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Hegemonization of Whiteness in the LatinX Community

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by

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Introduction

Power dynamics are prevalent in every part of society. They are the building blocks by which our structures and systems function. Social hierarchies have to be curated and sustained to enforce their superiority over others. These processes have the ability to be both visibly apparent and more slight in the perceptibility of their existence and maintenance. They exist within the smallest interactions and the largest establishments, their ability to acclimate to any climate makes them so prevailing.

In the 21st century, the phenomenon of whiteness is experienced by everyone in the United States. Within our current society, some are more intimate with it than others, yet all have come into contact with it. Whiteness is idealized and deeply rooted in our society through our customs and systems. Due to the idealization of whiteness, some people are elevated in perception and circumstance if they fit into this white idealization. For instance, people who are considered to be white-passing due to their lighter shade of skin are more likely to be given more opportunities that will elevate their social and economic status than those who have darker skin and are perceived as not a member of whiteness. Outside of physiological appearance, people who have adopted white ideologies into their life will similarly be given these same opportunities to advance their status. Importantly, society is built upon systems, social traditions, and ideologies that uphold various cycles of power and when the foundations of a society are centered around a specific concept such as whiteness, an unequal power dynamic is created. This is the hegemony of whiteness.

This hegemony can be directly seen in the perception of what is considered normal. These parameters of what is natural in society are set by the dominant culture, this, therefore,

renders characteristics that don't fit within these parameters as different and therefore "other". Ideologies are a set of social practices and ideas that are an important aspect to analyze to uncover how these power dynamics function within current systems. The way in which people understand the world is constructed together with dominant interpretations and ideologies that are created by the hegemonic group. This process furthers the narrative of what is normal and accepted within society and additionally supports the position of supremacy for the hegemonic group and the subjugation of the "other" group.

The word LatinX references people who come from countries that were colonized by Spain, generally those in Latin America and throughout the Caribbean. The LatinX community is diverse and encompasses a wide range of people, origins, and cultures. The LatinX community has long been left out of discussions regarding race and this is reflected in the lack of research regarding racial implications of this group within the academic discourse. Much of the research that I will be using within this paper has been conducted within the 21st century. This indicates that much of the research on this topic is relatively new and has not been a focus within academia until recently. Thus, there is not a huge foundation of research that this discussion is able to situate itself within. Furthermore, the number of articles that address this white intersectionality with LatinXs in comparison with other minority groups is lacking in the scholarly community. Hence, I find a comprehensive research review on this field to be required.

Considering the scarcity of academic research on the LatinX community with regard to this topic, I will be relying on a variety of theories to better situate this analysis. This paper is a compilation of research done by scholars with an emphasis on critical race theory, sociology, social psychology, inter and intra-race relations, and others. There is an abundance of research on

how whiteness became the dominant power. Within this context, I focus on the intersectionality between whiteness and the LatinX community, specifically the repercussions of this dominance.

To better understand how the LatinX community intersects with whiteness, this paper first provides an overview of whiteness to show how it functions within our current systems. Next, this paper discusses how this whiteness engages with the LatinX community through the paradigms of racial boundary and assimilation. Finally, this research provides significant areas where the research is in conflict and recommendations for future research. To help drive continued attention to this important racial structure in our society, it is imperative to shed light on this connection and to provide insight into a population of people that are relatively overlooked within the academic community.

This is an analysis of 18 different journal articles across various fields including communications, psychology, sociology, and other social science specializations. These articles come from a variety of journals including Ethnic and Racial Studies, Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, Du Bois Review, American Sociological Review, and others. In total, I used a variety of 10 journals to situate this review of the literature.

The Discourse of Whiteness

To begin this review, I will start with a review of the current discourse available on how whiteness functions within society. To understand how whiteness operates in different racially and ethnically diverse communities, one first needs to have a comprehensive understanding of what makes it a hegemonizing force. The theoretical conception of whiteness has been churned over by countless scholars over the years. Through this conceptual process, there are a few dominant principles and patterns that emerged from this scholarship that have been expanded on and analyzed in detail. I aim to explore these variations of whiteness and create a foundational

knowledge of how whiteness operates within society. I then apply it to a more defined scope within the Latinx community later in this review.

