 36 codes and 6 themes from the open-ended responses, representing all levels of the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Codes included culture, pride, community, family, language, and resistance. The six themes were: internal, interpersonal interactions, interactions, societal structures, larger culture, and miscellaneous. The codes and themes shed light on how Latinx youth conceptualize their ethnic racial identity (ERI). Exploration of relationships between themes of pride, a component of positive regard and ERI, academic achievement, and participation in M.E.Ch.A. (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán) revealed a significant relationship. between M.E.Ch.A. participation and responses coded for pride in which students who participated in M.E.Ch.A. were more likely to respond to the open-ended question in a manner indicative of pride.

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## **Introduction**

The study aimed to gain a better understanding about how Latinx adolescents in Oregon conceptualize their own ethnic identity, and to explore whether a more positive ethnic identity is associated with participation in organizations like M.E.Ch.A. as well as enhanced academic achievement. Latinx youth in Oregon were examined as a key population as they are underrepresented in previous literature. Historically they are a small percentage of Oregon residents, however, also a young and growing population that has many risk factors for dropping out of school (The Oregon Community Foundation, 2016; Motel & Patten, 2013; Simon et al., 2011). It is critical that we better understand protective factors for this population that help promote academic success and educational persistence (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016). Ethnic identity has been identified as a protective factor for academic success (Umaña-Taylor and colleagues, 2014).

### **Terminology**

For this thesis, the term Latinx will be used as a gender-neutral neologism in replacement of Latino or Latin to refer to people of Latin American or Hispanic cultural or ethnic identity in the United States. This is primarily to support Latinx individuals who do not fall into the gender binary. Latino, which emerged as a term in the 1990's, was first used as an official pan-ethnic term in the U.S. Census (Cardemil, Millán, & Aranda, 2019; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). Some self-identified Latinos prefer 'Latino' as it has been considered to be more progressive than alternative terms, such as Hispanic (Alcoff, 2005; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). However, the term can



be argued as inherently gendered and male-centered (i.e. Latino when in reference to a male and Latina in reference to a female). With typical Spanish usage, the term Latino is used with any group of individuals, regardless of gender identification, so long as one member of the group identifies as male. Use of Latina/o also is argued to reinforce cis-gendered heteronormative ideas and excludes those that do not fit into the gender binary (Vidal-Ortiz et al., 2018). Due to these limitations, *Latinx*, which first surfaced on the internet in 2004, has risen as an inclusive term used in academic and social settings (Ramirez & Blay, 2017; Vidal-Ortiz et al., 2018).

However, this term has not been without controversy, as scholars argue that *Latinx* is a buzzword that fails to address major issues with its origin. The use and a form of linguistic imperialism as the -x suffix was created from English language speakers and simply applied to the Spanish language, however as a suffix is argued to be “unpronounceable” (M. de Onís, 2017).

The decision to use the term *Latinx* in this paper arose from an informal discussion with *Latinx* high school students on terminology. Student’s felt that *Latinx* best described their inclusive existence as multicultural adolescents in the United States. Use of *Latinx* is also consistent with decisions by the National *Latinx* Psychological Association (Salinas & Lozano, 2019). Moving forward, I will be using *Latinx* as a pan-ethnic term to describe the high school students who participated in this study as well as general use within the literature review and discussion.

### **Project Significance**

In the United States, the *Latinx* population is expected to double by the year 2050, making one out of every four Americans *Latinx* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010;

Shinagawa & Jang, 1998). These shifting demographics are most evident among younger generations. Latinx groups are also more likely to be poor in the United States and Latinx youth tend to grow up in environments that lack resources for academic achievement and school-readiness (Motel & Patten, 2013; Simon et al., 2011).

In the United States, Latinx students had the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group at 10% which is double the dropout rate for White students at 5% (Gramlich, 2016). McWhirter, Garcia, and Bines (2017) recently found that Latinx students anticipated more barriers to their educational and occupational futures than their White counterparts. Some barriers anticipated by students were associated with their self-assessed ability, experiences of discrimination, lower expectations and differential treatment from teachers. These barriers may inform how Latinx students navigate high school.

Oregon is home to growing numbers of Latinx students. The Latinx population in Oregon is young, diverse, and growing in size by 72% since 2000. As a result, nearly 23% of k-12 students in Oregon are Latinx. Additionally, Latinx student enrollment in Oregon public schools has grown by 18% in the past decade while white student enrollment has decreased by 4% during the same period (The Oregon Community Foundation, 2016). The gap in educational attainment among this growing population highlights the importance of understanding factors that may enhance their ability to withstand and overcome barriers in their educational processes.

Using an archival data set, the current study used inductive thematic analysis to derive themes from responses to an open-ended question, “What does it mean to you to be Latina/o/x?”. First, codes were created to derive meaning from the data and then

sorted into themes that inform how Latinx youth conceptualize their ERI. After themes were conceptualized, I tested for relationships between the theme of pride, a component of positive regard and ethnic racial identity (ERI), and participants' academic achievement and participation in M.E.Ch.A. (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicax de Aztlán).

## **Literature Review**

### **Identity Development**

Adolescence is a critical period for identity development. It is not until this period in an individual's life that they have developed the capacity to fully explore identity, such as psychological growth, mental maturation, and social responsibility (Erikson, 1968). The confluence of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes in middle to late adolescence creates the optimal conditions for identity formation (Marcia, 1994). A defining feature of adolescence is the importance of peer groups, captured in the concept of *embeddedness*. Youth begin to define and construct their identity in relation to others, especially within groups (Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). For adolescents, one way they may begin to form their identity is in relation to their ethnic and racial groups.

### **Ethnic and Racial Identity**

According to Umaña-Taylor, colleagues and the Racial and Ethnic Identity in the 21st Century Study Group (2014), *Ethnic and Racial Identity* (ERI) is a multidimensional psychological construct that represents the beliefs, values, and attitudes that an individual has about their ethnic-racial group and group membership and the process by which these beliefs develop over the lifespan. Thus, ERI has components that represent the content of a person's views as well as the process of changing beliefs. Both developmental and contextual influences should be considered in the construction of the ERI (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Developmental influences are organized by the different developmental stages of life, due to the limitations and growth of an individual's cognitive function. Much of ERI in childhood is focused on ethnic categorization, knowledge, and behaviors. This is referred to as *Ethnic and racial identification* and occurs during this period. In adolescence, ERI is concerned with affective, cognitive processes and exploration (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). According to Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, the adolescent years are critical for identity formation and adolescents grappling with the question "Who am I?" is seen as a key developmental task. In this stage of life, individuals have the capacity to incorporate their sense of self with their reference group and develop ethnic-racial group awareness (Cross & Cross, 2008). *Exploration* consists of youth seeking information or being exposed to information about their ethnic-racial group. ERI in young adulthood is fixated on an expansion of different sectors of a person's life in which ERI is relevant (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

An individual's adolescence is one of the most impactful times for ERI development. Individuals are able to develop more certainty in their identification with their ethnic-racial group as an elaboration on their *ethnic labeling*, or the labels or terms that an individual chooses to use to describe their ethnic identification (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). This can make ERI more salient to youth. The idea of *salience* in terms of ERI refers to the extent to which an individual's ethnicity and race are pertinent to their idea of self in a given context. In a study by Kiang and colleagues (2010), adolescents who reported higher ethnic centrality also commonly reported increases in exploration and *affirmations*, the positive feelings one can have about their ethnic background. ERI *centrality* is the extent to which one considers race to be a key aspect of the sense of

self. Individual adolescents who reported higher commitment to their exploration of their ERI also reported the highest levels of salience across situations and the highest levels of centrality (Yip, Douglass, & Shelton, 2013).

*Positive affect or group esteem*, the way that individuals feel toward their own ethnic-racial group, is critical and is associated with positive adjustment through the developmental periods. ERI affirmation is seen to increase during early and middle adolescence (French et al., 2006). However, positive feelings about one's own race and ethnicity do not always reflect better adjustment and are dependent on the salience, centrality, and context. For example, Latinx students who reported higher levels of affirmation also experienced a decrease in academic adjustment from seventh to eighth grade (Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Conales & Dumka, 2012). The authors suggest that during this time, academic tracking becomes increasingly important and Latinx adolescents may begin to notice that Latinx students are being segregated into lower-achieving tracks. Umaña-Taylor et al. (2012) theorize that youth that feel a stronger connection to stereotyped groups begin to underperform, in accordance with the stereotype of that group. This concept is closely related to the idea of public regard.

*Public regard* refers to the degree to which youth feel that others view their ethnic and racial groups positively or negatively. As with other ERI components, public regard is closely related to perceived discrimination. Developmental theorists assert that experiences of discrimination are particularly impactful during adolescence (Spencer, 2006). Douglass and colleagues (2017) found that associations between perceived discrimination and public regard differed across ethnic-racial groups and ERI status. However, adolescents with an *achieved ERI*, having explored and found personal

meaning in their own ethnicity-race, were buffered against negative associations between public regard and adult discrimination. Thus, encouraging adolescents to explore and find meaning in their ethnic identity can be a protective factor against adult discrimination. Public regard also has impacts on other areas of functioning for youth as well, as demonstrated in a 2011 study by Rivas-Drake, in which researchers found that public regard correlated positively with academic adjustment among Latinx youth.

### **Theoretical Background of Ethnic Identity of Latinx adolescents**

According to Umaña-Taylor and colleagues (2002), research on Latinx ethnic identity development from 1969 to 2002 widely focused on three primary theoretical perspectives, Social identity theory, the ego identity perspective, and the acculturation perspective. *Social identity theory* asserts that an individual's self-identity is derived from membership in relevant social groups. In the context of ethnic identity of Latinx adolescents, researchers have focused on perceptions of the Latinx community and how those perceptions impact an individual's feelings about identifying with their ethnic group. This theoretical perspective focused most on self-identification (Ethier & Deauz, 1990). In the *ego identity perspective*, through commitment and exploration of values and beliefs an individual will obtain a more secure identity. According to this perspective, only after exploration of what an individual's ethnic identity means to them and accepting this identity, do they achieve a secure ethnic identity (Marcia, 1994). Finally, the *acculturation perspective* asserts that ethnic identity changes in relation to the acculturation process. *Acculturation* is the process that occurs when two cultures come into contact with each other and results in changes in either or both groups (Umaña-Taylor, et al., 2002). For a Latinx individual in the United States, acculturation

may look like learning the English language or adopting practices or values specific to the majority or host culture. Interacting within a host culture, where there may be differing expectations for individual based on their ERI also may lead to stereotype threat.

### *Stereotype Threat*

*Stereotype consciousness*, the awareness of the majority culture and other individuals' stereotypes, is an expression of public regard and can lead to stereotype threat. *Stereotype threat* describes the situation in which an individual is concerned about unequal treatment or judgement on the basis of stereotypes on their social group. Individuals may feel at risk for conforming to negative stereotypes of their racial/ethnic group and effects are most likely strongest when an individual is performing a task that is difficult for that individual (Spencer, Logel, & Davies, 2016). This particularly salient outgrowth of public regard is an extra pressure that can compromise the performance of target groups. Empirical evidence supports that stereotype threat can negatively affect the performance of an array of activities such as negotiations, financial decision making, and memory performance in older adults, and test performance in African Americans and Latinx Americans (Kray et al. 2002, Carr & Steele 2010, Mazerolle et al., 2012; Walton & Cohen 2003). Particularly, Walton and colleagues (2013) conservatively estimated that the psychological impact of stereotype threat accounts for 25% to 41% of the gap between White and Latinx youth on the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test).

Not only does stereotype threat affect activity performance, but it also can negatively impact psychological wellbeing and mental health for affected individuals.



Stereotype threat fosters negative emotions about one's own social group and can undermine an individual's perceptions of their own ability (Spencer et al., 2016). Additionally, this effect can undermine an individual's sense of belonging, affect motivation, and can lead to isolation from settings such as academia or professional settings (Walton & Cohen 2007).

However, the effects of stereotype threat have been contested, as researchers have found data to be overstated. Specifically, Sackett and colleagues (2004) argue that the widely cited paper by Steele and Aronson (1995) on Black vs. White students testing performance is frequently misrepresented and that the performance gap does not disappear in the absence of stereotype threat. This critique should be kept in mind in assessing the magnitude of stereotype threat.

A number of internal and external coping interventions have been identified as helpful in countering the effects of stereotype threat. For internal coping strategies, self-affirmation and mindfulness training has been shown to reduce the deleterious effects of stereotype threat (Spencer et al., 2016). Self-affirmation has been shown to restore self-integrity, self-efficacy and lead to improved performance in testing situations as well as social negotiation (Frantz et al., 2004, Martens et al., 2006). Weger and colleagues (2013) found that 5 minutes of a daily mindfulness exercise can significantly reduce the effects of stereotype threat in testing situations. More widely, self-affirmation interventions can buffer against negative effects of stereotype threat, experiences of discrimination, and stigma consciousness (Guyl, Madon, Prieto, & Scherr, 2010; Umaña-Taylor, 2016).

Though these coping strategies are effective for the reduction of the effect of stereotype threat, they do not change the negative environment. Researchers suggest creating identity safe environments, through altering interpersonal environments (Davis et al., 2005). Some methods for creating environments that are inclusive to various identities have proven affective through research are facilitating positive interactions between majority groups and targeted individuals and providing successful in-group role models for effected groups (Abrams et al., 2006; Walton et al., 2004; Drury et al., 2011, Shaffer et al., 2013). The method of creating identity safe environments has been used by a number of culturally informed programs to encourage the ethnic identity affirmation among various racial and ethnic groups.

