



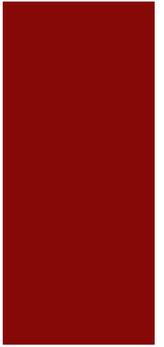
CCS 235

Blue Beetle & Comic
Latinidad

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Pre-lecture Question

- Let's review: What is race & racial/ethnic/ cultural (REC) identity?
- How does being Latinx & the Latinx experience fit into this?
- Is race the same everywhere, to everyone?
 - Does REC identity look different in Latin America, vs. in the United States?



Defining Race



- Race is a socially constructed system of unequal human categorization—*rooted in history, and based on phenotypical, and often ethnic, difference*—that produces both social and material consequences that are very real, & very significant.

- It is an ideology* that has been used to make sense of *human difference, & justify inequality.*

- *An ideology is our *belief-based framework for understanding how the world is, should, and can work*

Racialization



- We talk about this process of 'race/ethnicity/identity as a verb / a thing that happens' as RACIALIZATION, or Racial Formation:

"The sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed."

(Omi & Winant)

- Racialization reflects the way that racial identities & societal dynamics are understood, interpreted, represented, explained, organized, questioned, etc., both on individual & group levels; with the lived experience of race always caught between the tensions of individual experience, & the impacts of systemic power/structures

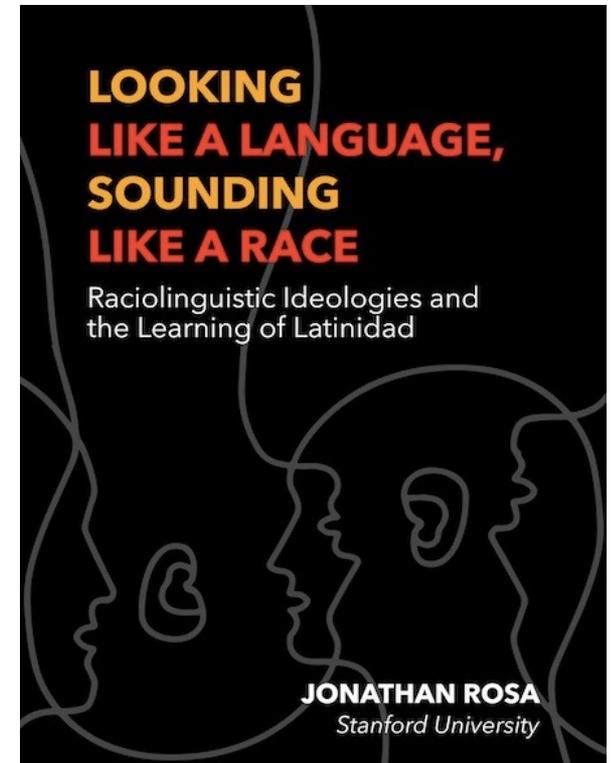
Latinx: Race? Ethnicity? Both?

- Race = Phenotypical features
- Ethnicity = Cultural & ancestral heritage

The complexity of MESTIZO ancestry & CULTURAL POLITICS make RACIALIZATION (the process of being seen as a race) an immanent (ongoing; happening NOW) reality for Latinx folks

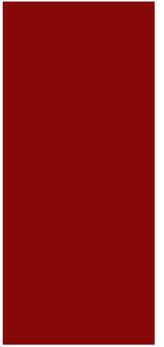
- In the U.S. context, Mestizo phenotype & Spanish-origin Latin American culture is regularly racialized; wrapped up with politics of belonging, citizenship, & immigration
- As Jonathan Rosa notes, ethnic difference:

“Looks like a language, and sounds like a race”
- In certain cultural moments, like today, Latinx Ethnicity **BECOMES** race...



Mic Check

- Since we know Latinx identity & racialization are more complicated than phenotype, what factors/dimensions would you list as contributors to Latinx racialization?



Race Looks Different Across Latin America, & within U.S. Latinx Populations

- Latin America encompasses an ENTIRE CONTINENT
- Culture, History, Politics, Experiences, even the Spanish that is spoken in these places--NOW & HISTORICALLY--all VARY WIDELY
- There is no singular, Latina/o/x experience. Nor is there a singular experience from WITHIN a Latinx national population
- VALUES, TRADITIONS, HISTORY, POLITICAL LANDSCAPES, & BELIEFS vary widely
- Cross-cutting issues pertinent in shaping these unique qualities include:
 - Socio-economic Status
 - Political affiliation
 - History in the Cold War
 - Colorism & Anti-Black Racism
 - Indigenous Relationships ('Mestizo' is positive in the US, but often erasure elsewhere...)
 - European & Asian immigration & influence

