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# Growing up Latinita: Latina girls, online 'zine production, and identity formation

Marilda Janet Oviedo  
*University of Iowa*

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GROWING UP LATINITA: LATINA GIRLS, ONLINE 'ZINE PRODUCTION, AND  
IDENTITY FORMATION

by

Marilda Jánét Oviedo

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Mass Communications  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2013

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Julie L. Andsager

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the ways in which the media products of the non-profit organization Latinitas revealed ideologies and discourses about identity. The organization purports to empower Latina youth via media education. The media products include two online magazines that feature content for and by the members of the organization. The media products also include a Web site where members of the organization can post and update individual blogs and videos. While not the focus of this dissertation, it is important to note that the organization also hosts various after-school programs and workshops that teach its members about issues related to media education.

The study was managed in two stages. First, a content analysis of the two magazines was conducted to reveal which ideologies were featured in the magazine articles. Literature suggests that the two most relevant identities to Latina girls are gender and ethnicity. As such, special attention was given to ideologies that directed attention to those identities. Second, a discourse analysis of the blogs and videos hosted on the Web site was performed to reveal whether the featured ideologies carried over into the media product of the members of the organization. Results suggested that the magazines focused on issues of gender while mostly ignoring issues of ethnicity. The blogs housed on the Web site reflected the focus on gender but were also the only place where talk of ethnicity was dominant. The videos were generally not used as a means to express identity and were vehicles for displaying the activities of the organization.

Abstract Approved:

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Thesis Supervisor

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Date

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph. D. thesis of

Marilda Janet Oviedo

has been approved by the Examining Committee  
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Mass Communications  
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To Alejandra, for being my “favorite” and reminding me of the importance of family.



## ABSTRACT

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

My father was born in Mexico, my mother on the borderlands of South Texas. Although I was born in the United States, I spent my formative years living in the city of Juarez, in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. I grew up in the Anahuac neighborhood in the south side of the city. I made friends up and down the Calle Bocoyna. I matriculated at the local escuela primaria.

In 2010, Juarez, which borders El Paso, Texas, was named the murder capital of the world due to a string of violent deaths and executions committed by the Juarez and Sinaloa Cartels in an attempt to gain control of the region—and its access to the United States. There have been more than 10,000 deaths related to the drug cartel turf war in Juarez (Arreola, 2012). The violence has decreased since its peak in 2010. Many believe it is because the war's decisive victor—the Sinaloa Cartel—literally got rid of the competition.

Juarez has also been the location for a decades-long campaign against young women who work in the city's maquiladoras. Since the 1990s, thousands (some even say hundreds of thousands) young women working in these factories and other service jobs in the city have disappeared. To date, only about 370 have been found. Some in unmarked graves. Most having been beaten, raped, and mutilated (Pantaleo, 2010).

When my father decided to immigrate to the United States from Juarez, he did so because of lack of job opportunities in the country. Not because he was afraid for the safety and welfare of his family. It wasn't a major concern then. It is now.

Mexicans immigrate into the United States. Some do so legally; others do not. The Pew Hispanic Research Center (2012) has reported that 11.7 million Mexican-born individuals were living in the United States in 2010, 57% of whom were undocumented. That Mexicans would want to immigrate into this country is not surprising—especially considering the very real dangers living in cities like Juarez currently represent. However, immigration is not a cut-and-dried process. Aside from the legal and political issues involved there are also issues that have to do with enculturation, acculturation, and identity.

An important facet of identity is how one is labeled -- the terms used to categorize someone into a group. For example, the United States government has mandated the terms Hispanic and Latino be used in an effort to catalog the various individuals of Spanish-speaking descent living in this country (Pew Hispanic Center, 2012). There is not a consensus about which term to use as both terms have somewhat charged connotations (Hispanic implies colonialism; Latino a focus on the Caribbean islands) (Garcia, 2011; Valdeon, 2013). Labeling individuals as either Latino or Hispanic does not guarantee a clear-cut, common identity. In fact, individuals catalogued by either of those terms that are of different countries of origin are prone to find more differences than similarities between themselves (Pew Hispanic Center, 2012). These differences are manifested in customs, values, beliefs, religious practices, and even word choice (Garcia, 2011). The only clear-cut commonality between the different individuals labeled as Hispanic or Latino is the importance of the Spanish language (Pew Hispanic Center, 2012).

Rather than labeling oneself as Hispanic or Latino, individuals prefer to label themselves depending on their country of origin: Dominican, Guatemalan, etc. (Pew Hispanic Center, 2012). I identify as Mexican-American because, as I stated earlier, I was born in the United States. Others might want to label me as Chicana—a term that means a woman born in the United States of Mexican descent (Acuña, 2012). However, the term implies a specific allegiance to a certain time, place, and political movement: the 1960s, East Los Angeles, and high school walkouts by a group of individuals of Mexican descent who felt that their educational opportunities were diminished because of their ethnicity/race (Acuña, 2012). Because I do not feel that the term is particularly relevant to my situation, I chose to identify as Mexican-American instead.

While labeling is a complicated and important facet of identity, the single biggest factor that influences the identity formation of individuals who can trace their roots to Spanish-speaking countries is ethnicity (Pizarro & Vera, 2001; Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). It's the shared cultures, physical features, and history of a people (Flores Niemann et al., 1999). An understanding of ethnicity involves enculturation and acculturation (Berry, 2005; Holleran & Waller, 2003; Pizarro & Vera, 2001; Unger & Schwartz, 2012). It involves acceptance of categorical inclusion into an ethnic group based on things like physical features and biology as well as education about that group's values, customs, and beliefs. It also involves the process by which individuals adjust to the values, customs, and beliefs of groups outside their own.

It should be noted that, although race is a separate marker of identity, it gets conflated with ethnicity (Rodriguez et al., 2010). It is difficult to develop a racial identity as a Mexican-American. Mexican-Americans as a whole (as a byproduct of Spanish colonialism and mestisaje-biological and cultural blending among Spanish settlers and the indigenous population) are mostly mixed-race, but in the United States legal system they can be classified as White (Pizarro & Vera, 2001). This is problematic, as Mexican-Americans come in various skin tones and are sometimes subject to discrimination on that basis. Regardless, ethnicity, coupled with race, helps shape what it means to “be” Mexican-American.