### **Contemporary Context of Ethnic Identity of Latinx adolescents**

#### *Ethnic identity and Ethnic identity affirmation*

Scholars and studies suggest that a given social and historical context influences the relationship between ethnic identity and psychological wellbeing. For example, Acevedo-Polakovich and colleagues (2015) found that the positive relationship between ethnic identity and psychological wellbeing for Latinx individuals in the United States is moderated by an individual's understanding of their collective, American identity. An individual's *American identity* is a parallel construct to ethnic identity that encompasses an individual's identification with and incorporation of their membership in the United States and their sense of self (Acevedo-Polakovich et al., 2014). Additionally, researchers found that acculturation has a positive relationship to depression symptoms, anxiety, and general psychological wellbeing (Chavez-Korell & Torres 2014).

Fortunately, many empirical studies have highlighted the broad protective effects of ethnic identity for Latinx individuals in the United States. One such effect is that stronger ethnic identity predicts lower depression and anxiety in adults and adolescents (Chavez-Korell et al., 2014). Umaña-Taylor and colleagues (2014) also found that ethnic identity is positively related to academic self-efficacy, social competence, leadership, and social responsibility among Latinx high school students. These findings support the assertion that ethnic identity has many broad positive effects on psychological wellbeing of Latinx individuals. However, ethnic identity affirmation, the affective component, or positive feelings about an individual's own ethnic identity, presents as both a positive and negative factor for Latinx youth.

Positive ethnic identity is a protective resource for Latinx youth that enables resiliency in individuals confronted with discrimination (Phinney, 2003; Romero & Roberts 2003). Adverse outcomes to discrimination can be offset by culturally informed resources that aid in productive coping (Spencer, Fegley & Harpalani, 2003). Romero and Roberts (2003) found that the negative relationship between discrimination and self-esteem was significantly weaker among Latinx adolescents who reported higher levels of ethnic identity affirmations than compared to Latinx adolescents that reported lower levels of ethnic identity affirmations. Umaña-Taylor and Updegraff (2007) suggest that ethnic identity affirmation may motivate Latinx adolescents to find productive ways of coping with culturally informed stressors, such as perceived discrimination, in an effort to avoid confirming existing negative stereotypes about the Latinx community. This understanding is consistent with the theoretical understanding of stereotype threat.

Ethnic identity affirmation is linked to increased ethnic and racial pride, or positive group esteem. Past research and theory suggest that ethnic-racial pride has a positive influence on academic achievement (Spencer, 2006). Juvonen and Colleagues in their 2006 study found that self-worth often preceded feelings of belonging in school and suggested that a positive sense of ethnic pride, which is a component of group esteem and self-worth, could also contribute to *school connectedness*, which refers to involvement, engagement, relatedness, and feelings of belonging (Townsend & McWhirter, 2005), and thus aid in academic progress.

However, ethnic identity affirmation has not proven to be a consistently positive protective factor, especially in regard to academic adjustment. As discussed previously, Umaña-Taylor and colleagues (2012) found ethnic identity affirmation to be a significantly positive factor in reducing the negative impact of discrimination on male Latinx early adolescence externalizing behaviors, yet, these same male Latinx adolescence also tended to have lower GPAs one year later. This suggests that ethnic identity affirmation may contribute to poor academic achievement. Umaña-Taylor and colleagues suggest a possible explanation for this phenomenon related to stereotype threat. Young Latinx individuals who feel most positivity about their own ethnic identity may underperform academically in order to present themselves as consistent with the stereotypes associated with their ethnic group.

This hypothesis is supported by Steele and Aronson's suggestion (1995) that early adolescent individuals have a unidimensional understanding of ethnic identity and still are in the process of exploring their identity and forming more mature and dynamic understandings of their ethnic group. Thus, early adolescence may be a developmental

period in which identification with an individual's own ethnic group can present as a temporary risk for poor academic outcomes (Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2012).

Additionally, Latinx youth may also use disengagement in school as a protective measure. When an intergroup setting, such as educational institutions, is seen as a threat to identity, people may respond with increased anxiety and withdrawal (Derk, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2006). Thus, underperformance in academic settings can be explained by an individual's approach to protecting their self-worth, by "self-handicapping". "Self-handicapping" protects the self by providing an explanation for poor performance, such as a lack of effort (Spencer et al., 2015, pp. 421). This may give insight to how, as previously stated in the introduction, Latinx youth drop out of high school significantly more often than White or African American youth (Fry & Taylor, 2013).

However, for Latinx adolescents, school connectedness is associated with positive behavioral and academic outcomes (Sass, Castro-Villarreal, McWhirter, McWhirter, & Karcher, 2011), higher rates of high school completion and postsecondary attendance (Niehaus, Irvin, & Karcher, 2011), and lower rates of delinquency and problem behaviors (Sass et al., 2011). Students' reasons for dropping out often are related to low school connectedness, such as disinterest or dislike for school, missed days, or not doing well in school (Rotermund, 2007).

#### *Current Political Climate, Anti-immigrant, and Anti-Latinx Sentiments*

As the Latinx population is growing, anti-immigration and anti-Latinx sentiments are increasing and can negatively affect Latinx individuals (Muste, 2013).

Based on *group threat perspective*, Latinx communities are seen as a threat to the majority group interest. This perceived threat may take several forms such as economic, political, or criminal (Blalock, 1967). Despite the sizable and growing body of research that contradicts negative claims about the Latinx community, general negative public regard for immigrants, both legal and undocumented, persists (Szkupinski, Quiroga et al., 2014). This negative public regard has fueled several thousand pieces of legislation in the United States in regard to immigration in the past decade at the state level, largely involving law enforcement verification of immigration status (Stupi et al., 2016). Quiroga and colleagues found that both U.S and foreign born Latinx individuals suffer similar levels of psychological distress related to negative public regard toward immigrants (2014). Thus, anti-immigrant and anti-Latinx sentiments are often conflated. Researchers have found an association between declines in mental health and psychological wellbeing among Latinx individuals and the announcement of several restrictive and aggressive immigration policies in January and February of 2017 (Bruzelius & Baum 2019). Even legal residents have difficulty with employment based on stereotypes and assumptions about undocumented immigrants and other macro and micro-aggressions from individuals from other social groups (Szkupinski et al., 2014).

The election and following presidential orders of President Donald Trump have been politically catalytic events that have negatively impacted youth of color. The political climate post 2016 has created a more hostile and threatening public school environment for students of color, particularly in predominantly white schools. In a report by UCLA's IDEA (Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access), more than 20% of high school teachers reported increased polarization on campus and incivility in

their classrooms and 27.7% reported an increase in students making derogatory comments about other racial/ethnic groups during class discussions (Rogers, 2017). This increase in hostility may negatively affect Latinx students. This negative impact may present in different ways, however, 58% of teachers reported students expressing concern and stress related to proposals for deported undocumented immigrants, and 44.3% of teachers reported that student learning was impacted by concerns about policy issues raised by the Trump Administration (Rogers, 2017).

The negative public regard for immigrants, the Latinx community, and more recent aggressive immigration policies also has a significant impact on Latinx youth. In individual interviews with teaching staff from various public high schools in the United States, teachers expressed that their students were living in “survival mode” in fear of deportation, students crying and breaking down in class about the outcome of their family members regarding immigration policies, and students voicing “feelings of hopelessness and frustration” (Rogers, 2017; pp. 8). At a Virginian high school white students explained to teaching staff and administrators they were “right” to bully Latinx students telling them that they should “go back to their country” and taunt them with chants of “build the wall” because it wasn’t “any different than what Trump will do” (Rogers, 2017; pp. 18). Acts of bullying discourage students from participating in class discussions as well as social activities with peers, and negatively impacts academic progress (Szkupinski et al., 2014).

Despite the negative impacts of the current political climate, high school students have exhibited a growing interest in politics and are becoming more politically engaged. A Washington high school teacher expressed “I have never seen students more

interested, concerned, worried or inquisitive” about politics (Rogers, 2017; pp. 24). Research has found that adolescent’s awareness of racial inequality was heightened in the wake of the presidential election of 2016 (Kennedy et al., 2019). Along these lines, 24.4% of teachers reported an increase in acts of kindness and community building related to political events, 21.2% reported an increase in students participation in clubs that encourage youth political engagement and speaking out, and 24.5% of teachers reported an increase in students participating in civic/political protests (Rogers, 2017). Kennedy and colleagues (2019) found that students who were engaged in student groups or clubs that engaged students to discuss recent political news exhibited increased political efficacy and critical action.

#### *Sociopolitical Development and Critical Consciousness*

*Critical consciousness* or *sociopolitical development* is “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradiction, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 19) and refers to an understanding of cultural and political influences that shape one’s status and experience in a larger society.

Researchers and literature have identified key components of critical consciousness. Components include critical awareness of inequality, political efficacy or agency in response to inequalities, and critical activism to counter or adjust conditions of inequality (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011).

Critical consciousness may be a protective factor for Latinx high school students as they navigate difficulties, constraints, and barriers of school (McWhirter, Valdez, & Caban, 2013). An awareness of inequalities in conjunction with agency and action to create change may empower Latinx students to resist stereotypes and persevere in



school (Cammarota, 2007). McWhirter and McWhirter found that higher critical consciousness among Latinx high school students was associated with positive school outcomes, in particular grades, school engagement, and extracurricular engagement (2015).

An extracurricular activity that is pertinent to critical consciousness is M.E.Ch.A., a Chicano organization that promotes culture, history, and community engagement. This organization is common on many high school campuses with more than 500 chapters nationwide (Estrada, 2012). M.E.Ch.A. may attract more ethnically identified young people and/or enhance the ethnic identification of those who join this organization. Additionally, participation in M.E.Ch.A. involves, whether overtly or subtly, ethnic identity affirmation and self-affirmation activities, both of which could lead to reduced effects of stereotype threat, experiences of discrimination, and increased self-integrity and self-efficacy, as previously stated in the literature review (Spencer et al., 2016; Frantz et al., 2004; Martens et al., 2006). This reinforcement of the strengths of Latinx culture and positive identity common to M.E.Ch.A. may foster sociopolitical development.

## **Study Purpose and Research Question**

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding about how Latinx adolescents in Oregon understand their own ethnic identity, and to explore whether a more positive ethnic identity is associated with participation in organizations like M.E.Ch.A. as well as enhanced academic achievement. Understanding of ethnic identity was approximated through examination of student's responses to the following question: "What does being Latino/Latina/Latinx mean to you?".

My research questions are as stated:

1. How do Latinx students in Oregon see themselves and their ethnic identity?
2. Do students who are involved in M.E.Ch.A. express more positive ethnic identity than those that do participate in M.E.Ch.A.?
3. Do students who express more positive ethnic identity report higher grades than students who do not?

The first research question is exploratory and does not have an associated hypothesis. For the second question, I expected that students who participate in M.E.Ch.A. would be more likely to convey signifiers of a positive ethnic identity as part of their response to "What does being Latino/Latina/Latinx mean to you?" than those that do not participate in M.E.Ch.A.. Additionally, for the third research question, I expected that students with higher grades would be more likely to express a positive ethnic identity than students with lower grades.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

My sample consisted of Latinx high school students in Oregon. These participants were attendees of the longest-running Latinx youth conference in Oregon, the Cesar E. Chavez Leadership conference for high schoolers. Participants consisted of individuals who identify as Latinx between the ages of 14 and 19 in Oregon. From this conference, 567 participants filled out the conference questionnaire that yielded the data for this study. Out of the 567 participants, 447 responded to the last question of the survey, “What does being Latino/Latina/Latinx mean to you?”. Participants self-reported as female ( $n = 357$ , 63%) or male ( $n = 209$ , 37%) and 94% of participants identified as Latinx, whereas 6% of participants identified as Latinx and another ethnic group. Out of Participants who responded to the open-ended question, Participants self-reported as female ( $n = 330$ , 73.8%) or male ( $n = 116$ , 25.9%). Participants also reported their immigration histories, as 73% of participants reported that both of their parents immigrated to the United States, and 18.4% of participants were immigrants themselves.

### **Instruments**

The instrument used was a 2 page, back to back survey (see Appendix A). Information was self-reported by participants. From this survey, I used responses to demographic questions, self-reported average grades, a question about participation in M.E.Ch.A., and the answer to the open ended question “What does being Latino/Latina/Latinx mean to you?”.

## **Procedures**

Participants were asked to fill out an anonymous 2-page questionnaire and evaluation at the close of the conference. The survey was administered and collected by conference personnel and responses are anonymous. This study did not meet the university institutional review board criteria for human subjects research and is considered archival research data. The goal of the conference was to increase Latinx high school students' leadership skills, self-confidence and pride, and educational motivations. Students self-selected or were encouraged by participating high school faculty and staff to attend the leadership conference. Questionnaires were compiled by conference personnel and sent to Dr. Ellen McWhirter at the University of Oregon.

## **Analysis**

Answers to the open-ended question were typed and coded. The entirety of the coding process was done with a small coding group consisting of three traditional undergraduate students from the Family and Human Services Department of the University of Oregon. One of the three coders identified as Latinx, one identified as Asian, and one as White. All three coders identified as female. The analysis processes had 6 phases based on Braun and Clark's (2006) guidelines, which were modified due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures, and access to campus resources. Each step is now described.