To start off, I will rely on Miller (2022) to deliver a general overview of the conceptualization of whiteness. Miller (2022) provides a review of the current conceptual framework of whiteness within the discourse and expands on it through an operationalizing approach. She separates the characteristics of hegemonic whiteness into two categories: inter-racial components and intra-racial components. These components are the main framework through which scholars can conceptualize whiteness. The inter-racial component focuses on how whiteness interacts and functions across all races. She identifies five elements that scholars use to consider all possible avenues in how whiteness operates in this space: white of racial group membership, ideologies, practices, spaces, and affects. Following this, she identifies the main components of intra-racial hegemonic whiteness. She then identifies the standard of white supremacy culture, national standards, as well as the standards for ethnic engagement and cultural practices which are the main principles that characterize hegemonic whiteness itself. The standard of white supremacy culture is founded on two main principles: white axiologies, as well as white epistemologies and ontologies. White axiologies include creating an idealized institutional and social arrangement that centers white values in the following areas: family, legal, and capital. Epistemologies refer to the dominant white knowledge that is used as well as how it is created. Ontology refers to the white aesthetic preferences that are preferred by society. The second component of intra-racial whiteness is the national standards which allude to what are the criteria that allow for a person to be considered citizenry. The final component is the white standards for ethnic engagement and cultural practices that distinguish them from people of different backgrounds.

Miller's work relies heavily on prior research, which makes her discourse position quite credible. She changes the direction through which she uses the framework of hegemony via inter and intra-racial components, and she provides a new and insightful analysis. The scope of secondary sources used in this process is immense. The magnitude and diversity of these sources emphasize the credibility of her claim due to how effortlessly she was able to weave them all into one narrative used to support her argument. The expertise with which she conducted this review is apparent as all of these principles have been repeated throughout other literature on the subject of whiteness as a hegemonizing force. Following this overview, further development of the points that Miller made regarding how whiteness functions in various spaces of the literature are needed. To start this analysis, an investigation into white knowledge structures is performed.

White Epistemologies

The theory of white knowledge production and dissemination is important to analyze as it provides a window into people's perceptions of reality. Goulash-Boza (2013) reviewed two different thought processes present in two articles, the first written by Feagin and Elias in 2012, and the second by Omi and Winant in 1994. She mentions that the need to comprehend the "proper global and historical context" is crucial to have a complete understanding of racism and therefore race within America (p. 995). By using the term "proper" she references the need for a comprehensive and complete understanding of the global and historical context; this knowledge extends past the dominant white epistemology to other paths of knowledge production and racially diverse narratives. The need for racially diverse narratives is echoed in an article by Sleeter (2017), where she notes that "curricular content of teacher education programs… (which includes) how curriculum is designed and what is taught… tends to reflect white sensibilities" and is eurocentric and white-dominated (p. 158). She backs this claim by drawing on a multitude

of scholars whose own studies and findings reflect this conclusion, such as Milner and Butler. She notes how this process is sustained via an article by Perez Huber, Johnson, and Kholi where they "analyzed the California Subject Examinations for Teachers" and found that through a significant lack of reference to racial and ethnic minorities, the curriculum maintained a Eurocentric focus and is therefore "discouraging prospective teacher candidates of color" (p. 161). This perpetuates white hegemony within current epistemological practices and beliefs within institutions. This furthers an incomplete understanding of a "proper global and historical context" (Golash-Boza, 2013) and perpetuates whiteness as the dominant epistemology. This process develops a power imbalance that favors white epistemology over all other diverse epistemologies. This in turn affects people's perception of reality as the current knowledge that they have on the world is saturated in whiteness.