My family’s move to the United States was not final. We went back and forth between countries frequently. We spent a year in Miami, Florida (where I was born), before spending the next decade journeying between Juarez and its U.S. border town of El Paso. Thus, ever since I can remember I’ve navigated between two worlds. Between Juarez and El Paso. Between Mexico and the United States. Between what it means to be Mexican and what it means to be American.

My studies as a doctoral student allowed me the ability to reflect on this navigation, but it wasn’t until I found the Latinitas organization that a true examination of how this navigation may be carried out could begin. As such, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine the ways in which identity is produced via the ideologies and discourses of some of the organization’s media products.

### **The Latinitas Organization**

The Latinitas organization launched as a class project for a graduate course at the University of Texas. In 2002, six graduate students in Professor Federico



Subervi's Latinos and The Media class conceptualized a magazine for girls of Spanish-speaking descent (LasLatinitas, 2013). After the class ended, two of the students endeavored to make the magazine a reality. That same year, the two students—Laura Donnelly and Alicia Rascon—registered the organization at the University. What the organization does is threefold: it edits, manages, and writes content for two online magazines that focus specifically on Latina<sup>1</sup> girls; it hosts a Web site that allows Latinas to post blogs and videos; and it organizes afterschool programs, workshops, and summer camps that aim at teaching young girls and teenagers about media production (specifically, how to compose and write for a magazine).

The organization focuses on Latina girls because they are more likely than non-Latina girls to “face the four most serious threats to achieving success: depression, pregnancy, substance abuse, and becoming a high school dropout” (LasLatinitas, 2013). The proposed solution of the organization is to give the girls a place to “discover their voice and develop media skills” (LasLatinitas, 2013). The term “Latinitas” is used to label both the organization and its members—adding “itas” to the end of the word Latina shifts the focus away from women of Latin descent to a focus on *young* women of Latin descent.

In 2003, Donnelly and Rascon officially launched the Latinitas.org Web site, which housed what they describe as “the first digital magazine for Hispanic girls”

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of clarification and organization I will use the terms Hispanic and Latina to refer to girls/women who can trace their roots to Spanish-speaking countries. There is an understanding that the terms are problematic and do not imply a collective, all-inclusive identity. The media product of the Latinitas organization also uses the two terms interchangeably.

(LasLatinitas, 2013). At its inception, the content for the magazine came from the two founders of the organization as well as volunteers from around the University of Texas community. That same year, the founders developed an editorial advisory board composed of teenage girls who would help generate stories for the magazine. Two years later, Donnelly and Rascon developed an accompanying online magazine that focused specifically on teenage Latina girls (the original magazine's targeted age group is 10- to 14-year-olds). In 2008 the MyLatinitas Web site, which hosts the blogs and videos, was launched. Currently, Latinitas hosts seven after-school programs in the greater Austin area. The organization also has after-school programs in San Marcos, Horizon, and El Paso, Texas. This dissertation focuses specifically on media products housed on the two Latinitas Web sites.

### Why Latinitas?

The Latinitas organization's media products were chosen as a site of study for numerous reasons. First, the Latina population in the United States is, comparatively, young (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2012). While the median age of the White population in the U.S. is 42, it is only 27 for Hispanics. The median age for individuals who identify as Latino but are born in this country is 18. Thus, the Latinitas organization's focus on youth is relevant.

Second, the Latinitas organization is founded in Texas, and the participants of its workshops and summer camps, as well as the members of its magazines' youth editorial advisory board, are from the area. Thus, a focus on Mexicans and Mexican-Americans (rather than other groups of Latino ethnicity) is likely. This is important not only because of its relevance to me but also because Hispanics account for

16.4% (50.7 million) of the U.S. population, 64.9% (32.9 million) of whom identify Mexico as their country of origin (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2012), making the Mexican population the largest Hispanic group in the country. Texas is second only to California in the number of Hispanics (most of whom are Mexican or Mexican-American) living within its borders. Also, identifying as Mexican is not limited to those born in Mexico. It includes individuals who catalog Mexico as their country of origin. As of 2010, there were 33 million people living in the United States who were not born in Mexico but who identified Mexico as their country of origin (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2012). Finally, as stated above, there are problems in attempting to lump together groups of people whose only similarity is the ability to trace ancestral roots to Spanish-speaking countries. While not a guarantee, the fact that the organization is housed in Texas means that the likelihood of focusing on Mexicans and Mexican-Americans is considerable. This is important if the attempt is to not overly generalize and to truly explore how identity is formulated.

Third, the *Latinitas* organization focuses on girls. Girlhood is a major marker of identity. Being part of a girl identity group is temporary, but important as it helps formulate further identity markers. Specifically, girlhood can be seen “as a separate, exceptional, and/or pivotal phase in female identity formation” (Wald, 1998, p. 587). Being a member of this group means being subject to the influence of mainstream culture and media and their specific instructions on the “correct” way become women (Mazzarella & Pecora, 2002, p. 3). Girls are subject to messages on romance, body image, sexuality, femininity, and gender, among others. They are

expected to acquire the current norms and characteristics (enculturation) given to them by the mainstream culture if they are to belong in this group.

Fourth, the online magazines and Web site act as tangible media capable of study. The content of the magazines, blogs, and videos is text that can be read and examined. This text is implicated in a wider system of representation.

Fifth, Latino representation in the U.S. media is lacking. Fewer than 5% of primetime television characters are Latino (Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2013). Latino representation still tends to be highly stereotypical and negative. Latinos are either portrayed as the criminal (if male) or the seducer, if female (Behm-Morawitz & Ortiz, 2013).

### **The Purpose of This Dissertation**

The Latinitas organization's media products are uniquely suited to my purpose of examining this underrepresented population through the lens of identity formation. An examination of the texts produced by the organization's founders, editors, and members will afford me the ability to explore the ways in which identity is institutionalized (by the Latinitas organization as well as by the girls' gender, age, locality, ethnicity, language) and constructed (via the girls own productive endeavors).

The fundamental concern of this project is identity. In particular, it is the ways in which media act as both purveyors and facilitators of identity formation. In order to investigate this fully, certain assumptions are made.

First, identity formation can be studied by examining the role of the media producer and the media consumer. Second, media products are embedded with

meaning and act as vessels to propagate dominate discourses and ideologies. Third, media texts are purposeful. They are meant to convey meaning and message. Fourth, the media consumer has the ability, if not the capacity, to “read” media products and internalize the discourses and ideologies embedded in them. Fifth, these discourses and ideologies contribute to the formulation of identity.