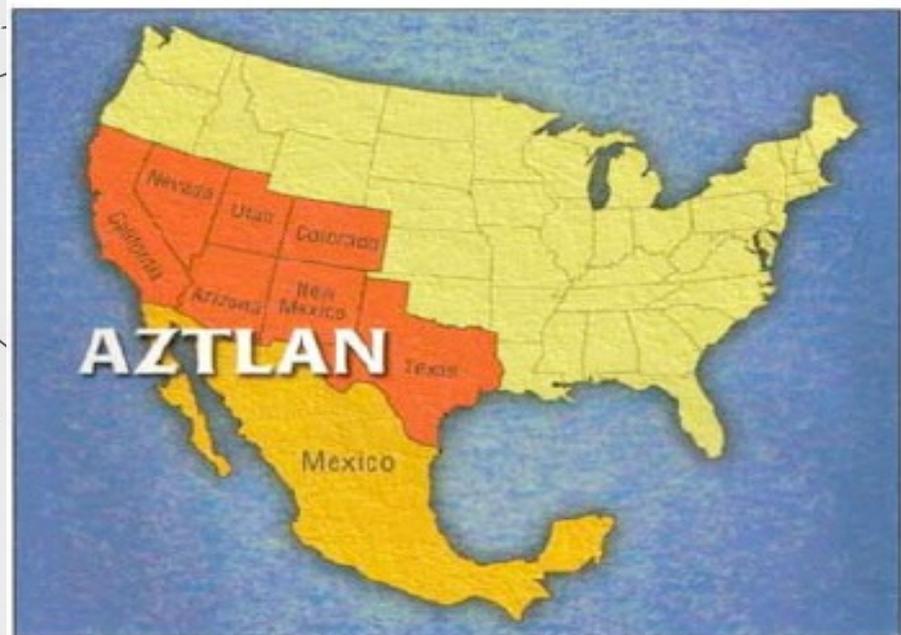


Bicultural Histories & Lives

■ The Chicana/o/x condition

“Ni de aqui, ni de alli”

(Not of here, not of there)

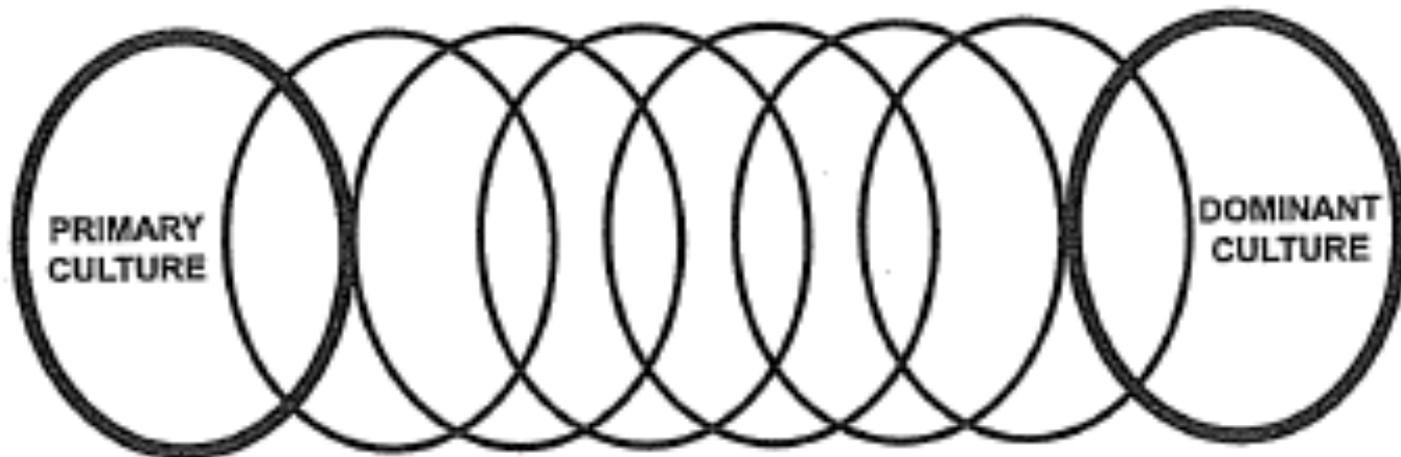


Negotiating Identity



- Essentially, BIPOC are confronted with & absorb the cultural messages, covering demands, etc. that reinforce a **NORMATIVITY** of Whiteness/White culture, & that has a psychological impact.
- As a result, BIPOC must **NEGOTIATE** an identity that will allow them to navigate a world framed by Whiteness/White Culture/ White Supremacy, living across a *continuum of biculturalism*:

Figure 3.1 The Biculturation Process Represented along a Dialectical Continuum



Nepantla, Latinx Identity, & the Borderlands

- The Nepantlerx “copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned.”
- The borderlands are, “not comfortable, but home.”

Jaime Reyes, Blue Beetle: Graduation Day

- How does Blue Beetle/Jaime Reyes display/showcase a 'nepantla' attitude?
- How is the border/ U.S./Mexico borderlands an additional character in Jaime Reyes' stories & adventures?
- Can we think of stereotype threats that are likely common for Chicanx/Latinx youth?
 - How do these appear & how are they contested in Graduation Day?



Blue Beetle – 2023 film

- Let's make a list: What are all the ways that the film Blue Beetle signals that this film is some unapologetically Latinx sh*t?
 - i.e. What are all the Latinx cultural elements that are captured in the film?
- How does the film & narrative capture, subvert, & play with Latinx stereotypes?
- Let's talk soundtrack...Calle 13, Los Tucanes, Vicente Fernandez...how is Latinx music part of the film's (and Blue Beetle's) identity work?



Reflection Questions

- Revisit: What is REC identity for Latinx folks? Is it the same everywhere?
- What are the pressing issues of identity & belonging for the Latinx community?
- How does the border/borderlands operate as an omnipresent character in the lives of Latinx people, & in Latinx comics?