### *Familiarize with Data*

First I familiarized myself with the data, which involved multiple readings of the responses to the open-ended question "What does it mean to you to be Latina, Latino, or

Latinx?” and taking notes and marking ideas for coding. I read the responses three distinct times before beginning to generate initial codes. The other two coders read the entirety of the data twice, with some time in between each read and to take notes each time. We met individually to discuss content and ideas for codes to ensure that each member of the coding team had properly familiarized themselves with the data.

### *Generating Initial Codes*

Second, we began generating initial codes about what the data communicates and what was most pertinent to our research question. The goal of this step was to create a coding system that pulls the most basic segment or element of the raw data and assess it in a meaningful way. Coding was done with an inductive approach, meaning themes that are identified by the coding team are strongly linked to the data themselves (Braun & Clark, 2006). Data was not coded to fit any pre-existing coding frame or analytic preconceptions. In this way, our inductive thematic analysis is data driven.

Initial codes were created together as a group, generated after reviewing around 200 responses together over the span of 3 hours. The coding team met weekly for about 15 weeks in order to discuss the inclusion, exclusion, or modification of codes over the coding process which included creating a code book (Appendix B) and modifying it for specificity. Originally, our team planned to code the responses using the software CAT (Coding Analysis Toolkit) hosted by Texifter, however, we moved to excel due to technical difficulties. There were 22 initial codes which are represented below in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Initial Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example(s)</u>
Ability	The possession of the means or skill to do something. The ability to do something or act in a particular way, especially as a faculty or quality.	<p>“<b>I have the power</b> to do a lot of stuff”</p> <p>“...to be a latina <b>I can do anything I set my mind to</b> and stand out just a little shinier...”</p>
Community	Feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.	<p>“It means <b>to be a part of</b> such a great ethnic group. Having a beautiful culture to be proud of. (drew hearts)”</p> <p>“Ser latino significa que nunc merindo y que portenesco <b>con mi gente</b> sin importar donde este. Siempre se tiene frijoles y tortillas en la sangre.”</p>
Culture	Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of the individuals in these groups.	<p>“Be a Latino is be part of a great family, full of <b>culture, music, culinary food.</b>”</p>
Different	Being different refers to when an individual feels as if they stand out. This can present in <u>either a negative or positive</u> light.	<p>“What a Latina means to me is that <b>we are different</b> and we should take advantage of that.”</p> <p>“For me to be latino means a lot to me. I feel <b>very different and unique</b> from all people because when they ask me where I am from, they don't know my town. It makes me feel that...”</p>

Disadvantage/Struggle	An unfavorable circumstance or condition that reduces the chances of success or having certain things in life be hard or difficult to deal with.	<p>“To be latino, it means that <b>I have to work differently and harder than other people.</b> It means I have <b>different levels of support than other people.</b> It means that I value honor more...”</p> <p>“To be Latina that we all feel the <b>struggle</b> that all of us get mis understood.”</p>
Future	When a response indicates that they are making vague to specific plans for the future for themselves or their community.	<p>“It means that you have to be proud of who you are. To value what people did before you and during, to give you a <b>better future.</b>”</p> <p>“That being a part of an ethnic group is amazing to be in although it being a minority, yet we all help each one out to <b>strive to be better and successful.</b>”</p>
Ethnicity	An ethnic group or ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other, usually on the basis of presumed similarities such as common language, ancestry, history, society, culture or nation.	<p>“It's being able to recognize my self threw <b>my ethnicity.</b>”</p>
Family	A group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single/ multiple household(s) and interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually those of spouses, parents, children, and siblings.	<p>“being proud of where I came from and from where <b>my family</b> came from being proud of all the things <b>my family</b> and I went through.”</p>
Freedom	Having control of one’s life and having no limitations or	<p>“It means to be free, and special. As well as</p>

	restraints as to what you can do.	creative//That I have the same rights that everyone has”
I don't know	I don't know or Idk is an abbreviation of the phrase I don't know. Idk is most commonly used in informal communication.	“No se” “IDK” “I don't know”
Language	A structured system of communication. Language, in a broader sense, is the method of communication. Many responses refer to speaking English and/or Spanish.	“Its amazing being a latina because not only <b>you speak two different languages</b> but it helps you get a good job because a lot of companies need people who <b>speak Spanish</b> . It is amazing”
Hard work	A great deal of effort is put into an activity or objective. It is a set of values-centered on the importance of work and manifested by determination or desire to work hard.	“to <b>work hard</b> and never give up!” “To me, it means I come from a culture that is very <b>hard-working</b> and fun. It's part of why I am the way I am.”
Location/ Geography	A physical location, including different countries, towns, or residences, or generally structured and defined areas. Nationality is the relationship between an individual person and a state/the status of belonging to a particular nation	“... when they ask me where I am from, they don't know <b>my town</b> . It makes me feel that I am the only person that know better the cultures of <b>my town....</b> ” “have ancestors and family from <b>Mexico</b> .” “I am proud to be afro- <b>mexican</b> .”
MISC	Miscellaneous refers to responses that are varied or mixed and cannot easily be categorized or grouped.	“Jess is very not (and Julie)” “Nah” “yeah”
Nationality	Nationality is a relationship	“It means to me, that I am



	between an individual person and a state. Nationality affords different rights and duties depending on the country.	part of the biggest culture in the world and it is also proud for me to say that <b>I am Mexican! Arriba Mexico!</b> ”
Opportunity	A set of circumstances (good position, chance, or prospect) that makes it possible or favorable to do something/attain a goal.	“Its amazing being a latina because not only you speak two different languages but <b>it helps you get a good job</b> because a lot of companies need people who speak Spanish. It is amazing”
Others	This refers to individuals or groups that do not belong to the respondent’s specific in-group (group of people with shared identify or interest).	“We don't have much opportunities as <b>white people</b> , so it's harder for Latino/a Latinx” “... Our schools a 5a but we live out there waay out there. Our school is full of hick and <b>Trump supporters</b> . They aren't afraid to show it either.”
Pop culture	A set of practices, beliefs, and objects that are dominant or prevalent in a society at a given point in time. Popular culture also encompasses the activities and feelings produced because of interaction with these dominant objects. Examples include media, entertainment, and notable/well-known people.	“To me, a Latina, Latino, or Latinx means someone who identifies as a Latino. Also, who represents us Latinos in a good way like <b>the actor Euguio Derbez or musician Selena Quiatanilla</b> . They've showed what it's like to be Latino in very different ways ...” “ <b>Coco the movie</b> ”
Pride	Confidence and self-respect as expressed by members of a group, typically one that has been socially marginalized, on the basis of their shared	“For me to be a Latino <b>makes me proud</b> because I know that my people did a lot of great things so <b>Im proud</b> of being a latino.”

	identity, culture, and experience.	“Para mi ser latino er algo que <b>me hace sentir orgulloso.</b> ”
Race	Race is often used to define someone by their skin color, as well as other physical, social, and biological attributes.	“¡La Raza!” “I embrace the <b>color of my skin</b> and the culture that comes with it...”
Resistance	Recognition of a negative attitude towards their minority group and responses with defiance to that negative attitude or stereotype; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument.	“...However, this whole <b>"White Privilege thing is BS"</b> “Being latino to me means that we come to America to <b>proof ourselves.</b> ” “It means that even though you aren't expected to succeed, <b>you do just to prove them wrong.</b> WORK it baby!”
Stereotypes	A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group.	“I feel like the meaning of being a latina/o is being able to prove people wrong! About what they think about us and how we are <b>stereotyped.</b> ” “To be latina to me means that we need to prove others wrong, that <b>were not just here to sell drugs, take others jobs.</b> To be latina means to me that I am strong and hardworking.”
Strength	Being physically, mentally, or emotionally able to handle difficult situations. Positive attributes that apply to the individual; either innate or learned.	“Being latina means that I'm <b>strong</b> and I can do anything. Makes me feel <b>fearless.</b> ” “Ser una persona muy trabajador y <b>fuerte y valorar</b> lo que tienen.”

Bolded words and phrases in the example column of the table represent the words or phrases that call for the code in question to be applied to the example.

### *Generating Themes*

After we had coded the data over multiple times and secured a shared understanding of the codes, we began searching for themes within the codes. In order to do this, I asked each member of the coding team to refocus their thoughts to the broader level of themes by thinking about the meanings of each code and consider how they interact with other codes and could be grouped together in various ways. Then, as a group we sorted codes into potential themes by creating Table 3 during one of our meetings.

Table 3: Potential Themes

<b><u>Theme</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Codes within the Theme</u></b>
Interpersonal	Relating to relationships or communication between people.	Community Family Expression
Places and Relation to Place	Connected to space in terms of a physical location or the movement or connection to a physical location.	Immigration Location/Country Nationality Race/Ethnicity
Internal/Individual Characteristics	Traits that an individual possesses that inform how they act or interact with themselves and the world.	Uncertainty Ability Self-identity Strength Pride Resistance Values Responsibility Hard work
Discrimination/Inequality	The unjust or prejudicial	Disadvantage

	treatment of different categories of people or things.	Stereotypes Struggle
History/Social-Cultural	Related to the different groups of people and their habits, traditions, and beliefs.	Culture Multiculturalism Pop culture Roots Language
External	Factors related to the social, cultural or political environment that an individual is in	Opportunity/Advantage Dreams/goals Education
Ideals	Principle or value that individuals or groups of people strive for related to group morality.	Diversity Equality Freedom
Misc	Miscellaneous.	Misc IDK Everything
Otherness	The quality of being different or separate from others.	Out-group Different

### *Reviewing, Defining and Naming Themes*

This step of the analysis was originally two separate steps in Braun and Clarke (Reviewing Themes and Defining and Naming Themes; 2006); however, I condensed these into one section of this thesis for clarity. Each member of the coding party reorganized and refined themes by each independently creating a thematic map and refined table of themes. After discussion between the coding team members, we achieved consensus on a final thematic map and table of our themes and sub-themes. At this point in the process, the goal was to have codes within themes that are coherent and are clear and distinct from one another. We continued to define and further refine the themes by identifying the essence of theme and what it represents as well as how the

themes work together to create the entire ‘data picture’ during team meetings. Tables detailing final themes, sub-themes, and a thematic map are in the results section.

*Producing the report*

The final step identified by Braun and Clarke was to write a detailed analysis that identifies the story of the themes and how it relates to the research question (2006). This discussion is located in the discussion section of this thesis.

## Results

### Final Codes

After modification of codes and additions of codes during the coding process there were 36 final codes. Table 2 presents each code, a description of the code, and one to three examples of statements receiving this code.

Table 2: List and Descriptions of Final Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example(s)</u>
Ability	The possession of the means or skill to do something. The ability to do something or act in a particular way, especially as a faculty or quality.	<p><b>“I have the power</b> to do a lot of stuff”</p> <p><b>“Si se puede”</b></p> <p>“To be strong and that I am Beautiful. My culture is very unique. To be able to be a latina <b>I can do anything I set my mind to</b> and stand out just a little shinier. I am proud to be a latina. It makes me just That more special!”</p>
Advantage/ Opportunity	A set of circumstances (good position, chance, or prospect) that makes it possible or favorable to do something/attain a goal.	<p>“It means I belong and feel a part of a growing culture that develops in ways of feeling proud about. Being latina <b>opens up opportunities</b> in the multicultural community.”</p> <p>“What a Latina means to me is that we are different, and <b>we should take advantage of that.</b>”</p>
Community	Feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. A response may identify with a	<p>“It means <b>to be a part of</b> such a great ethnic group. Having a beautiful culture to be proud of. (drew hearts)”</p>

	specific group. Group identification is when a member identifies with a social group (Hispanic, Latinx, women/men) or interpersonal groupings (friends at school).	“Ser latino significa que nunc merindo y que portenisco <b>con mi gente</b> sin importar donde este. Siempre se tiene frijoles y tortillas en la sangre.”
Culture	Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of the individuals in these groups.	“Be a Latino is be part of a great family, full of <b>culture, music, culinary food.</b> ”
Different	Being different refers to when an individual feel as if they stand out. This may be through race, religion, personality, appearance, language, etc. For some respondents, this may mean different from others outside of their group identification or within their group identification (such as but not limited to Latinx). This can present in <u>either a negative or positive</u> light.	“What a Latina means to me is that <b>we are different</b> , and we should take advantage of that.” “For me to be latino means a lot to me. I feel <b>very different and unique</b> from all people because when they ask me where I am from, they don't know my town. It makes me feel that...”
Disadvantage	An unfavorable circumstance or condition that reduces the chances of success <u>compared to others</u> .	“To be latino, it means that <b>I have to work differently and harder than other people</b> . It means I have <b>different levels of support than other people</b> . It means that I value honor more...” “you are diversified and can share your cultures w/ others. <b>You have to work 2x harder</b> to achieve your goals.”
Diversity	The condition of having or being composed of differing elements particularly when there is inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or	“It means to being able to connect with <b>a group of diverse peoples.</b> ” “Means to me that my ethnic background is <b>very diverse</b> but ...”