These assumptions allow the structure of this dissertation to unfold. Recognition of the process of identity formation is necessary. Thus, an examination into the ways identity has been conceptualized will be conducted by first exploring commonalities between various schools of thought and then examining how they approach identity. The schools of thought mentioned will each play a role in how the project is carried out. That is, that the theories will help to contextualize the methods and methodologies.

The Latinitas organization seeks to promote media education among *Latina girls*. As such, it is necessary to understand how the two main facets of Latina identity (ethnicity and girlhood) have been formulated. Thus, an exploration into ethnicity will be conducted via an examination into the concepts of nationality, globalization, diaspora, and border studies. This will be followed by a foray into girl studies and the role that the field plays in both identity formation and the production/consumption process.

Finally, and importantly, the means by which identity (through ideology and discourse) is produced via the media content of the organization will be investigated: First, by cataloging (via content analysis) the various different

ideologies espoused in the *Latinitas* magazines and then by analyzing (via discourse analysis) the blogs and videos housed on the Web site.

#### Dissertation Structure

In chapter 2, I elaborate on how the developmental, historical (via discourse theory), and socio-cultural schools of thought conceptualize identity. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which identity during adolescence is developed. Also, the importance of ideologies is explored.

In chapter 3, I examine the ways in which cultural studies has taken up issues of identity on a global scale. I explore the concepts of globalization, nationality, and diaspora before establishing the importance of border studies to my own project. The chapter also investigates the field of girl studies by first exploring the two fields that influenced it (subculture theory and feminism) and, second, examining how the field approaches the relationship between media and girls.

Chapter 4 furthers the exploration of girl studies by reviewing the literature on magazines targeted toward teen girls. The literature is then used to inform my content analysis of the two online magazines hosted on the *LasLatinitas* Web site.

In Chapter 5, I explore the common characteristics for blogs and video logs (vlogs). I then use this understanding to conduct a discourse analysis on some of the blogs and videos hosted on the *MyLatinitas* Web site.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by summarizing how the theory and literature reviewed helped to conceptualize my hypotheses and research questions. I then discuss the various different themes that emerged in the analysis. Limitations of the study as well as future directions are also discussed.

## CHAPTER II THEORIES OF IDENTITY

At its most basic, identity attempts to answer one question: “Who are you?” (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). The “You” in this question is comprised of a person’s self-identity, social-identity, and subjectivity (Barker, 2011). Self-identity is how an individual views herself. Social-identity is how an individual views herself in conjunction with how society views that individual, and subjectivity is focused on the process of identity formation. It is how an individual is constituted within an identity. These three notions work together to construct *Identity*. For example, I view myself as Mexican-American (self-identity). Others might not see me in the same way. My subjectivity will depend on my self-identity in conjunction with the power (both afforded and endowed) that social-identity has over me. Implicit in this view of identity is that it is socially constructed (De Fina et al., 2006; Hall, 1996b). That is, how others view me is paramount and linked to how I view myself.

Also, implicit in this view is that identities are not singular—we do not have one identity but rather multiple ones. I am a woman. A daughter. An academic. These are all ways I self-identify. They are also ways in which I am constituted socially. They do not, however, all carry the same weight. Gender, ethnicity (race), and class are the identities that matter the most (During, 2005).

Attempts to answer the “Who are You?” question have fallen along the developmental, historical, and socio-cultural points of view (Kroger, 2005; Schwartz, 2001).

## Developmental Theory

The developmental view of identity is dependent on the theory of ego identity formulated by Erikson (1968). Using psychoanalysis as a touchstone, Erikson (1968) originated a theory that put adolescence at the forefront of identity formation—something that had not been done in much frequency up until that point. Erikson believed that identity was social, that individuals did not just have a personal identity but also one that relied on how they fit into a community or group. He also believed that identity was epigenetic: That is, that there are certain stages to identity development, and each stage comes to fruition, chronologically, at a specific point in time. Ultimately, all the stages join together to form a complete individual life (Erikson, 1968).

The eight stages of ego development proposed by Erikson (1968) are each dependent on what he called crisis and resolution. Within each stage an individual interacts with the society she<sup>2</sup> inhabits. For example, during Erikson's (1968) first proposed stage of crisis development, infancy, a child will acclimate to her social environment and must learn whether to trust or mistrust her primary parental figure. It is only after this crisis of trust is resolved that she moves on to the next stage of identity development. Each subsequent stage finds her going through the same cycle of crisis and resolution. Before she reaches adolescence, each crisis

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<sup>2</sup> Erikson, along with other 20th century psychologists like Freud and Piaget, has been criticized for his distinctly male-driven point of view that does not take into account historical context or female viewpoints (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). The "she" pronoun is used in an attempt to further the narrative and with the realization of these criticisms.



will focus on issues of trust and the formation of values—on what she sees as important.

When she reaches adolescence she will face her most momentous crisis. It is then, according to Erikson (1968), that she will truly establish her identity. She will catalog, accept, or reject childhood identifications based on her values and interests. This will happen because, as Kroger and Marcia (2011, p. 281), modern-day proponents of the developmental theory Erikson initiated, stated that she will be faced with the “imminence of adult tasks” and will have to “relinquish the childhood position of being ‘given to’ and prepare to be the giver.”

In essence, Erikson (1968) proposed that an individual reaching late adolescence must learn to become an adult. She must figure out an occupation and formulate an ideology. Erikson (1968, p. 252) conceptualized ideology as something between a religion and what he called a “clear comprehension of life.” It is only after an individual resolves both of these issues that she can move to the next developmental stage. Each subsequent stage until the last (senescence) features its own crisis and resolution, but it is adolescence that is the most formative.

While Erikson’s (1968) concepts helped formulate developmental theory, most modern-day proponents realize that the stages and resolutions he proposed were too rigid (Kroger, 2005; Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Schwartz, 2001). Today, theorists like Kroger and Marcia (2011) qualify Erikson’s (1968) concepts by positing that individuals going through all stages of ego development are capable of trial and error and are free to discard past conceptualizations of, for example, career and ideology to formulate new configurations.

In fact, Kroger and Marcia (2011) propose that an individual going through the most formative stage of ego development (adolescence) must go through a process of exploration and commitment. Within this process the individual reflects on her life plans and thinks about testing out various occupational roles. She then decides how invested she is in adopting those plans and roles. If the investment is low she can continue to explore. If it is high, she commits, and the crisis is resolved.