In vs Out Groups of White Membership

Another aspect of whiteness that merits expansion is white membership. To reap the benefits of whiteness one must first be perceived as a member of white culture. A culture of whiteness is defined as an identity that has "symbols, values, norms, and collective practices" that are entangled with features of ownership, invisibility, and ignorance (Walton, 2021, p. 2). Through the dominant ideology that people of color are inferior and therefore are at fault for all "cultural, intellectual and moral failings" (Miller, 2022, p. 7), these aspects that characterize whiteness as an identity are made and sustained. Through the continuous interaction with these white identity features, racial socialization occurs and establishes an internalization of the dominant ideology of whiteness (Miller, 2022). Through this "integration of them into their own self-concept" (Miller, 2022, p. 7), their interactions with others and their environment start to

reflect this change of becoming part of the in-group of whiteness– This is where the performance of whiteness originates.

Considerations for the out-group however are of equal importance when discussing the membership of cultural whiteness. These identity features are a way of signaling a clear distinction between the in-group and out-group members which leads to further discrimination of the out-group. For example, values of "niceness" are used to distinguish what is unsettling via "taste culture" which is the idea that various behaviors and looks are more aesthetically pleasing than others and therefore fit into this ingroup. The members in this in-group control what and who is part of the in-group by abiding by the unsaid rule of whether others are aesthetically pleasing enough or not (Walton, 2021). Furthermore, another factor that shapes the exclusion and inclusion of people is colorblindness. Colorblind people shape their perceptions of their environment to align with the preferred identity features that they are comfortable with. This preference and changing of perceptions produce racial domination (Walton, 2021) as these identity features are solely part of the dominant white culture. Continuing with the example of values, behaviors that support these values follow, and the repercussions of establishing these out and in-groups become visible.

These behaviors do not limit themselves to individual and community actions but rather extend to government action as well. Government actions such as "...state policies shape the racialized meanings behind who belongs in the USA and who does not" (Golash-Boza, 2013, p. 996). These policies of human rights and others are a direct reflection of maintaining the barrier and distinction between the out-group and in-group of whiteness and other racial groups. The power of this is echoed in Walton's (2021) review of how whiteness functions in geographic locations, where denying or offering basic human rights and citizenship within the country is the

"manifestation of the subtle symbolic and social powers white people use to enforce racial

meanings and deny inclusion" (p. 3). Enforcing these regulations furthers the oppressive power

and dominance of whiteness. This inclusion and exclusion of membership is another tactic used

to preserve whiteness as a hegemonic force. This inclusion and exclusion of who is considered to

be a member of whiteness can be seen clearly in the formation of racial boundaries.

Formation and Effects of Racial Boundaries

Racial boundaries are clear distinctions of in- and out-group membership with race being

the determining feature. Garcia and Abascal (2016) draw on a variety of scholars to form the

overarching statement that "the construction of race involves attaching social meanings to

perceived differences so that groups of people come to be regarded as biologically distinct,

though these divisions have no scientific basis" (p. 424). This sentiment is also echoed by Olden

(2015) in her article regarding racial formation. She states that "race (is) not a scientific or

natural phenomenon but a social construct, easily altered, shaped, and negotiated" (p. 250).

These distinctions of race are all socially constructed to have meaning within society. With the

formation of race comes the construction of racial boundaries as the distinctions between people

have social meaning and importance.

In the past, many of these racial boundaries or 'colorline' were coded as distinct to the

white-black binary, which omitted a variety of other races and ethnicities in the conversation,

including the LatinX community. Olden (2015) notes that due to this binary, the idea of

"Mexican-Americans presented a challenge" to a system that was structured around this

black-white binary (p. 250). Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) point to areas of the literature that

claim that the "boundaries of whiteness will expand to include everyone that is not

African-American" as argued by Yancey (p. 906). This further highlights this white-black binary

that much of the past literature on this topic is based on.

        Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) disagree with this point in favor of the claim that the

"racial structure of the US is likely to change" (p. 906). Frank et al. (2010) also disagree that

"instead of an expansion of whiteness, racial boundaries might change through the creation of a

new racial boundary around Latinos" (p. 384). Bonilla-Silva (2004) further emphasizes this point

in an article regarding the racial stratification of the US and the expansion of the white-black

binary to possibly include a third intermediary category, making it a tri-racial system. In the past,

there wasn't a space within the literature or society for "brownness", further hiding various

inequalities and experiences that occur outside of this dichotomy. Olden (2015) notes that

"scholars are now complicating this black-white binary of race, demonstrating the flexibility of

racial categories and the importance of local histories for grasping the dynamics of racial

processes" (p. 252). This sentiment is echoed in my understanding of the literature as there is a

wide breadth of research regarding this topic. By acknowledging the need for a wider analysis of

racial and ethnic relationships, a further comprehensive study into the LatinX community can

occur.

        Within this racial stratification and boundary formation, there are specific areas that the

literature emphasizes. Frank et al. (2010) give direction to this point on changes within the racial

boundaries of the United States. They mention that their findings indicate that these changes will

only be regarding LatinX immigrants with darker skin and who have integrated well into the

United States. There will not be new changes for LatinX immigrants who have lighter skin as

they will be more likely to successfully "expand the boundary of whiteness" (p. 395). This is

because LatinX immigrants recognize the benefits of self-identifying as white and the current

members of the white racial boundary are more willing to accept someone who has these features.

Additionally, Olden (2015) cites various historical records regarding how Mexican-Americans were treated and delegated in her article. She notes that in a desegregation case, "Mexican Americans constituted their own distinct racial category" that was separate from the black-white binary that the system was structured under. Due to this pre-existing structure, the system wasn't able to properly meet the needs of these children. This is an example of how the black-white binary system is a disservice to LatinXs and doesn't have a place for them. This indicates that this group of people is either falling into pre-existing categories or is changing the racial stratification and boundaries that exist. This historical example follows the current trend and direction of the research regarding this conclusion.

While some of the literature highlights strict racial boundaries, other articles emphasize less rigid boundaries. Vasquez's (2014) study in particular highlights a "boundary blurring" in his work done with interracial marriages between Whites and LatinXs. These less distinct boundaries produce a form of biculturalism in which the "hidden ethnicity" becomes just as apparent in these "intermediary spaces" as the dominant ethnicity, thereby sharing "cultural attributes" (p. 404). This in turn, challenges "the notion of whiteness as a norm" (p. 404) in this social space. Considering the changing racial boundaries that have been found in the literature, the discourse has similarly changed its direction on how to analyze this area of study. This can be directly seen in the refinement of the vernacular used.

The Creation of Ethnorace

The current literature has made recent advancements in its terminology to better encompass the new direction of the findings of the literature. This development occurred to

enhance academia's understanding of this current social reality. For example, the use of the term "ethnorace" has been presented as a term that might be better equipped to understand the current intricacies concerning hybrid identity categories (Lewis & Forman, 2017, p. 2223). Lewis and Forman (2017) state that the value of this word is that it "recognizes that both ethnicity and race involve hierarchies and exclusions along with positive in-group meanings and sources of community and agency" (p. 2223). Aranda (2017) discusses the ethnoracial perspective in response to Valdez and Golash-Boza's claims. She echoes the idea that this term is important as this "ethnoracial perspective can be leveraged to understand better global racial and ethnic inequalities" as well as the "trajectories of incorporation (and) patterns of exclusion" (p. 2233). Aranda (2017) notes that the term "ethnoracism" is the intersection between a variety of concepts that create the process of racialization, including, colorism, national origin, racism, and racial ideologies. Each of these pieces can be expanded upon to give a more comprehensive idea of what different in- and out-groups experience.

Racial boundaries and the concept of ethnorace have been found to have connections in the literature. Racial boundaries are created based on ethnoracial groupings. Lewis and Forman (20) noticed in their findings that race is the "primary organizing category of social relations" (p. 2222). These ethnoracial groupings are based on social relations as these are the peers with which people associate themselves with. The emphasis on social relations and racial boundaries is also emphasized in a study by Golash-Boza and Darity (2008). Their study yielded results that indicate that "skin color and experiences of discrimination affect whether people from Latin America and their descendants who live in the US will choose to identify racially as black, white or Latina/o" (p. 899). Skin color was found to be a clear marker of a visible racial boundary while the discrimination that stemmed from this perception also emphasized and is an effect of

this racial boundary. The discrimination also indicated a clear membership into an ethnoracial group that was not considered the norm as defined by white hegemony.