	organization. Diversity incorporates all of the elements that make individuals unique from one another such as gender, race, age and so forth.	
Dreams/goals	A strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work, a cherished aspiration, ambition, or ideal.	<p>“It means that you have to be proud of who you are. To value what people did before you and during, to give you a <b>better future.</b>”</p> <p>“That being a part of an ethnic group is amazing to be in although it being a minority, yet we all help each one out to <b>strive to be better and successful.</b>”</p>
Education	This code refers to formal education or the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Formal education is classroom-based, provided by trained teachers.	<p>“... It also means to me that my parents didn't had the opportunity to go to <b>school</b>, so I want to make them proud and have a <b>degree</b> dedicating to them. I have more opportunities because I c...”</p>
Equality	The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.	<p>“That I have <b>the same rights that everyone</b> has”</p>
Everything	This code was developed in reaction to responses that indicate themes along the lines, “it means everything to me” or “it means a lot to me”	<p>“It <b>means a lot</b> to me”</p> <p>“<b>everything.</b> That's who I am. Nothing can change that”</p>
Expression	The process of making known one's thoughts or feelings, an indication of feeling, spirit, character, etc. Responses may indicate expression by “being who you are”, “sharing”, or “representing” their culture.	<p>“For me it means a lot because I get to <b>represent</b> my culture.”</p> <p>“Para mi ser latina es mastrar tu orgullo Mexicano. No ser avergonzada por tus raices. Al contrario ser libre y <b>expresante, y representar</b> de donde viniste.”</p>



Family	A group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single/multiple household(s) and interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually those of spouses, parents, children, and siblings.	<p>“Being Latina to me means being different, an individual who can reach goals that I set for myself. It means I get to reach the dreams my <b>grandparents have for their grandchildren.</b>”</p> <p>“being proud of where I came from and from where <b>my family</b> came from being proud of all the things <b>my family</b> and I went through.”</p>
Freedom	Having control of one’s life and having no limitations or restraints as to what you can do.	“It means to be free, and special. As well as creative//That I have the same rights that everyone has”
IDK	Used to express that you do not understand or do not have an answer or response for a question or comment. Idk is an abbreviation of the phrase I don't know. Idk is most commonly used in informal communication.	<p>“No se”</p> <p>“IDK”</p> <p>“I don’t know”</p>
Immigration	Immigration is the international movement of people to a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship.	<p>“...I am rich of culture, talents, and pride for <b>my home country that my parents came from...</b>”</p> <p>“I see things differently. I was born here but at the age of 5 <b>I move to mexico</b> and basically grew up being a full Mexican person and I feel like that.”</p>
Language	A structured system of communication. Language, in a broader sense, is the method of communication. Many responses refer to speaking English and/or Spanish.	“It’s amazing being a latina because not only <b>you speak two different languages</b> , but it helps you get a good job because a lot of companies need people who <b>speak Spanish</b> . It is amazing”
Hard work	A great deal of effort is put into an activity or objective. Some	“to <b>work hard</b> and never give up!”

	responses refer to work ethic, a belief that hard work and diligence have a moral benefit and an inherent ability, virtue or value to strengthen character and individual abilities. It is a set of values-centered on the importance of work and manifested by determination or desire to work hard.	<p>“To me, it means I come from a culture that is very <b>hard-working</b> and fun. It's part of why I am the way I am.”</p> <p>“...<b>They work the hardest</b>, they have all fallen away from those good pathsbut that only strengthens my determination...”</p>
Location/ Country/ Nationality	A physical location, including different countries, towns, or residences, or generally structured and defined areas. Nationality is the relationship between an individual person and a state/the status of belonging to a particular nation	<p>“... when they ask me where I am from, they don't know <b>my town</b>. It makes me feel that I am the only person that know better the cultures of <b>my town....</b>”</p> <p>“have ancestors and family from <b>Mexico.</b>”</p> <p>“I am proud to be afro-<b>mexican.</b>”</p>
MISC	Miscellaneous refers to responses that are varied or mixed and cannot easily be categorized or grouped, incomplete responses, responses with confusing meanings, responses that are not full or complete sentences.	<p>“Jess is very not (and Julie)”</p> <p>“Nah”</p> <p>“yeah”</p>
Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism is the way in which a society deals with cultural diversity, both at the national and at the community level. On an individual level, multiculturalism for many responses means belonging to more than one ethnic/racial/or cultural grouping.	<p>“Being latina opens up opportunities in the <b>multicultural</b> community.”</p> <p>“I am proud to be afro-<b>mexican...</b>”</p> <p>“I am able to <b>share 2 ethnicities</b> and being latin is the greatest gift because the culture is my life.”</p>
Nationality	Nationality is a relationship between an individual person and a state. Nationality affords different rights and duties depending on the country.	<p>“It means to me, that I am part of the biggest culture in the world and it is also proud for me to say that <b>I am Mexican! Arriba Mexico!</b> ”</p>

Opportunity	A set of circumstances (good position, chance, or prospect) that makes it possible or favorable to do something/attain a goal. This code is used when the response <u>indicates a favorable position or circumstance that makes a goal or task more obtainable.</u>	“It’s amazing being a latina because not only you speak two different languages, but <b>it helps you get a good job</b> because a lot of companies need people who speak Spanish. It is amazing”
Out-group	This refers to <i>specific</i> individuals or groups that do not belong to the respondent’s specific in-group (group of people with shared identify or interest).	“We don't have much opportunities as <b>white people</b> , so it's harder for Latino/a Latinx” “For me being a latina at Lebanon High School. I'm usually the only latina in the class. Our schools a 5a but we live out there waay out there. Our school is full of hick and <b>Trump supporters</b> . They aren't afraid to show it either.”
Pop culture	A set of practices, beliefs, and objects that are dominant or prevalent in a society at a given point in time. Popular culture also encompasses the activities and feelings produced as a result of interaction with these dominant objects. Examples include media, entertainment, and notable/well-known people.	“To me, a Latina, Latino, or Latinx means someone who identifies as a Latino. Also, who represents us Latinos in a good way like <b>the actor Euguio Derbez or musician Selena Quitanilla</b> . They've showed what it's like to be Latino in very different ways ...” “ <b>Coco the movie</b> ”
Pride	Confidence and self-respect as expressed by members of a group, typically one that has been socially marginalized, on the basis of their shared identity, culture, and experience. It can also mean a feeling or deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the	“For me to be a Latino <b>makes me proud</b> because I know that my people did a lot of great things so <b>Im proud</b> of being a latino.” “Para mi ser latino er algo que <b>me hace sentir orgulloso.</b> ” “Being a latino means being

	achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired.	part of a <b>bad ass</b> group. <b>I am very proud</b> of...” “To be part of a <b>beautiful</b> culture.” “To Me it Means to be <b>Awesome</b> and be who I am as a person. <b>Be proud.</b> ” “It <b>means a lot</b> to me”
Responsibility	Having a duty or something to be in charge of or are in control of. Being held accountable for something/having to be mature to handle situations independently.	“Being latina means coming from a medium class and <b>having to do house chores</b> at a young age also do school more”
Race/Ethnicity	An ethnic group or ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other, usually on the basis of presumed similarities such as common language, ancestry, history, society, culture or nation. Ethnicity is usually an inherited status based on the society in which one lives. Ethnicity is separate from but related to the concept of race. Race is often used to define someone by their skin color, as well as other physical, social, and biological attributes.	“It's being able to recognize myself threw <b>my ethnicity.</b> ” “¡La Raza!” “I embrace the <b>color of my skin</b> and the culture that comes with it...”
Resistance	Recognition of a negative attitude towards their minority group and responses with defiance to that negative attitude or stereotype; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument.	“...However, this whole <b>"White Privilege thing is BS"</b> “Being latino to me means that we come to America to <b>proof ourselves.</b> ” “It means that even though you aren't expected to succeed, <b>you do just to prove them wrong.</b> WORK it baby!”
Roots	Roots refers to cultural heritage as an expression of the ways of living developed by a community	“have <b>ancestors</b> and family from Mexico.” “It means being proud of

	and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values. Cultural heritage is often expressed as either intangible or tangible cultural heritage.	<b>indigenous roots.”</b>
Self-identity	One's self-concept is a collection of beliefs about oneself. Self-Identity includes personality attributes, knowledge of one's skills and abilities, one's occupation and hobbies, and awareness of one's physical attributes.	“Being a latina means that I'm someone <b>who's not ashamed of who I am</b> . Also, on not quitting, and that there's always a way to get where I want to be.” “ <b>To be yourself</b> and don't let other people let you down and accomplish your goal.”
Stereotypes	A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. The type of expectation can vary; it can be, for example, an expectation about the group's personality, preferences, or ability.	“I feel like the meaning of being a latina/o is being able to prove people wrong! About what they think about us and how we are <b>stereotyped</b> .” “To be latina to me means that we need to prove others wrong, that <b>were not just here to sell drugs, take other jobs</b> . To be latina means to me that I am strong and hardworking.” “Our school is full of <b>hicks</b> and Trump supporters. They aren't afraid to show it either.”
Strength	Being physically, mentally, or emotionally able to handle difficult situations. Positive attributes that apply to the individual; either innate or learned.	“Being latina means that I'm <b>strong</b> and I can do anything. Makes me feel <b>fearless</b> .” “Ser una persona muy trabajador y <b>fuerte y valorar</b> lo que tienen.”
Struggle	Having certain things in life be hard or difficult to deal with.	“Being a latina means being awesome know the <b>hardships of life</b> and working harder

		every day to accomplish your dream.” “To be Latina that we all feel the <b>struggle</b> that all of us get mis understood.”
Uncertainty	When an individual is not completely confident or sure of something about a particular situation. This may also present as estrangement, or the feeling that you don't belong, especially when you're surrounded by other people. Not knowing how to explain something that pertains to you.	“...I can't really compare myself to others, but <b>I guess</b> that makes me unique.” “ <b>I'm not sure what it means</b> to me, but it does make me happy to be a latino.”
Values	Values are the things that an individual believes are important in the way a person lives and works. Values can determine one's priorities.	“Being a latino means to me is that it shows the <b>values</b> and roots that all my family and including everyone.” “To be Latinx - you have <b>to respect and keep your beliefs and values</b> . You're proud for being a brown person in a place full of opportunities. You want to show all haters that we can!!”

Bolded words and phrases in the example column of the table represent the words or phrases that call for the code in question to be applied to the example.

## Final Themes

During the Reviewing Themes step, the coding team found a relationship between Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1977) and the initial themes we created. Thus, the final organization of themes was reorganized to mimic the ecological model. Themes reflect the various levels of the ecological model, starting with the individual and expanding to the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, and Macrosystem. Additional sub-themes were created to represent groupings of codes that do not correspond to the ecological systems theory. A full table of themes and sub-

themes are listed below in Table 4 and visually represented in a thematic map in Figure 1, and a full list of number of responses to each code are listed in Table 5. Each response was coded for an average of 5.4 codes with a range of 1 to 12.

Table 4: Final Themes

<b><u>Theme/Sub-Theme</u></b>		<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Codes within the Theme</u></b>
Internal (Individual)		a single person being distinct from a group	
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Individual Characteristics	Traits that an individual possesses that inform how they act or interact with themselves and the world.	Uncertainty Ability Self-identity Pride Resistance** Expression Different
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Values*	A person's principles or standards of behavior or one's judgment of what is important in life.	Responsibility Hard work Strength
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Place and Relation to Place	Connected to space in terms of a physical location or the movement or connection to a physical location.	Nationality Race/Ethnicity Language**
Interpersonal Interactions (Microsystem)		Relating to relationships or communication between people.	Community Family Out-group Education
Interactions (Mesosystem)		Interactions between microsystems or between two different systems (such as the Individual and Macrosystem).	Language** Resistance**
Societal Structure (Exosystem)		societal structures that function independently of the	