A developmental view of identity is interested in the lifespan of an individual. It answers the “Who Are You?” question by setting specific stages to identity formation. Implicit in this view is the idea that identity is an intrinsic, almost biological, part of a person. Identities are singular and fixed. Although modern proponents of the theory encourage exploration, it is with the caveat that eventual commitment to an essential identity is necessary. While this view of identity is contradictory to the idea that identities are mutable and numerous, it is important to my project in two ways. First, its focus on adolescence as a formative stage of identity development and its insistence on exploration are important to an understanding of identity theory in general. Second, the focus on adolescence and exploration ground the theory on blogs and video logs (vlogs). That is, literature on the importance of both media products uses developmental theory as a touchstone.

### **Historical Theory**

Answering the “Who Are You?” question from an historical point of view involves acknowledging that questions of identity are not self-contained but are a reflection of the times one lives in and of the way in which society as a whole conceptualizes identity. It also involves realizing that the practices we use to think

about ourselves are not universal. To elaborate, “the way we talk, write, and think about ourselves varies historically and culturally” (Burkitt, 2011, p. 268). Thus, identity is relative to time and place (Burkitt, 2011).

For example, Kroger (2005, p. 2) noted that a person’s place in life during the medieval period was determined by the “social rank and the kinship network into which one was born.” As time progressed and values changed, the standard for self-definition shifted away from kinship networks to wealth (Kroger, 2005). Thus, instead of conceptualizing identity as in relation to a place within a clan, a person’s monetary status (and, by extension, class) began to exert an influence on identity.

Kroger (2005) wrote that in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early parts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century identity seemed to be focused on self-definition. This is not to say that previous notions of identity are not still relevant, but rather that the ability to decide for oneself is an apparent option. Burkitt (2011, p. 268) elaborated on this idea by defining the modern Western version of identity as one focused on the importance of “a person’s public persona—in terms of status, rank, class, or reputation.”

This version of identity also recognizes that a person can be identified by an internal self, one in which the person is the only one with access to it and can only be seen by others if she chooses to share it. Burkitt (2011) traced back this concept to Greco-Roman times. He wrote that the Greco-Roman concept of *a persona* originally meant a mask that was used in the theater or the role that an individual assumed during a play but it gradually started to refer to the “rights of the freeborn as citizens with ownership of their own person” (Burkitt, 2011, p. 269). This view of identity sets the groundwork for an understanding that identity had a very public

component but, as with the developmental view, that identity can be seen as intrinsic and essential.

An historical point of view on identity is one in which the researcher acts as an archaeologist (digging up hidden facts and discovering new concepts) and a historiographer (looking at narratives of change, at causes and origins). However, this is not the only way that one can do historical work on identity. In her work on feminine adolescence, Driscoll (2003) moved away from traditional views of historical identity and instead (using Foucault's [1972] writings as a touchstone) used the concept of genealogy to talk about girlhood in the modern era (which she conceptualized as the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century). A genealogist does not discover new knowledge or new forms of identity; instead, a genealogy aims at examining how extant knowledge of a particular form of identity (in Driscoll's case, girlhood) helps shape what that identity means and how those individuals partaking in that identity experience it.

#### Discourse Theory

Driscoll (2003) examines how genealogies of feminine adolescence are constituted via a range of discourses.<sup>3</sup> As stated earlier, the way that we communicate varies historically and culturally; thus, any attempt to understand the question of identity—"Who are you?"—needs to consider discourses used in attempts to answer that question.

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<sup>3</sup> Discourse is the primary means by which historical theory is actualized in this project.

At its most basic, discourse is a “way of speaking and knowing about the world” (Driscoll, 2003, p. 4). One of the main tenets of discourse theory is the belief that identity is constructed. It is not set in stone and, in fact, is “negotiated among speaking subjects in social contexts” (Bamberg, De Fina, & Schiffrin, 2011, p. 178). If identity is not fixed, as discourse theory suggests, then the *acts* of discourse help to shape it. Analyzing discourse means taking discourse in context—not just looking at what was said or written but also considering the circumstances involved in the saying/writing of it: how it was said and why it might have been said.

The context of discourse is important if one is to distinguish between two seemingly opposing views of discourse, what Gee (2011) called capital-D discourse and small-d discourse. Capital-D discourses view the person “as constructed in and through existing discourses” (Bamberg et al., 2011; p. 180) and depend on two principles. The first is an understanding that discursive practices can act as distinguishing features for a community. For example, there are such things as the discursive practices of the French nobility or of the modern American middle class. The second is the assumption that “dominant discursive practices circle around and form the kind of thought systems and ideologies that are necessary for the formation of consensus” (Bamberg et al., 2011).

In other words, the discursive practices form dominant ideologies that tend to be agreed upon via hegemonic consensus. Viewing discursive practices via the capital-D lens allows for an understanding of how those practices are capable of being principles of historical formations and even whole changes in thought systems—what Foucault (1972) called regimes of truths.

Capital-D discourse theorists tend to view discourse on the societal as opposed to the individual level. In fact, in this kind of analysis, the individual identity is confined to the societal norms and traditions of its time, and a person's identity is formed only when she partakes in already existing discursive communal practices. While it is possible to choose in which discursive practices to partake, those choices are limited to existing patterns that are "imposed on them by their culture, society, or communal norms" (Foucault, 1988, p. 11). In short, analyzing discourses via a capital-D lens involves looking not just on the actual words and sentences uttered but also (and especially) the particular circumstances that hold discourses together and how those circumstances are altered over time.

By contrast, small-D discourse focuses on the actual discourses involved in everyday conversations, more specifically: "The relation between what is said, how exactly it is said, and the functions that such utterances serve in their local in vivo context" (Bamberg et al., 2011, p. 181). Although what is actually being said is important, the most important component in this type of analysis is *how* it is being said and *why* it was said in a particular way as opposed to another. The hope is that in understanding the differences in choices of presenting a message, one can illuminate how the speaker makes sense of his or her own world. For example, there are many different ways that we can say that we are having a good day. Each, depending on word choice, emphasis, tone, can convey a different meaning. The choices the communicator uses in order to convey a particular sentence are what matters. This is because the choices allow the analyst to interpret a speaker's intention and a sense of who the speaker *thinks* he/she is—the identity.