Another area within the literature where racial boundaries are formed is through spatialization. Zhou and Dirago (2022) expand on the formation of these racial boundaries through the lens of spatialization in Los Angeles and segmentation and the characteristics of various ethnoracial groups. They claim that these "ethnoracial groupings are dynamic and evolving" with the expansion of the color line outside of the white-black binary and the addition of hyperdiversity. Their approach to this literature reflects this by centering their research on these less dominant narratives and how they intersect with the various attributes of their environment, including hyperdiversity. Zhou and Dirago (2022) also note that even though the ethnoracial groups and therefore the racial boundaries are evolving, there remains a "persistent racial hierarchy" in the social structure that "reproduces and exacerbates spatial inequality" (p. 23). While this hierarchy may remain, Aranda (2017) notes that through an ethnoracial approach while looking at colorism, a revelation of "hierarchies of privilege and disadvantage within racialized groups" (p. 2237) with become apparent. With this revelation, more knowledge can be acquired and later action can be taken to provide equity to these groups. An effect of the development of these racial boundaries is the desire for some to cross into different groups than the one they were perceived as being a member of. A way in which people of the out-group may be able to gain membership into whiteness is via assimilation.

Assimilation in Hegemonic Whiteness

Assimilation in this body of work functions with the definition of a process in which someone internalizes a culture different from their own with the goal of adapting to and even conforming to that culture's norms. Vasquez (2014) puts the overarching assessment of

assimilation literature into one statement: "Minorities will move away from ethnic identification and toward mainstream identification" (p. 386). Assimilation takes many forms as it adapts and operates within different groups. Types of assimilation are reflected in the current academia on the subject. In this section, I relate the theory of assimilation in all its parts to the LatinX community and draw on a variety of sources to create a complete understanding of this intersection.

Growing on the concept of racial boundary, the term "racialized assimilation" emerges (Golash-Boza & Darrity, 2008). Racialized assimilation is the process by which someone's understanding of their place within the racial boundary system is recognized through time spent interacting with this racial boundary and system as a whole (p. 385). This term is used by both Golash-Boza and Dairity (2008) in their work since they found that the traditional use of assimilation theory, commonly known as segmented assimilation theory, to be lacking in its inclusivity of all the different facets that go into assimilation, in particular the factor of race. Frank et al. (2010) have also expanded on this term in their work. The recognition of this proposed term to expand and accommodate the research to modern views is recognized and accepted within the academic community. This wide acceptance gives this term and its implications credibility within the research and its real-world application. The effects and therefore outcome of assimilation can be seen more clearly when analyzing the self-identification of LatinXs.

Self-Identification of LatinXs

The literature has in some ways deviated from this focus on analyzing changes in the racial boundary and "traditional assimilation" (Vargas, 2015, p.122) to focus more on how LatinX self-identify to glean a better understanding of the effect of interacting with this racial

boundary and analyzing the outcome of possible assimilation. In this article, Vargas (2015) "examines the conditions under which Latina/os self classify as White and report being perceived as white by others" (p. 122-123). This racial self-identification as a variable in the literature has been repeatedly used to look into this subject from a different perspective. Golash-Boza and Darity's (2008) study also adds to the literature by examining how self-identification is influenced by a variety of variables. Furthermore, in their review of the literature, they cite other sources such as Ian Haney López's work regarding how people who self-identify as "Latino Hispanics" are different from people who identify as either black or white Hispanics (p. 906). Much of their review further propels the need to focus and expand on this section of the research. This study also adds to the validity of depicting self-identification as a variable worthy of recognition when examining the complex relationship between identity and race. In Golash-Boza and Darity's (2008) study their findings indicated that "assimilation (does not) lead to self-identification" as white (p. 926), however, "skin shade influences choice of racial category" (p. 929). There are contestations within the literature on the effect that assimilation or other factors such as skin color have on affecting how LatinXs self-identify as white in particular. Identifying as white has been an area within assimilation research that is stressed as an outcome of successful assimilation. Identifying as white adds to the idea that this self-identification is a direct result of the hegemonization of whiteness in different communities as it represents a desire to be white.

