

# Microaggressions in Relation to *Latinidad* and Latinx Identities

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## Research Question

*The goal of this investigation is to analyze how microaggressions manifest themselves among Latinx residents in the United States and how they interact with different notions of Latinidad.*

## What are Microaggressions?

According to Derald Sue, they are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group.” (This definition specifies microaggressions based on race, but they can be based on any identity.)

**Example:** A young Latina woman reported that she was talking to her high school guidance counselor about what college she wanted to attend, and she mentioned a specific university, and the white, male guidance counselor laughed and said, “oh that’s for rich white people, why don’t we look into a community college.” (Ballinas 398)

### Types:

- **Microinsults:** “communications that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity and that demean a person’s racial, gender, or sexual orientation, heritage, or identity”
- **Microassaults:** “conscious, deliberate, and either subtle or explicit racial, gender, or sexual-orientation biased attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors that are communicated to marginalized groups through environmental cues, verbalizations or behaviors”
- **Microinvalidations:** “communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential realities of certain groups” (Sue)

When microaggressions accumulate on a societal level, they become macroaggressions.

## Latinx, Latin American, Hispanic

**Note: These are commonly used definitions and are by no means all-encompassing. Someone may fit the description here but choose not to identify with the term.**

**Latinx:** US resident who has Latin American heritage

\*The term Latinx is used instead of Latino, Latina, and Latin@ to include people who do not identify within the binary gender system

**Latin American:** someone living anywhere in Latin America (Latin America generally includes Mexico, Central America, South America, and can include the nations of the Caribbean.)

**Hispanic:** the person is from Spanish-speaking areas of Latin America or Spain



## Latinidad

“A shared sense of Latino identity” (Negrón)

It is problematic to create a more concrete definition because it would group together a large group of people, and each person may connect to and express their Latinx identity in a different manner.

## Methods

Analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and other sources from a variety of disciplines.

## Discussion

Microaggressions are prevalent among Latinx residents in the United States to the point that it is a macroaggression.

Latinx residents have reported microaggressions that create hostile school and work environments.

## Conclusions

Microaggressions can occur in all forms but microinsults and microinvalidations were most commonly reported.

Identities are deeply personal and vary based on the context. An individual may feel more connected to different aspects of their Latinx identity depending on the group of people and environment.

## Future Directions

- Exploration of the tension between freedom of speech and fear of offending others
- Examination of the relationship between Latinx identity and national identity (for example, if Cubanos in Florida identify as Cubano, Latinx, or both)
- Analysis of generation and age on perceived microaggressions
- Consideration of microaggressions in relation to the Latinx population in the political climate

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