Both capital-D discourse with its focus on dominant discursive practice and small-D discourse with its focus on the particular choices made within discourse are examples of how a discursive view of identity works. Instead of viewing identity as something that is fixed, what a discursive point of view on identity does is locate attempts at identity formation in context via the communication acts of particular times and places. Both views of identity are important to the structure of this project. Discourse contributes to the formation of identity. As such, the theories of discourse mentioned above provide the theoretical and methodological framework for both the textual analysis of the blogs and the visual analysis of the videos hosted on the Latinitas Web site. Capital-D discourse is used as a theoretical framework to explore which discourses are prominent in the writings and videos of the Web site; this is actualized by examining the specific words chosen to communicate the text and speech (small-D discourse).

### **Socio-Cultural Theory**

Answering the “Who are you?” question from a socio-cultural point of view involves examining how society and culture help or constrict the ways in which identity is formulated. The ways in which society and culture interact is a main tenet of cultural studies.

### **Cultural Studies**

Cultural studies examine the ways in which society and members of society interact with culture. Miller (2001, p. 26) stated that cultural studies examines how “culture is used by ‘ordinary’ and ‘marginal’ social groups” and “sees people not simply as consumers but as potential producers of new social values and cultural

languages.” The knowledge of culture that individuals in modern Western society acquire is usually made available via media. As such, any well-rounded version of cultural studies also takes into account the ways in which culture and the media interact. Also, any well-rounded version of cultural studies has a preoccupation with identity—an examination of how members of society interact with culture is an examination into how those members use culture to help answer questions of the self (who they are in relation to the culture; where they fit in culture).

This preoccupation with identity manifests itself through the concepts of ideology (Hall, 1996a) and hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). Hall (1996a, p. 26) defined ideology as:

The mental frameworks—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way that society works.

In other words, identity is constituted via ideology (Althusser, 1969). In fact, During (2005, p. 67) stated that it is only by identifying with “ideologically presented models of selfhood” that people acquire a social identity.

Ideology is inextricably linked to hegemony. This is because hegemony offers an understanding of how ruling groups maintain power. Gramsci (1971) wrote that different kinds of social formations can arise out of a unity of combined interests—for example, formations based on commonalities with those of the same economic class or formulations that arise out of commonalities of working in the same job.

A hegemonic formulation is also possible. This formulation arises when an interested group can move beyond the economic, when the group takes in members



of subaltern groups and when the members of the group propagate moral, political and economic unity. It is only when members of a dominant group take in members of other groups that this formulation can be called a historical bloc. A historical bloc is temporary and the fact that it has achieved hegemonic status does not guarantee the bloc will be successful. Gramsci (1971) stated that there are two ways by which a historical bloc can lead: one is through dominance and the other is the achievement of consensus by those that it is attempting to lead. This, then, is hegemony. Hegemony explains how people can be (and are) willing participants in their own domination.

The project of cultural studies is focused on how identity is constructed. What is important—what defines these projects as cultural studies--is a focus on the ideological, on culture, and on the ways in which members of culture grapple with and are embedded in the societal systems in place.

### Consumption

One of the ways in which people grapple with culture is via consumption. Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) were interested in the consumption choices of the masses in relations to works of art. Works of art can be divided between those produced organically and those produced mechanically (via what was then a newly emergent cultural industry). They wrote of the differences between high-class art (that which is produced organically) and low-class art (that which is produced mechanically). Examples of high-class works of art are things like jazz music and classical paintings. Examples of low-class works of art are things like popular music or television shows. Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) stated that the works of art

consumed by the masses cater to the lowest common denominator. They are the works of art put in place to keep the masses placid and docile. In short, these low class works of art are meant to keep the hegemonic order. The only means of escaping this hegemonic system, then, is by consuming works of art that are not mechanically produced. Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) also wrote of the dangers of living in a system that works under the rule of the cultural industry. This is because (and again recalling Marx's conception of base and superstructure) the means of production determine the ways in which society functions. Thus, they attribute little agency to the masses and situated them as individuals kept in line by the prevailing ideologies of the cultural industry.

Cultural studies has taken up the concept of audiences by examining the ways in which consumers (audiences) might resist dominant ideologies propagated by the cultural industries. Hall (1980) wrote that there are three different ways in which an audience (consumers) can "read" (interpret) a media product: preferred, negotiated, or oppositional. He argued that media products are encoded with the ideologies of the product's producer. Audiences can read those ideologies in the way that producers intended (a dominant reading); they can negotiate with the ideologies embedded into a media product and find ways to make those ideologies align with their own views; or they can choose to read the media product in an oppositional manner than that which was intended. This doesn't mean that audiences are capable of reading the ideologies of a media product any which way. The consumer (audience) is still inculcated within a structure of ideology.

A major tenet of the early cultural studies project was to write works that examined the ways audience-as-consumers interacted with mass culture. Two seminal studies were the works of Morley (1980) and Ang (1984). Morley (1980) examined the ways that different social classes of the audience of the British television news magazine *Nationwide* decoded the program. For example, he found that people categorized as students interpreted the program in different ways than those categorized as trade unionists and those categorized as business managers. His work suggests that social classes are important components in how a media product is interpreted, that social factors influence particular interpretations, and that individuals are capable of a variety of interpretations.

Another formative study on reception is Ang's (1984) work on audience interpretations of the television show *Dallas*. She examined the letters of 43 individuals from the Netherlands written in response to her query as to why they watched the show. She found that the audience (mostly women) bargained with themselves in terms of their own beliefs and social norms in order to still derive pleasure from the show. For instance, some audience members described themselves as anti-consumerists and viewed the show as an example of American commercialism (imperialism), yet they still watched it in order to (in their own words) mock it. Thus, they justified their continued consumption and still managed to hold on their beliefs. Ang's (1984) work demonstrated the many different ways audiences will attempt to justify deriving pleasures from a television series that might not, on its face, hold fast with their own personal convictions.

These studies and others like them situated the consumer within a system ruled by dominant ideologies (the messages of the cultural industry, for example). They also saw the relationship of the consumer to the media product as one in which the ideologies embedded in the product are neither fully incorporated nor fully discounted. Identity in this instance came by how free an individual was to reject and or accept certain ideologies. Implicit in the concept of ideologies and their relevance to identity is that identities are socially constructed.