This emphasis on white identification is apparent in the literature. Olden (2015) notes in her article the historical narrative of the "Mexican American civil rights and the rise of the 'other white' strategy" (p. 252). Here she notes that this other white was formed to encompass the "brownness" as they didn't fit into the black-white binary but still tried to reap the benefits of

whiteness. A historical example of this is how many Mexican American civil rights activists and

leaders identified as white to challenge discrimination behaviors even though they did not

experience the benefits of whiteness. Another historical example of this is in a court case that

argued that Mexican American children were white, they just had a culturally different

background. They argued this so that they could keep the Mexican American children with other

white children in schools. She continues to cite other court cases that used the same strategy of

this "other white" category. Here it can be seen that the LatinX community used whiteness to

further their agenda and benefit in a system that didn't have a place for them. They preferred to

identify with the white category over the black category in this system.

This emphasis within the literature on white identification however is not without

disputed within the academic community. Garcia and Abascal's (2016) study focuses on racial

theory, specifically the construction of race. Their study mentions that the academic community

recognizes "that the choice to attend to certain phenotypic markers is arbitrary and fluid, the

perception of these markers is implicitly theorized as an input in the processes of constructing

race" (p. 424). They state that how people self-identify is not necessarily what the literature

should be focusing on as it can be unpredictable and changes. However, the perception of people

when speculating on racial theory is an area that warrants consideration. In particular, an area

that the perception of people has an impact is skin color.

This emphasis on skin color within assimilation literature is also emphasized in

Golash-Boza and Darity's (2008) study. Their findings indicated that "Hispanics with more

money and education are more likely to self-identify as white" (p. 920). However, they also

mention that this may be due to the fact that Hispanics with lighter skin are more likely to have a

higher income in the US since the US inherently values whiteness and therefore lighter skin. This

indication came from when they controlled their results for skin color which was not an option in

the survey they analyzed. When this control was done they noticed that Hispanics with higher

incomes were "more likely to self-identify racially as 'other' than as white" (p. 920). This

indicates that there is mixed evidence regarding whether or not Hispanics with higher income are

more likely to choose white for their race as skin color was not controlled. This study signifies

the importance of skin color when analyzing how LatinXs interact with whiteness. The concept

of skin color outside of the assimilation paradigm is an important contributing factor to

understanding how whiteness functions in relation to the LatinX community.

Skin Color's Attribution to White Hegemony

Skin color is one of the most apparent representations of in- and out-group of whiteness.

To central whiteness as the idealized version of people, one has to learn its value. Vasquez (2014)

notes that the value of whiteness is learned. This value is a practice that is done through

behaviors and ideologies that are learned from their family and "society in general" to "learn

white" in all its forms (p. 402). Golash-Boza and Dairity (2008) identify the Anglo-Saxon core to

be central to the identity of an American and the membership of the dominant culture in

American society.

The influences of skin color range to encompass a variety of areas, including the

identification of racial categories. In Golash-Boza and Darity's (2008) study their findings

indicated that "skin shade clearly influences choice of racial category" (p. 929). Frank et al.

(2010) also expand on the importance of skin color as an influencer on racial identification.

However, they take it further than Golash-Boza and Darity and say that while "Latinos can

choose their racial identification… this choice is constrained by the color of their skin and

skin-color-based discrimination" (p. 396).

Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) pointed out that "darker complexioned Latino/as often would choose white as their racial category (which) is reflective of a general Latino preference for whiteness" (p. 929). This is a direct example of what occurs when someone values whiteness over other identification categories. They hold whiteness in high esteem and seek to participate in it.