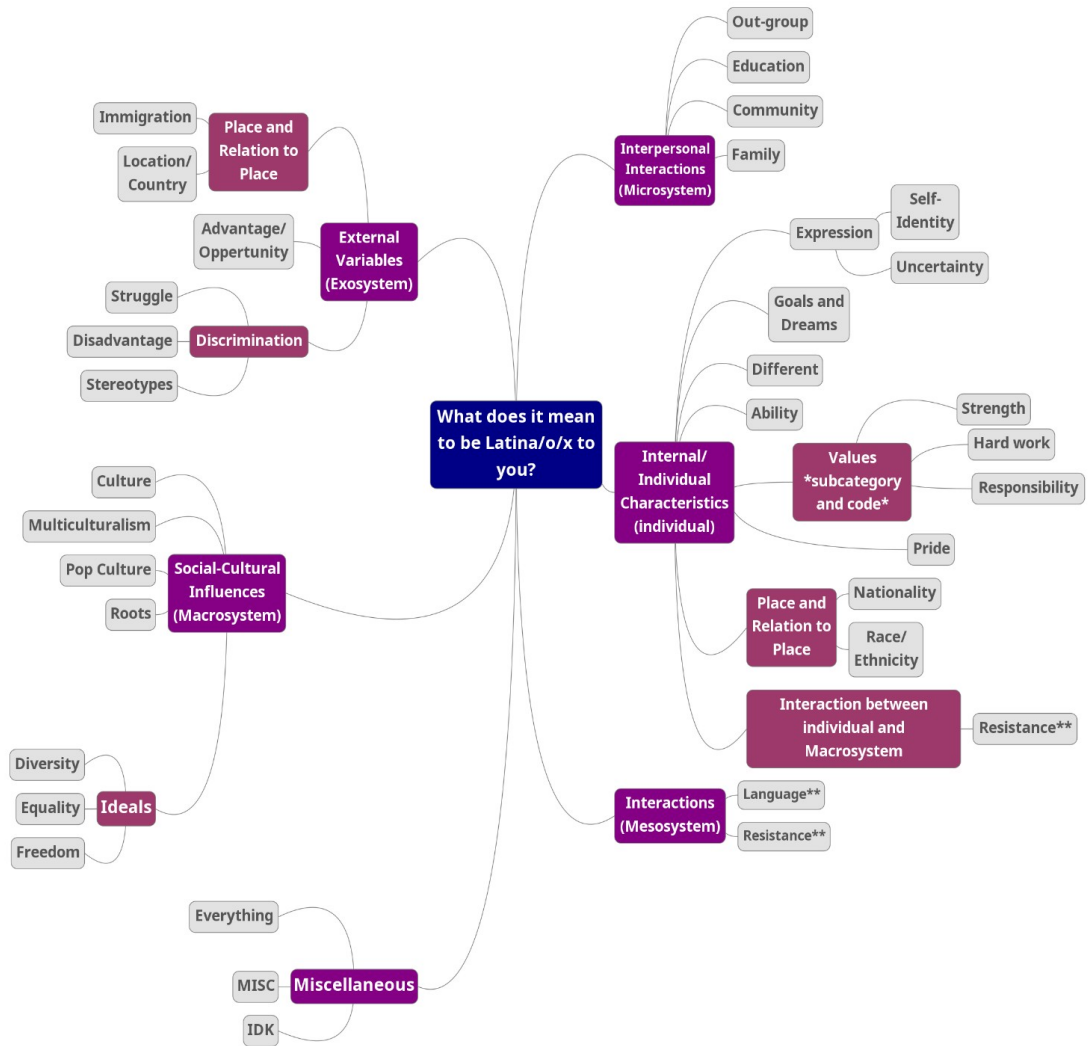
		individual.	
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	External Variables	Factors related to the social, cultural or political environment that an individual is in.	Opportunity/Advantage
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Place and Relation to Place	Connected to space in terms of a physical location or the movement or connection to a physical location.	Immigration Location/Country
Larger Culture (Macrosystem)		The culture in which the individual lives.	
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Social-Cultural Influences	Related to the different groups of people and their habits, traditions, and beliefs. The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things.	Culture Multiculturalism Pop culture Roots Language**
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Discrimination	The unjust or prejudicial treatment of distinct categories of people or things.	Disadvantage Stereotypes Struggle
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	Ideals	Principle or value that individuals or groups of people strive for related to group morality.	Diversity Equality Freedom
Miscellaneous		miscellaneous.	Misc IDK Everything

\*Code that is also the name of a theme or sub-theme

\*\*Codes that appear in multiple themes or sub-themes



Figure 1: Final Thematic Map



Box in blue indicates the survey question students were asked. Boxes in purple indicate the themes and boxes in red violet indicate sub-themes. Gray lines indicate the connection between themes, sub-themes, and codes.

\*Themes or sub-themes that are also codes

\*\*Codes that appear in multiple themes or sub-themes

Table 5: Count and Percentage of Codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Ability	30	4.9
Advantage/ Opportunity	20	3.2
Community	57	9.2
Culture	137	22.2
Different	38	6.1
Disadvantage	14	2.3
Diversity	9	1.5
Dreams/Goals	21	3.4
Education	7	1.1
Everything	8	1.3
Equality	10	1.6
Expression	49	7.9
Family	44	7.1
Freedom	14	2.3
IDK	10	1.6
Immigration	9	1.5
Language	26	4.2
Hard work	44	7.1
Location/Country	33	5.3
MISC	21	3.4
Multiculturalism	12	1.9
Nationality	26	4.2
Outgroup	12	1.9
Pop culture	3	0.5
Pride	201	32.5
Responsibility	9	1.5
Race/Ethnicity	39	6.3
Resistance	46	7.4
Roots	90	14.6
Self-identity	41	6.6
Stereotypes	14	2.3
Strengths	24	3.9
Struggle	15	2.4
Uncertainty	15	2.4
Values	24	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1172</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*How many responses received this code

## Coder Agreement

Intercoder reliability in terms of coding refers to the extent to which independent coders agree on applying codes to the content in which they are coding when using the same coding scheme (Compton, Love, and Sell, 2012). In this case, codes are applied to respondents' answers to the open-ended question "What does it mean to you to be Latina, Latino, or Latinx?". This is a key component of thematic analysis and studies with a higher intercoder reliability are considered more objective (Compton et al., 2012). As such I calculated the percent agreement (or simple agreement) for each code. According to Allen (2017), a percent agreement of 80% or higher is representative of moderately strong validity. All codes had a percent agreement between 88.9% and 99.8%, thus the methods of this study were quite reliable. A full table of frequency of codes applied and percent agreement is listed below in Table 6.

Table 6: Coder Agreement

Code	Frequency of only one coder applying code	Frequency of only two coders applying code	Frequency of full agreement (all applying or not applying code)	Valid percent of full agreement
Ability	6	7	432	97.1
Advantage/ Opportunity	3	4	439	98.4
Community	23	20	403	90.4
Culture	5	10	431	96.6
Different	8	6	427	96.8
Disadvantage	3	8	435	97.5
Diversity	2	2	446	99.1
Dreams/Goals	7	6	434	97.1
Education	1	2	441	99.3
Everything	2	2	440	99.1

Equality	1	4	439	98.9
Expression	13	12	421	94.4
Family	9	6	432	96.6
Freedom	1	8	438	98.0
IDK	3	6	436	98.0
Immigration	3	1	443	99.1
Language	2	5	435	98.4
Hard work	2	3	442	98.9
Location/ Country	7	7	431	96.9
MISC	8	8	430	96.4
Multiculturalism	3	6	435	98.0
Nationality	7	5	434	97.3
Outgroup	4	8	430	97.3
Pop culture	0	1	440	99.8
Pride	22	27	394	88.9
Responsibility	0	7	439	98.4
Race/Ethnicity	8	17	409	91.5
Resistance	12	12	442	94.6
Roots	11	16	416	93.9
Self-identity	15	11	417	94.1
Stereotypes	7	5	433	97.3
Strengths	5	1	443	97.3
Struggle	6	3	438	98.6
Uncertainty	7	1	431	98.2
Values	11	6	426	96.2

### **Codes grouped into Themes and Sub-themes**

Below is a table that presents the relationship between responses, codes, themes, and subthemes. The most common themes that appeared in the data are as follows. The majority of responses to the open-ended question “What does it mean to you to be Latina, Latino, or Latinx?” included at least one code corresponding to the Internal (Individual) theme. While just over half responses were coded for at least one code within the Larger Culture (Macrosystem) theme. The third highest presenting theme was Interpersonal Interactions (Microsystem).

Table 7: Number and Percent of Responses Assigned to Themes and Sub-themes

<b><u>Theme/Sub-Theme</u></b>		<b><u>Number of the 447 Responses Coded within each Theme/Sub-theme</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Responses Coded within each Theme/Sub-theme</u></b>
<b>Internal (Individual) – 13 codes total</b>		434	97.2
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Individual Characteristics – 7 codes</b>	320	71.6
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Values* – 3 codes</b>	67	15.0
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Place and Relation to Place – 3 codes</b>	84	19.0
<b>Interpersonal Interactions (Microsystem) – 4 codes total</b>		138	31.0
<b>Interactions (Mesosystem) – 2 codes total</b>		71	16.2
<b>Societal Structures (Exosystem) – 3 codes total</b>		58	13.0
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>External Variables – 1 code</b>	20	4.5
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Place and Relation to Place – 2 codes</b>	38	8.5
<b>Larger Culture (Macrosystem) – 11 codes total</b>		265	59.4
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Social-Cultural Influences – 5 codes</b>	216	48.4
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Discrimination – 3 codes</b>	41	9.3
<i>Sub-Theme</i>	<b>Ideals – 3 codes</b>	33	7.4
<b>Miscellaneous – 3 codes total</b>		39	8.8

Each of 447 responses received from 1 to 12 codes.

**Grades, M.E.Ch.A. Attendance, and Pride**

The second and third research questions assessed whether there was a relationship between grades, M.E.Ch.A. participation, and participant ethnic identity. For this analysis I focused on the code of pride, consistent with the literature on ethnic identity affirmation. Rates of missing data for M.E.Ch.A. participation and reported grades range from 3.3% and 2.9%, however, only 78.7% of participants responded to the open-ended question. Data from participants who did not respond to the open-ended question were not included in the following calculations.

Addressing the second research question and hypothesis, the hypothesis that students who participate in M.E.Ch.A. will be more likely to convey signifiers of pride as part of their response to “What does being Latino/Latina/Latinx mean to you?” was tested using a chi-square test. It was determined that there was a significant relationship between M.E.Ch.A. participation and responses coded for pride,  $\chi^2(1, N = 384) = 9.22$ ,  $p = .002$ ; students who participated in M.E.Ch.A. were more likely to respond to the open-ended question in a way that would be coded for pride. Table 8 show the counts and percentages of students who had or had not participated in M.E.Ch.A. and responses coded and not coded for pride.

Table 8: M.E.Ch.A. and Pride Crosstabulation

		PRIDE Code		Total	
		No	Yes		
MECHA	Yes	Count	73	88	161
		% within MECHA	45.30%	54.70%	100.00%
		% within PRIDE	34.90%	50.30%	41.90%

		code			
	No	Count	136	87	223
		% within MECHA	61.00%	39.00%	100.00%
		% within PRIDE code	65.10%	49.70%	58.10%
Total		Count	209	175	384
		% within MECHA	54.40%	45.60%	100.00%
		% within PRIDE code	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

MECHA Yes indicates participants who had marked they had participated in M.E.Ch.A. in high school and MECHA No are participants who did not mark that they had participated in M.E.Ch.A. in high school. PRIDE CODE indicates whether responses to the open-ended question received a pride code (Yes) or did not (No). A total of 63 students did not respond to whether or not they participated in M.E.Ch.A, thus the total number of students for this table is 384 rather than 447. The Chi Square test results are as follows  $\chi^2(1, N = 384) = 9.22, p = .002$ .

The third research question and hypothesis, in which it was anticipated that there would be a relationship between student's reported grades and responses coded for pride, was also tested using a chi-square test. Data showed that there was not a significant relationship between students who reported grades of As and Bs with responses coded for pride,  $\chi^2(1, N = 378) = .204, p = 0.65$ .; Students who had higher reported grades were no more likely to respond to the open-ended question in a way that would be coded for pride. Table 9 show the counts and percentages of students' reported grades and responses coded and not coded for pride.

Table 9: Reported Grades and Pride Crosstabulation

			PRIDE code		Total
			No	Yes	
GRADES code	As and Bs	Count	123	110	233
		% within GRADES code	52.80%	47.20%	100.00%
		% within PRIDE code	63.30%	62.90%	61.60%

	Cs and Below	Count	80	65	145
		% within GRADES code	55.20%	44.80%	100.00%
		% within PRIDE code	39.40%	37.10%	38.40%
<b>Total</b>		Count	203	145	378
		% within GRADES code	63.30%	36.70%	100.00%
		% within PRIDE code	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

GRADES code indicates the reported grades on surveys, and whether they were Mostly As and Bs or Cs or below. PRIDE code indicates whether responses to the open-ended question received a pride code (Yes) or did not (No). The Chi Square test results are as follows  $\chi^2(1, N = 378) = .204, p = 0.651$ .



## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding about how Latinx adolescents in Oregon understand their own ethnic identity, and to explore whether a more positive ethnic identity is associated with participation in organizations like M.E.Ch.A. and academic achievement. Results of the thematic analysis yielded 36 codes that were organized into 6 themes based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (1977). This discussion is organized as follows. First, I briefly expand on the ecological system theory, major findings, and then discuss final themes and codes. Each theme is discussed along with the most commonly applied codes within each theme. Additionally, codes that have been identified as related to the research question (such as education and resistance) are also discussed. Then I discuss the relationship between M.E.Ch.A. participation, reported grades, and the code Pride.

As I based the organization of themes and the thematic map on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1977), I begin with a brief description of this model. Originally developed to describe influences on children's development, the ecological systems theory describes multiple levels or systems that are contexts for individual development. This model is centered around the individual, which includes the individual's characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, personality, sex, and so on. Then, the microsystem is the immediate environment that the individual has direct contact with such as home and school. Moving further, the Mesosystem represents the connections between microsystems (such as a child's parents interacting with the child's teacher). The Exosystem is the indirect environment affecting development, such as societal structures of government and social services. Finally, the macrosystem

includes the social and cultural values of a society in which the individual exists (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

### **Major Findings**

The most common theme that emerged through our thematic analysis reflected participants' own individual characteristics. For example, they referred to their ability to speak multiple languages, personal values such as a strong work ethic, personal goals, and from where they or their parents originated. The next most frequent theme in the responses was at the macrosystemic level, reflecting larger cultural ideas. They made references to culture, to their family origins, traditions, and larger cultural ideals.

These findings indicate that these Latinx students see their identity in terms of personal characteristics and within a larger cultural framework of society, the most personal and distal levels of the ecological model. Given that the vast majority of responses included reference to individual characteristics, these may be the most salient features of their conceptualization of their ethnic identity. Additionally, how a Latinx adolescent understands themselves in a larger context of their ethnic grouping has major impact on their ethnic identity. This finding suggests that perhaps Latinx adolescents connect their personal experiences and understanding of the world around them to their identity. It also supports the previous assertion that the more engaged they become in their ethnic group in several ways, such as engagement in cultural celebrations, foods, people, and activities may help them in their ethnic identity formation (Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002).