Hall (1990, p. 223) elaborated on this concept, stating that identity should never be seen as “an already accomplished fact,” as if we are somehow born into an identity and it remains with us, static, through the whole of our lives. Instead, identity should be viewed as a production “which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (Hall, 1990, p. 223). Representation is, simply, the use of symbols to stand in for something else. In regards to cultural studies, representations usually refer to how various individuals/groups within a culture are represented via the media. Hall’s (1990) article focuses specifically on the representation of Blacks in cinema, although it can certainly be used as an example of how to examine Latino ethnicity/race and representation. He wrote that how we are represented in media necessarily shapes how we view ourselves and how others view us. In short, representation shapes our “cultural identity” (Hall, 1990, p. 223).

#### Politics of Representation

It is possible to look at identity as a shared culture, a sort of collective self. Even this is not static. Cultural identity “is not some universal and transcendental

spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark” (Hall, 1990, p. 226). Rather, there are fractures. Hall (1990, p. 225) wrote that along with the many ways in which one ethnic group/race is similar to another, “there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather—since history has intervened—‘what we have become.’” In short, identity never just “is”: It is always in the process of “becoming.” Hall used this explanation of identity to discuss the colonial and post-colonial experience in order to elucidate the idea that there are politics in identity and, by extension, in representation of identity. Identities are “subject to the continuous play of history, culture, and power” (Hall, 1990, p. 226).

Regardless, obvious value exists in critiquing how different identities (such as race/ethnicity/gender) are represented in media. McRobbie (2004) wrote that the politics of representation looks at the political gains that can be won by the critical examinations of representation, especially when those representations are negative. For example, Mulvey (1975) argue that the ways in which the camera shot is positioned in movies is indicative of a “male gaze,” thereby speaking to a somewhat subconscious way in which media representation objectifies women. bell hooks (1992), like Hall (1990), also examined Black representation. She stated that popular culture commodifies otherness. It makes being different unique but not in a way that is authentic or beneficial. Instead, this otherness (different skin color, way of speaking or dressing) is tamed through media commodification. The media make difference less scary and more palatable to mainstream culture and audiences, such

that any experience had with the other adds “spice” to mainstream culture instead of disrupting it.

The examples of politics of representation mentioned above focus mostly on one area of identity (either gender or race); however, both Mulvey (1975) and hooks (1992) were aware that identity is not composed of just one characteristic. Instead, identity should be viewed holistically. Hall (1996b) stated that we cannot look at race as the only marker of identity but must also look at how race intersects with class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Furthermore, he used Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony to stipulate that there is neither automatic identity nor a necessary correspondence between economic, political, and ideological forces. It is possible that ethnic and racial difference can be constructed as a set of economic, political, or ideological antagonisms within a class. In sum, identity is a complex construction influenced and shaped by various forces; it is nearly impossible to state that someone has just one “true” identity without taking into account political forces and conflicting markers of identity.

Thus a cultural studies view of identity takes into account the importance that culture (via its cultural products) has on the formation of identity. There is an understanding that culture products are imbued with ideology and that the ability of individuals to navigate within the ideology is how identity is articulated. Also, the importance of analyzing representation was mentioned.

Cultural studies is important to this project because of its focus on identity and on the interrelated concepts of ideology and hegemony. The content analysis of the two online magazines will be done via the lens of ideology and specific

ideological categories set up by Peirce (1990). More broadly, ideology and hegemony allow for the concept of identity to be studied and actualized. That is, without these concepts, attempts to study identity would be difficult and not overly demonstrable.

### **Summary**

This chapter has focused on how identity has been conceptualized by various schools of thought. From developmental theory there came the importance of adolescence to identity as well as the ability of individuals to explore. From historical theory (discourse theory) came the understanding of language to identity formation and the idea that discourses can regulate individuals within certain identities. Finally, from cultural studies came the understanding of culture and its products to the formation of identity and agency. A primary tenet of this project is to study how identity is constructed. Without theories on identity in general and without these three in particular there would not be a means by which to realistically observe identity's construction. The next chapter will explore how ethnicity and girl studies as they relate to this project.

### CHAPTER III ETHNICITY AND GIRLHOOD

As stated earlier, the two most prominent identities are ethnicity (race) and gender (During, 2005). This chapter will explore the import of these identities via the lens of cultural studies and girl studies. Cultural studies because of its focus on identity in general and girl studies because of its focus on issues of consumption and adolescence. To reiterate, cultural studies is a broad field that focuses on the ways in which individuals interact with culture. Encapsulated within this definition are questions of identity and how cultural industries and the media can constitute it. However, cultural studies also explores how identity is shaped on a global scale, usually through the form of nationality and what it means to be a member of a nation.

#### **Nationality**

Discussing identity in relation to nationality requires a trip through various concepts: globalization, modernity, diaspora. Because nationality is salient to the identities of Latinas, I will briefly explicate the ways in which cultural studies has considered Latin America.

The Latin American version of cultural studies arose in the aftermath of the breakdown of the military regimes that took over Latin American countries in the 1970s—though few intellectuals would have characterized their projects in that way. There has been some resistance from Latin American media scholars to align themselves to the cultural studies project (O'Connor, 1991). This is, mainly, for fear of loss of autonomy and of getting positioned as peripheral nations in relation to the



center. Fox and Waisbord (2002) also stated that any attempt to map the Latin American cultural studies landscape should be cautious of trying to situate the project in the same vein as both British and American cultural studies. One of the chief purposes of cultural studies is to examine culture within the specific context of its surroundings (Fox & Waisbord, 2002). To assume that Latin American cultural studies is just cultural studies with a different focus is to forget that culture itself is always situated within the confines of a particular setting and situation that has attached to it specific ideologies and histories.

A confluence of events arose in the aftermath of the military regimes of the 1970s that allowed the Latin American cultural studies project to emerge (Estoguy, 2001). Chief among them was a resistance to the rule of the oppressive regimes and the need to examine that resistance. Also, social movements and interest groups brought to the forefront questions that had previously been considered private. There was a need to examine the ways in which people appropriated various media content and to examine the roles of citizens in the production of cultural goods. Ultimately, the main intellectual thrust of Latin American cultural studies came from the need to examine the ways in which citizens understood their identities in relation to both state and global influences (Estoguy, 2001).