Skin color is another way that the function of hegemonic whiteness is visible via racial identification. Frank et al. (2010) found that "Latinos with greater exposure to the United States, (have a darker skin tone and are Dominican Republic in origin) are increasingly challenging the existing racial identification options available to them" (p. 391) by abstaining from choosing a racial category. Part of these findings is contrary to Golash-Boza and Darity's findings that darker skin tone LatinXs often choose to identify as white. This indicates that there is much complexity regarding the findings of these questions on how LatinX self-identifies. There are similarly many different factors that come into play when getting these results such as location, population, national origin, and others that may affect whether certain populations within the LatinX community have different parameters that affect them and not others. Frank et al. (2010) also expand on this emphasis on skin color that "while Latino/as can choose their racial identification, this choice is constrained by the colour of their skin and their experiences in the United States" (p. 932) specifically, skin-color based discrimination. Within these processes, it becomes apparent in the results of these studies that show the hegemonization of whiteness is maintained and sustained by remaining the basis to which everything is compared.

The influence of skin color is not limited to self-identification but also affects racial categorization. Garcia and Abascal's (2016) study aims to use skin color to analyze racial stratification rather than methods such as self-identification or other forms of racial

categorization. They found that "assessments of others' skin color are affected by a subtle racial

cue, a name" (p. 420). People's assessment of someone's face was darker "when that face is

assigned a distinctively Hispanic name as opposed to a non-Hispanic name" (p. 420). They also

found that male-presenting faces were more sensitive to this effect than female-presenting faces.

Garcia and Abascal offer two possible explanations for this gender difference by drawing on the

work of other scholars. They state that this is possible due to the idea that "Latinos are

stereotyped as criminal" and that "hegemonic norms of femininity may encourage women to

present themselves as 'whiter' by changing their appearance" (p. 433) to follow these beauty

norms associated with whiteness. Within this study, it should be noted that the social

construction of race is key in reinforcing positive values and traits with a perception of

whiteness, and the negative connotations, such as criminality, are associated with a darker

complexion and therefore with LatinXs.

Rebuttals and Critiques

While many articles within this body of research support the idea that whiteness is

hegemonized in LatinX communities, I have also discovered a few articles that pertain to this

subject that are of a differing opinion on how linear the hegemonizing of whiteness seems. A

study conducted by Vasquez (2014) found that the most common outcome of intermarriage was

biculturalism rather than social whitening (p. 402). This is contrary to a majority of the

assimilation research in that with enough time spent with the dominant race, a form of

assimilation will occur in which the minority group will take on more of the attributes of the

dominant race in this one-way exchange. This bilateral exchange is not mentioned in the

dominant literature on this subject. The idea that the dominant culture would also similarly adopt

some of the attributes from the subordinate culture is contrary to the belief that there is a

hegemonic culture that is not influenced by the many different counterparts it interacts with. However, this is not to say that the whole of the literature is in contrast to this point but rather with this one context of interracial marriage. With this interracial relationship, there is a subversion of racial and ethnic boundaries through the white's "migration into ethnic territory and gain racial literacy" through this marriage (p. 403). This process thereby inverts the "expectations of assimilation theory and (demonstrates) the nontrivial impact of racial/ethnic minority partners in intermarriage" (p. 404).

Furthermore, it has been noted within the literature that LatinX has a tendency to "fail to assimilate into dominant Anglo-American culture in terms of learning English and accepting other core American values" (Martinez & Gonzalez, 2021, p. 204). This claim is contrary to the idea that whiteness is hegemonized in the LatinX community. Since this community has "failed" to learn how to be white, they have maintained and preserved their culture without diluting it with white practices and ideologies. This also means the white fear that opponents of immigration face regarding their argument that immigrants are a threat to American culture is unfounded and not valid in its assertion.