The identified themes were aligned with the ecological model, with almost each level being represented in the data. This suggests that Latinx youth experience their ERI

in every level of their environment, meaning that any interaction they have within the world may impact their ERI, even influences as distal as popular culture.

The one level of the ecological model that was not represented as originally formulated by Bronfenbrenner was the mesosystem, or the interactions between microsystems. This was a concept that was not manifested within participant responses. However, participants still touched on interactions between either themselves and larger systems, such as resistance against stereotypes, or their microsystems and larger systems, such as their families' difficulties navigating the host culture due to language barriers. These types of interactions became the modified definition for our Interactions (Mesosystem) theme. Thus, interactions between systems was still an important aspect that impacted Latinx adolescent's identity, but not necessarily interactions between microsystems, which, for example, might have looked like how schoolteachers interact with parents.

Students reporting that they were involved with M.E.Ch.A. were also more likely to respond to the open-ended question with indicators of pride over non-M.E.Ch.A. participating students, consistent with the notion that engaging in cultural activities can bolster a student's positive ethnic identity. It cannot be determined from this data whether students who engage in M.E.Ch.A. develop greater cultural pride, students who join M.E.Ch.A. already have greater pride, or there is a dynamic interaction between the two. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that Latinx students' engagement in cultural activities and knowledge of their history may have numerous positive benefits (Cabrera, Milem, Jaquette, & Marx, 2014). Lastly, this

study found that there was no association between indicators of pride and reported grades.

### **Discussion of Final Themes and Codes**

This section of the discussion will further elaborate on themes, subthemes, and codes found in the data in the context of the responses and current literature. Each theme will be discussed, along with the most common subthemes and codes, as well as codes that have been identified as highly salient in the literature on ERI, such as Resistance and Education.

#### *Internal (Individual) Theme*

This theme was made up of 3 subthemes: Individual Characteristics (with 7 codes), Values (with 3 codes) and Place and Relation to Place (with 3 codes) and 97.2% of responses included at least one of these 13 codes. This indicates that almost all participants saw themselves and their internal characteristics as key components of what it means to be Latina/o/x. As discussed in the literature review, Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development details that an individual's adolescence is a key time for identity formation and contemplating "Who am I?". In this stage of life, individuals have the capacity to incorporate their sense of self with their reference group and develop ethnic-racial group awareness (Cross & Cross, 2008). This, as well as the wording of the open-ended question, informs the high percentage of the sample group cited the internal and individual characteristics in their responses as they are reflecting on the significance of their ethnic identity.

Within this broad theme are many very distinct codes that provide insight to how Latinx students in Oregon see themselves and their ethnic identity. Codes that relate particularly to research questions or have notable significance are discussed below.

### *Ability Code*

30 responses, or 4.9% of the data was coded for Ability. Ability, which we defined as the possession of the means or skill to do something or act in a particular way, especially as a faculty or quality, is related to the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, as stated in the literature review, the confidence in ability to do things in a specific domain (Martens et al., 2006). All participants attended a one-day leadership conference created for Latinx identified high school students, which likely involved activities that helped affirm their self-efficacy, effecting the number of codes applied to the ability code. Additionally, participants likely linked being Latinx with their ability to succeed in general through the term “Si se puede.”

Some responses included the phrase “Si se puede”, which translates to English as “Yes, it is possible” or roughly “Yes, we can.” This phrase has a rich and complex history, however, for simplicity of coding was coded under “Ability”. For many, the phrase holds a deep political meaning and rooted in the adversity of working-class Latinx communities in the United States. The phrase “Si se puede” was used by the United Farm Workers Union in the 1970’s as a rally cry (Perez, 2008). This use of the phrase is typically attributed to Cesar Chavez, an American labor leader and civil rights activist, who used the phrase during a 24-day hunger strike protesting farm labor laws in Arizona (Erichsen, 2019). The phrase has continued to be used by political activist

and allies throughout the decades. Notability, “Si se puede” was adopted by immigration reform marches in 2006, and by Belisario Betancur’s and Obama’s presidential campaigns (in 1982 to 1986 in Colombia and 2008 to 2012 in the United States respectively; Perez, 2008; Erichsen, 2019).

### *Language Code*

Language was a code that appeared in 4.2% of the responses. This code was also included in multiple themes and sub-themes because of its impact in various systems in the ecological model. The sample group included immigrants or children of immigrants, Spanish speaking, and non-Spanish speaking Latinx students. Past studies have shown that many Latinx youth, particularly children of immigrants often serve as language brokers, the cultural and linguistic go-between for their families and the host culture (Tse, 1995). This duty comes as a positive influence and a risk factor for Latinx youth. Research has found that the more variety of interpreting experiences an individual has higher their academic achievement as well as translation difficulty is positively related to academic self-concept (Anguiano, 2018). However, the impact of language brokering is also context dependent, as translating demanding situations also may pose as a risk for increased stress (Corona et al., 2012).

For the current study participants, the ability to speak a second language was primarily seen as an advantage to students. Students suggested in their responses that the ability to speak Spanish would serve as a benefit when looking for jobs or allow them to interact with a larger variety of people. Particularly notable was this response by a seventeen-year-old Latinx student:

To me, being latina means being proud of where you come from, no matter what others say. This includes speaking Spanish when those around you tell you to stop. Being Latina means you're not afraid to show off your culture.

This response implies that speaking Spanish and language use can be form of resistance to the host culture, which typically pressures non-English speakers to adjust and adapt to English language use (Anguiano, 2017). This is just one example of how language interacts with the individual (a mode of communication the individual possesses), the microsystems (those that the participant is speaking to and those that tell her to stop using Spanish) and the macrosystem (interacting with social norms of speaking English in the United States).

#### *Pride Code*

Pride was most applied code with 201 responses or 32.5% of the data was coded for pride. This may be due in part to context in which the data was collected, at a Latino leadership conference. Pride in ethnic identity is closely related to the concept of group esteem and associated with positive adjustment through the developmental periods. Ethnic pride is an aspect of ethnic identity that represents positive attitude towards ones racial or ethnic group (Phinney, 1990). Past theory suggest that ethnic-racial pride has a positive influence on academic achievement (Spencer, 2006). Additionally, positive experiences in school and other social contexts that validate a student's identity, such as the leadership conference our sample group was attending, may promote the development of ethnic pride for an adolescent (Spencer, 2006).

However, empirical research has also found contradictory evidence to a positive link between ethnic pride and academic adjustment, as previously stated in the literature

review (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2012). Thus, there is a conflicting understanding of how ethnic pride interacts with academic adjustment and performance.

### *Interpersonal Interactions (Microsystem) Theme*

The Microsystems theme consists of 4 codes with 31.0% of the data coded for at least one of these codes, meaning that almost a third of participants found their close personal relationships to be an important part of their own conceptualization of their ethnic identity. This is consistent with the collectivistic traditions of Latinx cultures (Acevedo-Polakovich et al., 2014). This theme is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1989), in which individuals are embedded in many proximal social contexts, such as their family, educational systems, and various communities. The qualities of these social contexts are critical when considering ethnic and racial identities for an adolescent, as they form their sense of self within these contexts. These social contexts are represented within this theme and expanded on further in following sections.

#### *Education Code*

The education code was only applied to 7 of the 447 responses, or 1.1% of the data. This, in part, is because this code only refers to formal education, rather than informal learning. This lack of responses applied to the education code may indicate that this group of Latinx youth do not often see formal education as a significant factor in their relationship with their own ethnic identity.

Formal education is often seen as a gateway to success, as having a high school degree is positively associated with various health indicators, job satisfaction, and lower



rates of unemployment than those without a high school diploma or its equivalent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Responses that did mention education referred to it as a way to elevate themselves financially or become successful, many of which also referred to their families as motivation, such as this high school senior's response:

Being Latina means that I have to work harder than most of my peers in school. I started off with less opportunities because of financial circumstances. However, I have opened doors for myself with the inspiration of my parents to work hard. I want to pursue a degree in environment engineering to pay back everything they have done for me as well as give back to my community and the world.

#### *Family Code*

A total of 44 responses, or 7.1% of the data, was coded with the family code. An adolescent's family is critical for helping them learn values and behaviors which inform their adaption to various social contexts and environments (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Previous literature has found that family connection and positive interactions can be a protective factor for Latinx youth. For example, *Familismo*, a central Latinx value that emphasizes commitment and loyalty to family, has a negative relationship with depressive symptoms (Nagayama Hall, 2017). Additionally, studies with ethnic minority adolescents have found that close and warm relationships with parental figures is associated with positive effect and group esteem (Huang & Stormshak, 2011).

#### *Interactions (Mesosystem) Theme*

The Mesosystem has traditionally referred to interactions between microsystems, however, for the purposes of this thesis, the mesosystem theme consist of

codes that are ways for the individual to interact with various levels of their ecological system. This theme, which consists of only two codes, consisted of 16.2% of the data, with 71 responses being coded for this theme. Both codes in this theme were also a part of other themes and sub-theme as they play rolls in various systems in the ecological model. For example, the resistance code, which is also a part of the internal characteristics sub-theme, is a concept that transcends the individual and interacts with the exosystem and macrosystem. Because of these interactions, though not interactions between microsystems, this code is a part of the Mesosystem code.

#### *Resistance Code*

46 responses, or 7.4% of the data was coded for resistance. Our coding team defined resistance as the recognition of a negative attitude towards their minority group and responses of defiance to that negative attitude or stereotype. Our concept of resistance is related to critical consciousness. Though critical consciousness is not limited to resistance of oppressive forces, the ability and capacity to envision and take part in creating a more just society is a key part of the process (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003).

An example of resistance, as touched on previously in the Language Code section of this discussion, was a young women's defiance in continuing to speak in Spanish after being told to stop. This example displays how responses were coded for multiple codes as the different concepts of each code interact to paint a larger message.

Some participants demonstrated their understanding of the existence of inequalities that impact them and push back against these norms, such as this fourteen-year-old male participant:

To me, being Latino is having the privilege of being a part of a culturally beautiful family. Although their ongoing prejudice and other problems that they are faced with may sometimes reflect, it is a burden I am more than willing to accept. Because we are family and this is our fight, our world, and it will be beautiful. ¡Arriba los Latinos!

In this response, the participant exhibits a base understanding of biases, and though not an in depth understanding of oppression or sociocultural influences by any means, the participant expresses acceptance of this reality and empowerment to combat this perceived prejudice.

Other participants expressed resistance of negative stereotypes, some of which may be experiencing stereotype threat. Often responses indicate that they have the ability and capacity to do more or perform better than others expect them to. For example, one participant put it simply saying, "...Just because I am Latina it doesn't mean I will do what stereotypes say. I'm more than that and I can succeed in life." Individuals experiencing stereotype threat feel pressure to disprove or avoid confirming negative stereotypes that impact their social identity (Spencer et al., 2015). This pressure to succeed is an additional stressor that nonstereotyped or nonminority groups do not experience. As stated in the literature review, this motivation unfortunately can lead to underperformance due to the added pressure (Ben-Zeev et al., 2005).

#### *Societal Structures (Exosystem) Theme*

This theme was made up of 2 subthemes: External Variables (with 1 code) and Place and Relation to Place (with 2 codes) with a total of 3 codes, and 13.0% of responses included at least one of these 3 codes. The Exosystem are the societal structures that function independently from the individual, however, still have a host of

effects on individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These societal structures include opportunities, for example Affirmative Action policies, as well as disadvantages, such as the lack of pathways to citizenship for young people brought to the US as children.

#### *Larger Culture (Macrosystem) Theme*

The Macrosystem theme, which included over half the data, at 285 responses or 59.4% of the data, includes three sub-themes, social-cultural influences, discrimination, and ideals. The Macrosystem is the most distal to the individual and influences all other systems in the ecological model. This includes social cultural characteristics of the society in question such as anti-immigrant attitudes (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

#### *Social-Culture Influences Subtheme and Culture Code*

The social-cultural influences sub-theme includes the majority of these responses, at 211 or 48.4% of the data, which indicates that larger social-cultural influences like culture and heritage were very significant in participant's conceptualization of their own ethnic identity.

The culture code was one of the most applied codes with 137 responses or 22.2% of the data. Often responses used the word 'culture' vaguely, likely referring to culture as an umbrella term that encompassed their experiences of being Latinx. Our coding team defined culture as social behaviors, norms, knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs, and habits of a group or larger society, so all responses that mentioned these themes in addition to responses that simply used the word culture were coded under this code.

### *Discrimination Sub-Theme*

This sub-theme of the exosystem theme includes the codes disadvantage, stereotypes, and struggle. In total 41 responses, or 9.3% of the data, were coded within this subtheme. Experiences of discrimination include being treated differently or inferior to others based on group membership, such as a racial or ethnic group and the unfairness, exclusion, prejudice comments or actions, and negative stereotyping (Córdova & Cervantes, 2010). For example, one response from a 15-year-old Latina described her experiences with discrimination:

yo pienso que siendo latina muchas personas no creeran en ti y te van a somestimar por eso los latinos tenemos que demostrar nuestro valor y enseñanes a los demas que si Podemos

Translated to English this response reads as:

I think that as a Latina many people will not believe in you and they will underestimate you, that's why Latinos have to demonstrate our value and teach others that we can do it

Nearly all responses that talked about experiences with discrimination were also coded for other themes outside of the discrimination theme. This may be for many reasons, however, it can be hypothesized that this sample group sees more to their own ethnic identity than their experiences of discrimination.