The issues at the heart of Latin American cultural studies are nationality and the intersection between state and international interests. The media have seemingly always been inextricably linked to the fate of the region and have been theorized in relation to the West/North/Center (the United States). Also, Latin American countries, for the most part, consider describing the similarities between

modern and traditional cultures as a central issue. There is a desire (shown chiefly in the work of Martin-Barbero [1993]) to keep traditional cultures intact but not at the expense of progress, creating a continuous push and pull between wanting to be modern and wanting to honor the traditional culture of a home country. This leads to identity whiplash. The continuous tug of war between modern and traditional does not stop because the members of a country are no longer in their homeland. For example, the members of the *Latinitas* organization may be in their physical homeland (the United States) with its modern customs but their ties to their Latin American roots might compel them to continue with traditional practices and beliefs.

### Globalization and Identity

The main way in which the push and pull between modern and traditional culture has been studied is via the overarching concept of globalization. Giddens (1990, p. 54) defined globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” Appadurai (1996) examined globalization through the lens of modernity. He stated that the twin forces of mass migration and electronic mediation characterize globalization. What he meant by this is that the media have taken us beyond our own country. Since media are almost universally available, the messages that we receive through media allow us to construct new ways to view ourselves outside of the culture of our own country. Appadurai (1996) focused on the ways in which the media influence our sense of space. It does not matter, he stated, whether space is imagined as “nations, regions

within nations, or cultures demarcated by region or nation” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 89). Borders and boundaries are almost irrelevant in this modern, globalized age. Instead, what is important is imagination and all that it entails. While identity is not necessarily tied to or defined solely by the nation-state, identifying as a member of a nation still remains. *Latinita* girls’ identity is not necessarily defined by either Mexico or the United States. However, identifying as a member of a nation is still relevant.

A person’s national identity can be tied to a country’s politics and governmental policies (Wallerstein, 1987)—to the very foundations of what constitutes a nation. For example, Wallerstein (1987) explicated how different classifications/ethnicities imposed by the government on the people of South Africa led to explicit racism and, ultimately, apartheid. However, this is not a necessary correspondence. That is, it is possible for national identity to be completely removed from the politics of government. In fact, identity can be imagined and constructed via the needs of a certain community (Anderson, 1983). Thus, as in everything relating to identity construction, there is a need to take care with the influences that help shape it. It is not simple. Identifying as a member of a nation means that one is still, if only in part, tied to the policies and ideologies of that nation.

In terms of *Latinitas*, it is important to examine how much influence both nations have on the girls’ identity. More specifically, an examination of how they are positioned as a subset of a national ethnicity is needed. It is probable that the *Latinita* girls can be seen as neither “pure” American or “pure” Mexican, but,

somehow, something in between—the governmental policies that they both seemingly belong to have to be taken into account (the anti-immigration policies of the United States provide the most relevant example).

#### Diaspora and Border Studies

As both Appadurai (1996) and Wallerstein (1987) noted, nation and identity are linked, perhaps not in the steadfast ways in which they were in the past, but there is still a connection. Because of globalization, migration, and post-colonialism (among other factors), however, nationalities and borders have expanded, such that it is now possible to still identify as a member of a nation and not live within a nation. This brings us to the topic of diaspora. Diasporas are composed of expatriate minority communities dispersed from their original center to at least two peripheral places (Safran, 1991). These communities maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their homeland. They do not believe that they can be fully accepted into their host countries, and they yearn to return home. It should be noted that the *Latinita* girls do not necessarily qualify as a diasporic population. Though some of the girls might have been born in the United States, they or their families might still consider Mexico home. Also, these girls are, literally, living on the borders between two countries. Returning “home” for them is both a simple and complicated process: Simple because the location of their home country is only miles away (or they may be living in it), complicated because the definition of “home” is elusive.

Thus, instead of diaspora, the *Latinita* girls should be examined through the lens of border studies. This field takes into account the ways in which people who live in the borderlands between two countries navigate their identities and, often,

loyalties to both countries. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldua (1987) used poems, critical essays, and stories of childhood to examine the difficulties that she encountered in trying to establish an identity while living in the borderlands between Mexico and the United States. These difficulties are twofold: 1) there are very real, literal difficulties in having to straddle two countries with the customs, languages, and ideologies that that entails, and 2) there is a means by which psychological boundaries are put up that disallow one to fully feel comfortable in the in-between place. It is almost as if having to be part of both countries means that one can never be truly part of either.

An example of the complexities involved in the examination of border culture is found in the work of Saldivar (1997). He examined ways in which the Mexican-American/Chicano(a) population is forging its own identity. He did this through examining their cultural production—what he calls “material hybridity” (Saldivar, 1997, p. 19). He showcased songs by Los Tigres del Norte and El Vez, poems performed by Jose Montoya, and stories written by Helena Maria Viramontes (among others) as examples of this material hybridity. He posited that academics studying issues of the border should move away from the “linear narrative of immigration, assimilation and nationhood” and used his book to “imagine new cultural affiliations and negotiations in American studies more dialogically, in terms of multi-faceted migrations across borders” (Saldivar, 1997, p. 1). The ways in which the members of border community negotiate their identity are not simple, requiring constant negotiation and shifting subjectivities. In short, Saldivar’s works examined various cultural products as a way to explicate how members of this liminal

community understand and negotiate their own identity. In this way, his work mirrors that of Martin-Barbero (1993), though Martin-Barbero focused specifically on Latin American culture writ large instead of examining Mexican-American border culture only. Martin-Barbero (1993) challenged totalizing conceptions of Western hegemony by stressing the active mediations in which media are lived and experienced by the people, producing meanings, identities, and participation in national cultures. Focusing on a Latin American context, Martin-Barbero analyzed how the Mexican cinema, creole circus, radio theater, Black music, and the popular press contributed to the emergence of national cultures and identities. Martin-Barbero (1993) noted that in an age of globalization, national and traditional cultures intersect with global cultures but hold their distinctive mediations and forms.

Garcia Canclini (2001) also examined Latin America as a whole but took it as his project to tie identity formation, cultural production, modernity, and globalization together. He used the word “modernism” in different ways (modernity, modernism proper, and even the Marxist notion of modernism) and stated that the various modernisms in Latin America (in all the signifiers that that entails) are always in conflict with global modernization (Westernization or the ideological dominance of the West). Garcia Canclini examined the works of, for example, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Pablo Neruda, stating that there is an obvious need to situate a nation as somehow “anti” modern if one is to keep its authentic identity in place. However, Latin America nations are constantly striving to be “modern.” Examples of this strive toward the modern are seen in nations’ “insistence on formal innovation

and the processing of new aesthetics” (Garcia Canclini, 2001, p. 31). Ultimately, what this leads to is nations that have “an exuberant modernism with a deficient modernization” (Garcia Canclini, 2001, p. 65). He concluded that Latin American countries can really only be thought of as hybrid and the cultural products that they export as examples of this modernism and deficient modernization.