Additionally, Lewis and Forman (2017) critique the current literature available on assimilation in that it has a quality of "racial unconscious" (p. 2220). They state that due to this quality, there is a need for a "rethinking of the scholarship more generally" in order to properly and accurately portray the environment that currently exists in the real world. Furthermore, there is a lacking in the attribution and examination of power relations to the assimilation paradigm in the literature as well. This includes the various "racial logistics" in how constraints on assimilation occur due to racial inequalities. These power dynamics are not analyzed enough in the literature, even though they are such an integral part of the foundation of this research.

Conclusion

The foundation of this discourse is centered around how whiteness is sustained as the dominant force within U. S. society. Whiteness is the basis by which the U.S. is organized and therefore how all racial hierarchies are sustained. In this work, I aimed at exploring how whiteness, as the dominant force within society, converges with the LatinX community. This body of knowledge lends itself to the idea that while the effect of this white domination is apparent within the LatinX community there is still pushback from the LatinXs in sustaining their cultural identity.

LatinXs have long been omitted from the narrative of race. Therefore, there are many areas within the academic discourse that are lacking this specific perspective that is distinct from the black-white binary that is so commonly discussed. In addition to this general need of having more LatinX representation, there are areas within the literature that seek more expansion and analysis. In particular, Chavez-Dueñas et al. (2014) note that there is a deficiency in the psychological perspective on the effects of colorism and racial discrimination. While these phenomena do occur, the psychological effects of these phenomena and their implications have yet to be fully understood or explored. Additionally, Weitzer's (2013) article emphasizes the need for more research on the policing of LatinXs. The policing of LatinXs is an area in which white dominance intersects directly with the LatinX community in a tangible way. This would reveal a more concrete understanding of how this intersectionality between these two groups functions.

The U.S. should be recognized and understood through its diversity. By highlighting different narratives other than the dominant one, a richer grasp of the current realities that make up our society is attained. Understanding current power imbalances is imperative in knowing

what areas need to change to create a more equitable society. Through this knowledge, people can make informed decisions on what direction they want to point the compass of evolutionary advancements in ways that may subvert these power imbalances and provide a space for people of varying backgrounds. This expansion and knowledge is true for power relations beyond the U.S. as well as outside of these two groups of LatinXs and Whites. The hegemonic qualities of whiteness that are damaging to the culture of the LatinX community are not limited to this one community but rather affect all types of minorities, including the Black, Asian, and LGBTQ+ communities. While these qualities may stay the same, their effect may be different depending on the culture of the community in question. Power dynamics are a global phenomenon that don't adhere to geographical boundaries. Considering this, the effects and repercussions of these power relations are therefore also global in their scope.

Furthermore, within the literature, it is clear that there is an unequal power dynamic between the LatinX community and hegemonic whiteness. The sustainability of this hegemony is fluid and complex in its operationalization and function within the LatinX community. By making the distinction between in- and out-group membership of whiteness, a clear recognition of inferiority is made. With this member distinction, racial boundaries are made around these out- and in-groups on the white-black binary. However, LatinXs have recently been changing this binary to include a space for "brownness" in the racial stratification of society. This can be seen directly in how LatinXs are self-identifying as "other". Nonetheless, it is still apparent that there is a preference for LatinXs to self-identify as white which is a direct reflection of the effect of whiteness being hegemonized. A principle constrictor on whether LatinXs can be perceived as a member of whiteness is skin color, regardless of preference. The internalized value of

whiteness is seen in this community through these preferences of being perceived as white through skin color and other methods.

Considering the findings of the literature, these social and systematic hierarchies that centralize and idealize whiteness have tangible consequences for this community. It enforces subordination and inferiority to hegemonic whiteness. It defines the normal as whiteness and compares everything else against this impossible standard. This is harmful as it lessens society's value of these different cultures, epistemologies, ideologies, and lifestyles. This lack of value is then reflected in the dehumanized treatment of these groups ranging from interpersonal to institutionalized levels. An equalization of the value of diverse groups is needed. It is imperative to value all different walks of life and to appreciate the diversity that exists. Our current systems and social processes should reflect this in order to uphold harmony and celebrate the uniqueness of the human race.

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