In terms of ethnic identity, experiences of discrimination can threaten the identity of members of minority groups (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). There are many negative consequences that arise when one is experiencing discrimination, such as higher rates of anxiety, depression, psychological distress, and job dissatisfaction (Lee & Ahn, 2012). Experiences of discrimination, whether overt or subtle, can be

particularly harmful for minority youth as this is a key developmental period (Huynh, 2012).

### *Miscellaneous Theme*

This theme was created to encompass codes that did not fit neatly into other themes, based on the ecological model. This includes the code miscellaneous, everything, and IDK. The everything code was developed in reaction to responses that indicate themes along the lines, “it means everything to me”. This code was meant only for use with responses just vaguely referring to “everything” as they did not expressly imply a single code, such as pride, however, these responses generally had positive connotations. The IDK code was only use when a response was only “IDK” or “I don’t know”.

### *Summary Statement of Themes and Codes*

The most prominent themes that arose within participant’s responses were their own individual characteristics, sociocultural influences, and interpersonal connections when asked the open-ended question. The most common individual characteristics were the ability to express one’s self and their self-identity, the individuals’ work ethic, and resistance to stereotypes and negative interactions with others. Many students cited their connection to their culture, traditions, and heritage as a key factor as well. Students also expressed that feeling a connection to their families and larger Latinx community was an important part of their ethnic identification. Student’s personal connection to their ethnic identity, such as the themes touched on above, outweighed the number of responses that specified factors such as discrimination, disadvantages, or stereotypes.

### **Discussion of relationships between M.E.Ch.A., grades, and Pride**

There was a significant relationship between M.E.Ch.A. participation and responses coded for pride such that students who participated in M.E.Ch.A. were more likely to respond to the open-ended question in a way that would be coded for pride. Participation in M.E.Ch.A., as stated in the literature review, involves ethnic identity affirmation and self-affirmation activities, both of which to reduced effects of stereotype threat, experiences of discrimination, increase self-integrity, self-efficacy (Spencer et al., 2016; Frantz et al., 2004; Martens et al., 2006). This reinforcement of the strengths of Latinx culture and positive identity common to M.E.Ch.A. participation may explain why pride was such a salient part of their response to the open-ended question.

There was no relationship between grades and responses coded for pride. As discussed in the literature review, there was conflicting evidence compared to theory for the connection between ethnic pride or ethnic identity affirmation and academic adjustment and achievement or Latinx adolescents, making it unsurprising that there was no significant relationship found between reported grades and responses coded for pride. Additionally, because participants were also attendees of a leadership conference, the majority of students had grades that were strong enough to be allowed to attend a school field trip. Further, students engaged in ethnic identity affirmation activities and interventions at the conference, therefore responses may have been impacted. This could be an explanation to why there was no significant relationship between coded responses for pride and reported grades even though education is typically highly valued in Latinx and immigrant families (Ethier et al., 1990).

## **Strengths, Limitations, and Implications**

Study strengths include a large sample size and sufficient power for the statistical analyses. Another strength of this research study is a focus on a rapidly growing demographic group. In terms of methods, our detailed process for checking consistency across coders ensured intercoder reliability. Having a focus on identity as an asset for Latinx youth also supports strength-based methods when working with minority groups. Finally, the use of participant's own words as data allows for data analysis to be more closely connected to participants thoughts and feelings about their ethnic identity.

Study limitations include the cross-sectional study design as it does not allow for causal or directional relationship conclusions, such as how ethnic pride may affect academic achievement. Another limitation of this work is the concern that thematic analysis can be influenced by researchers and coders biases and preconceived notions without careful coordination between coders (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). On the positive side, intercoder reliability was strong. Additionally, a possible concern with the findings is that all measures are self-reported by students. Though this is a common approach for gathering data, this method may be impacted by social norms, desirability, and selective recall (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Participants also had just attended a one-day leadership conference intended to promote educational aspirations, cultural pride, and stimulate motivation. It is possible that participants would respond differently to the question in another context, which may affect generalizability of the study's findings. Further research should be done to investigate relationships between



Latinx youth's ethnic identity, participation in culturally informed activities, such as M.E.Ch.A., and academic achievement.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding about how Latinx adolescents in the Pacific Northwest conceptualize their own ethnic identity, and to explore whether a more positive ethnic identity is associated with participation in organizations like M.E.Ch.A. as well as higher academic achievement. Theme organization approximated the ecological model: internal (individual), interpersonal interactions (microsystem), interactions (not consistent with the definition for mesosystem, but representing individual-system or microsystem and exo- or macrosystem interactions), societal structures (exosystem), larger culture (macrosystem), and miscellaneous. This shows that almost all levels of the ecological model are represented in the data, and that both personal characteristics and a wide variety of interactions with the environment are reflected in Latinx adolescents' understanding of their own ERI.

The most prominent themes that arose within participant's responses were their own individual characteristics and sociocultural influences. Students involved with M.E.Ch.A. were also more likely to respond to the open-ended question with indicators of pride relative to non-M.E.Ch.A. participating students. There was no correlation between indicators of pride and academic achievement. Further research should be done to investigate relationships between Latinx youth's ethnic identity, participation in culturally informed activities, such as M.E.Ch.A., and academic achievement.

## Appendix A

### Survey Questions Used

2. What are your grades, in general? (Circle one) My grades are mostly.....

**A's**            **A's & B's**            **B's**            **B's & C's**            **C's**            **lower than C's**

7. Have you participated in any of the following **during high school?** (circle YES or NO for each)

**Yes No** Career/Technical Education (CTE) classes

**Yes No** AP/IB classes

**Yes No** English Language Learner classes

**Yes No** MeCha or any Latinx-

focused club

**Yes No** Dual enrollment or College Now classes  
(high school & college credit)

**Yes No** Volunteer Community Service

**Yes No** School Athletic Team

**Final question: What does it mean to you to be Latina, Latino, or Latinx? Please share with us!**



**¡Gracias!**

## Appendix B

### CODE BOOK

#### **Code: Ability**

**Brief Description:** the ability to do something

**Keywords:** can do, power, si se puede

**Full Description:** The possession of the means or skill to do something. The ability to do something or act in a way, especially as a faculty or quality.

**When to use:** Apply this code when a response indicates that a respondent feels that they can do an activity.

**When NOT to use:** When the keyword power is used not in reference to ability (ie: Unity is power), when a response refers to the limitation of ability or not being able to do something.

**Example:** “To be strong and that I am Beautiful. My culture is very unique. To be able to be a latina **I can do anything I set my mind to** and stand out just a little shinier. I am proud to be a latina. It makes me just That more special!”

#### **Code: Advantage/Opportunity**

**Brief Description:** the chance to do something

**Keywords:** achieve, advantage, opportunity

**Full Description:** A set of circumstances (advantageous position, chance, or prospect) that makes it possible or favorable to do something/attain a goal.

**When to use:** Apply when the response indicates a favorable position or circumstance that makes a goal or task more obtainable, many responses indicate that the ability to speak Spanish as an advantage.

**When NOT to use:** Do not use when the response does not indicate there is a specific chance for bettering or getting to a better position than where they are at or when an opportunity has been denied to them (lack of opportunity).

**Example:** “It means I belong and feel a part of a growing culture that develops in ways of feeling proud about. Being latina **opens up opportunities** in the multicultural community.”

#### **Code: Community**

**Brief Description:** being a part of a group/group identification

**Keywords:** community, connection, unity, belonging, belonging to more than two groups, be a part, helping others, group, shared experience, support (one another)

**Full Description:** A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. Being part of a community can also be called Group identification. Group identification is when a member identifies with an interacting group and is distinguished conceptually from social identity, cohesion, and common fate. This can be thought of as a social group (Hispanic, Latinx, women/men) or interpersonal groupings (friends at school).

When to use: Apply this code when a response refers to being a part of a social group, feeling connected to that social group, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with group identification.

When NOT to use: When a response is referring to a community like family, ancestors, or roots (which are coded under family, and roots respectively).

Example: “Ser latino significa que nunce merindo y que portenesco **con mi gente** sin importar donde este. Siempre se tiene frijoles y tortillas en la sangre.”

### **Code: Culture**

Brief Description: present-day involvement in culture

Keywords: food, traditions, culture

Full Description: Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.

When to use: Apply this code when response uses present tense or identifies connection with a culture in present-day involvement.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response refers to culture in terms of their heritage, origin, or roots.

Example: “Be a Latino is be part of a great family, full of **culture, music, culinary food.**”

### **Code: Different**

Brief Description: standing out from others

Keywords: Not ashamed, unique, misunderstood

Full Description: Being different refers to when an individual feels as if they stand out. This may be through race, religion, personality, appearance, language, etc. Being different can be when the individual does not match the societal norm (white, male, middle class, Christian, heterosexual, etc.) and identifies with non-norm groups (Latinx, non-white, etc.). For some respondents, this may mean different from others within their group identification (such as Latinx). This can present in either a negative or positive light.

When to use: Apply this code when a response denotes feeling different or separate from the societal norms or within groups.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code if a response identifies with a non-norm group (Latinx, non-white) *without* specifically denoting feeling different or separate from others

Example: “What a Latina means to me is that **we are different** and we should take advantage of that.”

### **Code: Disadvantaged**

Brief Description: an unfavorable circumstance or condition that reduces the chances of success in comparison with others

Keywords: no opportunities compared to, working harder than

Full Description: Disadvantages refers to unfavorable circumstances that are often in relation to a person’s racial/ethnic group. Often this involves the systematic or

institutional disadvantages due to discrimination of race, class, gender, etc. An example would be fewer resources for Spanish speaking families to gain equal access to jobs or welfare programs.

When to use: Apply this code when a response acknowledges the unfair or unequal circumstances and a comparison between the circumstances of people from the host culture and Latinx individuals.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a person is talking about...

Example: “you are diversified and can share your cultures w/ others. **You have to work 2x harder** to achieve your goals.”

### **Code: Diversity**

Brief Description: inclusion of differences in a group

Keywords: diversity, different perspectives,

Full Description: the condition of having or being composed of differing elements particularly when there is inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization. Diversity incorporates all of the elements that make individuals unique from one another such as gender, race, age and so forth.

When to use: Apply this code when a response is referring to the inclusion of different groups of people. This may include the benefits of diversity and changes to a society with diversity.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response is just talking about the differences they see or feel (code for different).

Example: “It means to being able to connect with **a group of diverse peoples.**”

### **Code: Dreams/Goals**

Brief Description: an aim or desired result

Keywords: to do better, better life, ambition, reach dreams

Full Description: a strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work, a cherished aspiration, ambition, or ideal

When to use: Apply this code when a response indicates having an aspiration for something better, oftentimes this aspiration is vague.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response talks about working hard without indicating an aspiration, goal, dream, or expected outcome.

Example: “Honestly to be Latino it means a lot because its something that we have to live a struggle that we are here **to do the better things and make us better** and our family as well.”

### **Code: Education**

Brief Description: formal schooling

Keywords: school, education, college

Full Description: Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Formal education is classroom-based, provided by trained teachers.

When to use: Apply this code when a response indicates schooling/participation in high school curriculum/college, in a positive or negative light.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response indicates education in terms of informal learning, such as learning about their culture. Do not apply this code when responses indicate their non-educational experiences at school.

Example: “For me it’s alright being latino. I am just mainly glad that **colleges** have started to appreciate us. It’s nice being mexican I guess.”

### **Code: Everything**

Brief Description: vaguely referring to everything

Keywords: everything

Full Description: This code was developed in reaction to responses that indicate themes along the lines, “it means everything to me”. Meant only for use when responses just vaguely refer to “everything.”

When to use: Use when responses are vaguely referring to “everything.”

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response uses the word “everything”, but not in the vague context of directly responding to “what does being latina/o/x mean to you?”

Example: “**everything**. That’s who I am. Nothing can change that”

### **Code: Equality**

Brief Description: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities

Keywords: same rights, just like everyone else, no different

Full Description: Equality is the ideal of ensuring that every individual has equal opportunity and the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. Responses may be recognizing that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination.

When to use: Use this code when a response is indicating that they are on equal footing with others or that they deserve equality.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response is recognizing inequalities.

Example: “That I have **the same rights** that everyone has”

### **Code: Expression**

Brief Description: the process of making known one's thoughts or feelings, indication of feeling, spirit, character

Keywords: Uniqueness, self- expression, True colors, creative, being yourself, showing, represent, sharing with others

Full Description: The process of making known one's thoughts or feelings, an indication of feeling, spirit, character, etc. Responses may indicate expression by “being who you are”, “sharing”, or “representing” their culture.

When to use: Use this code when a response indicates the ability/capacity of expression, in any form that is outside of the individual and can be witnessed. \_

When NOT to use: Do not use this code when a response expresses something without citing the ability/mode of expressing that thing.

Example: “For me it means a lot because I get to **represent** my culture.”

**Code: Family**

Brief Description: family members

Keywords: Parents, Grandparents, Love, Immigrant parents, extended family members

Full Description: A group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually those of spouses, parents, children, and siblings.

When to use: Apply this code when a response indicates family members.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code if a response indicates family in a metaphorical sense that implies a tight knit community.

Example: “Being a person of color **whose family** has been from a Latin Country. It's being different from everyone else (which is a good thing). We don't have much opportunities as white people, so it's harder for Latino/a Latinx”

**Code: Freedom**

Brief Description: being able to make decisions or act without restrictions

Keywords: privilege, independent, free

Full Description: Having control of one’s life and having no limitations or restraints as to what you can do.

When to use: Apply when the student is describing their life or an instance where they have all control and nothing holding them back.

When NOT to use: Do not use when the student is describing limitations holding them back.

Example: “It means to be **free**, and special. As well as creative...”

**Code: IDK**

Brief Description: I don’t know

Keywords: no se, I don’t know, IDK, No comentarios

Full Description: Used to express that you do not understand or do not have an answer or response for a question or comment. Idk is an abbreviation of the phrase I don't know. Idk is most commonly used in informal communication.

When to use: Only use when a response only indicates one of the keywords above or something very similar.

When NOT to use: Do not use if the response indicates one of the keywords as well as another idea or concept (example: “IDK. I'm just proud I'm Latina!”; this example should be coded from pride and uncertainty).

Example: “**IDK**”

**Code: Immigration**

Brief Description: coming to live in a foreign country

Keywords: moved, came here, came from

Full Description: Immigration is the international movement of people to a destination country they are not native to or where they do not possess citizenship in order to settle or reside there, especially as permanent residents or naturalized citizens, or to take up employment as a migrant worker or temporarily as a foreign worker.

When to use: Apply this code when a response is referring to themselves, their families, or their community members moving from one country to another.

When NOT to use: Do not use this code when responses talk about the movement of people that they are not connected to (out-groups like Whites).

Example: “I see things differently. I was born here but at the age of 5 **I move to mexico** and basically grew up being a full Mexican person and I feel like that.”

### **Code: Language**

Brief Description: A verbal form of communication

Keywords: English, Spanish, speaking one language, speaking two or more languages,

Full Description: A language is a structured system of communication. Language, in a broader sense, is the method of communication that involves the use of languages.

When to use: Apply this code when a response indicates the ability to communicate through a specific language or the idea of languages.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response indicates communication without specifically indicating a language.

Example: “I’m proud of being latina because I’m different from other people. I like that I can **speak another language**”

### **Code: Hard Work**

Brief Description: hard work/work ethic

Keywords: Strong, hard work, motivated, strive, pushes

Full Description: putting in a lot of effort into what you do/a great deal of effort or endurance. Work ethic is a belief that hard work and diligence have a moral benefit and an inherent ability, virtue or value to strengthen character and individual abilities. It is a set of values centered on the importance of work and manifested by determination or desire to work hard.

When to use: Apply when the student is describing working on a hard task or indicates the idea of work ethic.

When NOT to use: Do not use when the student is not describing the way they do things or how they work.

Example: “latino shows more respect to other people Because there are mexican people and **hard work** and latino sometimes have respect.”

### **Code: Location/Country**

Brief Description: A physical location

Keywords: Mexico, Latin country, United States, Guatemala, boundaries (physical), pais

Full Description: A site (an area, a structure or group of structures) or an area within a site where something was, is or will be located. The description, distribution, and interaction of the diverse physical, biological, and cultural features of the earth.



When to use: Apply this code when a response indicates a specific physical location, often a county, town, or residence.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response indicates a non-physical location, such as unmarked boundaries or limitations.

Example: “have ancestors and family from **Mexico**.”

### **Code: MISC**

Brief Description: miscellaneous

Keywords: yeah, nothing, No comentarios

Full Description: Miscellaneous responses are varied or mixed and cannot easily be categorized or grouped, incomplete responses, responses with confusing meanings or misspellings.

When to use: Apply this code if a response is ineligible because of misspellings, confusing meanings, or is an incomplete response. Also apply this code if you do not believe a response belongs to any code and does not indicate the need for a new code.

When NOT to use: Do not use this code if a response is coded with any other code or indicates the need for a new code/theme. Please mark responses that you believe need a new code and bring up in coding meetings.

Example: “**nothing**”, “**Jess is very not (and Julie)**”

### **Code: Multiculturalism**

Brief Description: more than one culture

Keywords: afro Latina/o, two cultures, two ethnicities, multicultural, bicultural

Full Description: Multiculturalism is the way in which a society deals with cultural diversity, both at the national and at the community level. On an individual level, multiculturalism for many responses means belonging to more than one ethnic/racial/or cultural grouping.

When to use: Use this code when an individual indicates in their response that they identify with more than one culture/ethnicity/race.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response indicates sharing or representing their culture with others (code for expression).

Example: “I am proud to be **afro-mexican...**”, “I am able to **share 2 ethnicities** and being latin is the greatest gift because the culture is my life.”

### **Code: Nationality**

Brief Description: the status of belonging to a particular nation

Keywords: Mexican, American, Puerto Rican

Full Description: Nationality is a relationship between an individual person and a state. Nationality affords different rights and duties depending on the country.

When to use: Use this code when a respondent indicates a specific nationality in their response.

When NOT to use: Do not use this code when a response only mentions a country (code for Location) or being from a specific location. Also do not use this code when a response is only indicating at the beginning of their response the original question in

leading form (such as “Being Latina means that....” or “I feel like being latino means...”).

Example: “It means to me, that I am part of the biggest culture in the world and it is also proud for me to say that **I am Mexican! Arriba Mexico!**”

### **Code: Out-group**

Brief Description: the customs or traditions of others/sharing with people from other cultures

Keywords: others, different groups, other traditions

Full Description: Speaking of others who do not belong to your group of people I know who I am so I can connect with people that aren’t like me, I am able to share my culture with others (from different cultures), outer-culture connections, or appreciating other cultures.

When to use: Apply when the student is speaking of other groups or traditions and customs that they do not identify with or sharing their own identity/culture/values with people from other groups.

When NOT to use: Do not use when the student is only speaking of his own traditions and customs.

Example: “You understand people easier and you can relate a lot to **other ethnicities.**”

### **Code: Pop Culture**

Brief Description: modern popular culture transmitted via the mass media and aimed particularly at younger people

Keywords: Coco, Selena

Full Description: Popular culture is generally recognized by members of a society as a set of practices, beliefs, and objects that are dominant or prevalent in a society at a given point in time. Popular culture also encompasses the activities and feelings produced as a result of interaction with these dominant objects.

When to use: Apply this code when a response sites a popular culture reference.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code if the response refers to a wide sweeping generalization (or stereotype) of a group of people.

Example: “**Coco (the movie)**”

### **Code: Pride**

Brief Description: having a strong feeling of confidence

Keywords: joy, satisfied, proud, confident

Full Description: Confidence and self-respect as expressed by members of a group, typically one that has been socially marginalized, on the basis of their shared identity, culture, and experience. It can also mean a feeling or deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired.

When to use: Apply when the student is describing who they are with a sense of confidence and high satisfaction in who they are or in a group. Use this code whenever a response uses positive adjectives (like beautiful, awesome great) when describing their culture, themselves, etc.

When NOT to use: do not apply if the student is not describing who they are as something they are proud of, or simply say it is important. Do not apply if response indicates feeling uncertain or ashamed, thinking that other people should be proud or express pride differently.

Example: “For me to be a Latino **makes me proud** because I know that my people did a lot of great things **so Im proud of being a latino.**”

### **Code: Responsibility**

Brief Description: to be in charge or held accountable for something

Keywords: not letting others down, chores

Full Description: having a duty or something we are put in charge of or are in control of/ Being held accountable for something/having to be mature to handle situations independently.

When to use: Apply this code when a response refers to something as their “job” or duty.

When NOT to use: Do not use when the response is not specifically referring to a specific “duty” or goal needing to be completed by them.

Example: “Being latina means coming from a medium class and **having to do house chores at a young age also do school more** so being a latina you acquire such things as multitasking and working hard until we reached our goal and go beyond what offered to us.”

### **Code: Race/Ethnicity**

Brief Description: Ethnic or racial grouping

Keywords: Being not White, Afro-Latina/o, Latinx

Full Description: An ethnic group or ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other, usually on the basis of presumed similarities such as common language, ancestry, history, society, culture or nation. Ethnicity is separate from but related to the concept of race. Ethnicity is usually an inherited status based on the society in which one lives.

When to use: Apply this code when a response identifies an ethnic group that they identify with.

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when a response identifies an ethnic group that they *do not* identify with (ie white).

Example: “Being Latinx means to be proud of your **ethnic background.**”

### **Code: Resistance**

Brief Description: the attempt to prevent or change something by action or argument

Keywords: determined, survive, can do anything, never give up, proving others wrong, not quitting, make change, enact change

Full Description: Recognition of a negative attitude towards their minority group and responses with defiance to that negative attitude or stereotype.

When to use: Apply this code when a response indicates a negative attitude and pushes back in some way or another.

When NOT to use: When there is an acknowledgment of negative attitudes or stereotypes *without* denial or defiance. Also do not apply this code if a response talks about working hard without defiance of a negative stereotype or attitude.

Example: “It means I can be tougher to keep my head up and **prove people wrong!!**”

### **Code: Roots**

Brief Description: Connection with an origin

Keywords: Heritage, Tradition, Ancestors, Knowing where you come from, where I’m from, Origin, diverse, rituals, indigenous roots, food, culture, carry on

Full Description: Roots refers to cultural heritage as an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values. Cultural heritage is often expressed as either intangible or tangible cultural heritage.

When to use: Apply this code when a response refers to cultural traditions that refer to times or generations before them that they are or are not involved in the present tense.

When NOT to use: Do not use this code when a response is referring to only present-day involvement or present-day family.

Example: Having some Spanish heritage in your blood whether it’s your parents or yourself.

### **Code: Self-identity**

Brief Description: self-concept

Keywords: who I am, be yourself

Full Description: One’s self-concept is a collection of beliefs about oneself. Self-Identity includes personality attributes, knowledge of one’s skills and abilities, one’s occupation and hobbies, and awareness of one’s physical attributes.

When to use: Use when a response is referring to self-concept or answering the question “who am I?”

When NOT to use: Do not apply this code when responses are talking about expectations they experience on who they should be (code for stereotypes) or who they hope to become (code for dreams/goals).

Example: “Being a latina means that **I’m someone who’s not ashamed of who I am.** Also on not quitting, and that there’s always a way to get where I want to be.”

### **Code: Stereotypes**

Brief Description: over-generalized belief

Keywords: Not being expected to succeed, hot guys, expect

Full Description: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. The type of expectation can vary; it can be, for example, an expectation about the group’s personality, preferences, or ability.

When to use: Use when a response is citing a stereotype/general expectation/or believe held about them or a group that is either positive or negative.

When NOT to use: Do not use this code if a response does not indicate a clear expectation/stereotype.

Example: “It means that even though **you aren't expected to succeed**, you do just to prove them wrong. WORK it baby!”

### **Code: Strengths**

Brief Description: Being physically, mentally, or emotionally able to handle difficult situations. Positive attributes that apply to the individual; either innate or learned

Keywords: strong, power, courage, tenacity, capable

Full Description: Positive qualities that make you more effective and stronger in a metaphorical or concrete way.

When to use: Apply when the word is being used to describe distinct qualities they have that others don't demonstrate.

When NOT to use: do not use when no specific qualities of strength/power are being described, when referencing weakness or lack of strength in themselves or others.

Example: It means to be strong and be proud of where you came from.

### **Code: Struggle**

Brief Description: having to work extra hard for certain things.

Keywords: hard times, struggle, difficult

Full Description: Having certain things in life be hard or difficult to deal with.

When to use: Apply when the student is describing a case of disadvantage or having to work hard.

When NOT to use: Do not use when the student is not describing being in a specific hard situation in life, do not use this code when response compares their hardship to another (direct comparison of hardships in which the response indicates a worse position, would be coded for disadvantage).

Example: “To be Latina that we all **feel the struggle that all of us get misunderstood.**”

### **Code: Uncertainty**

Brief Description: unsure or hesitant about something

Keywords: Not belonging anywhere, unsure, i guess

Full Description: When an individual is not completely confident or sure of something about a particular situation, Estrangement, or the feeling that you don't belong, especially when you're surrounded by other people. Not knowing how to explain something that pertains to you.

When to use: Use when a response indicates that the respondents is unsure about something related to their own identity or how they feel about Latina/o/x culture, they do not know why or where their identity comes from, or describe a feeling of not knowing or confusion in regards to who a person identifies as or where they come from/family.

When NOT to use: Do not use this code if a response only says “idk” or something that represents only “I do not know”.

Example: “I **don't really belong anywhere** / in an ethnic group, because Im more than 2 groups and I don't speak anything but english, but I'm not white either **so I don't know.**”

**Code: Values**

**Brief Description:** Concepts that are important to an individual

**Keywords:** Value, respect, honor, support, humble

**Full Description:** Values are the things that an individual believes are important in the way a person lives and works. Values can determine one's priorities.

**When to use:** Coders will use this response when responses indicate values as a general concepts or values that are not included in other codes (such as family, culture, etc.)

**When NOT to use:** Do not use this code when a value is cited by a response that is already a code (such as hard work, strength, or responsibility).

**Example:** "To be Latinx - you have **to respect and keep your beliefs and values**. You're proud for being a brown person in a place full of opportunities. You want to show all."

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