In summary, a cultural studies view of ethnic identity explores the importance of globalization and nationality. It examines the ways in which individuals are constituted within certain, liminal, ethnic identity positions by their status as both members of one nation or another. It also explores the ways in which people use cultural products to navigate and perhaps push the confines of their ethnic identity.

This examination into ethnic identity is crucial to my study because it sets the groundwork for the importance of ethnicity to the girls’ media work. That is, one of the focuses of this project is to examine the ways in which the members of the organization use the Web site and online magazines to construct ethnic identity. Knowing the way that ethnic identity has been conceptualized is important. What is at stake for the members of the *Latinitas* organization is the push and pull between two sets of countries and all that entails. It is the push and pull not only between issues of acculturation (the change two groups undergo when they interact with each other) but also issues of enculturation (Berry, 2005; Holleran & Waller, 2003; Pizarro & Vera, 2001; Unger & Schwartz, 2012). It is about the values, beliefs, and customs that the members of the organization use to construct their ethnic identity and whether those values, customs, and beliefs are in conflict with each other.

These values, customs, and beliefs are not confined solely to overt issues of ethnicity. In fact, there is bleed-through to issues that focus on gender. What follows, then, is an examination of the field of girl studies and its usefulness to the study of the media content of the Latinitas organization.

### **Girl Studies**

One of the lines of research in girl studies explores the ways in which girls are using media production to help fight against some of the dominant ideologies espoused by media industries (Harris, 2008). The field of girl studies can be thought of as a descendent of subculture theory and feminism (Harris, 2008).

### **Subcultures**

Subcultures have traditionally been composed of youth from poor and working-class backgrounds. The youth actively engage in popular culture and use its messages and products in subversive ways. For example, Hebdige (1979) wrote of various subculture youth who rebelled against dominant culture via the means of style. The punks of the 1970s wore safety pins and showed the threadworks on their outfits, and the Rastafarians wore dreadlocks and other accouterments as a means of “resisting” popular forms of dress. Further, the punk movement embraced a “Do-It-Yourself” philosophy that challenged, among other things, popular notions of music composition.

Subcultures were also seen as a means of enacting class conflict. Having been put into disadvantaged positions by the economic and social classes in place, the members of various subcultures used their subversion of popular culture as a means of class negotiations. To elaborate, members of subculture were invariably



also members of a particular class, and they used their statuses as members of that class as markers of identity. The punks of the 1970s were almost entirely composed of members of the working class of London (Hebdige, 1979). As such, any foray into popular culture was done as a representation of that class's intervention into dominant culture: Their style of dress as opposed to the style of dress of the bourgeois. Thus, subculture youth were thought of as resistant to dominant ideology and their acts of resistance as an important political endeavor.

However, traditional class-based subcultures were not particularly beneficial for women. McRobbie and Garbner (1976) pointed out that girls and their experiences were mostly left out of subculture group discussion because of the structured "secondariness" of their position in patriarchal society. Because there were few options for girls to engage in traditional subcultures, the authors instead focused on finding out "the different but complementary ways in which girls organize[d] their culture life" (McRobbie & Garbner, 1976, p. 87). A study McRobbie (1984) conducted on dance elucidates this principle. She found that fans of dance used common cultural artifacts like magazines, toys, movies, and the act of dance itself to showcase the role that dance played in their lives. Thus, she showed how a particular subculture of society used popular culture to establish meaning, participate in culture, and form identity.

While subculture theory has been used to showcase the ways in which youth can resist dominant ideology by subverting popular culture, it has mostly failed to take into account young women's experiences and has tended to treat women as secondary citizens. It has also fallen out of favor in recent times. This can be

attributed to the decline of class as a primary marker of identity, the rise of the concept of individualization, and “the emergence of a global, technologized commercial youth market” (Harris, 2008, p. 3). However, traces of its principles still remain in girl studies.

Another significant ancestor to the modern study of girls is feminism.

### Feminism

Important for the foundation of girl studies are the principles of third-wave feminism and their relation to young women. Third-wave feminism also explores the concept of resistance. However, instead of thinking of resistance in terms of outright opposition to the patriarchy, the concept is more nuanced. Harris (2008) described the shift away from previous concepts of resistance as occurring along four axes.

First, there is an understanding that the two previous feminist “waves” had a much more demarcated separation between their members and the dominant culture. While members involved in each of the first two waves were seemingly able to outright reject dominant notions of femininity, third-wavers “have complex relationships with popular culture that require them to negotiate, infiltrate, play with, and undermine feminine cultural forms rather than simply rejecting them” (Harris, 2008, p. 8).

Second, a characteristic of modern times is a trend away from group collectivity and toward individualization. This has shifted the focus of feminism away from trying to change structures of society and toward considering personal views. It has shifted from demonstrations on the street and a need to join

organizations like the National Organization for Women to examining the roles that women play in their everyday lives (Harris, 2004).

Third, power relations in third-wave feminism are more complex because identities are not necessarily conceptualized as fixed but are more “fluid, hybrid, and multiple” than ever before (Harris, 2008, p. 3). Finally, because feminism has become more visible than in the previous two waves and has been at least partially absorbed by society, it has lost some of its political power. As a result, young women engaging in feminist practices have to contend with whether they are actually engaging in resistive practices or cashing in to a sanctioned, and therefore weakened, de-political version of feminism.

Acts of resistance in third-wave feminism are hard to come by and must be filtered through sites of culture that are creative, mutable, and negotiated (Harris, 2008). In fact, Duncombe (2002, p. 5) defined cultural resistance in modern times as “culture that is used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure.” Third-wave feminists can (and do) still use feminism as a means of resistance and, while at first this kind of feminism might seem less potent, it is a testament to the complexities of modern times that scholars conceptualize it in such a nuanced manner.

In sum, the field of girl studies owes its foundation to subcultural theory and feminism. From subcultural theory, there is the idea of resisting dominant culture by using popular culture in subversive ways. From third-wave feminism, there is an understanding that the complexities of modern life require girls to take a nuanced

approach to the concepts of power, resistance, and political action. Resistance has been taken up by girl studies to mean resisting passive consumption and instead enforcing critical consumption and even media production.

### Girls as Critical Consumers

Big business and capitalist propagators have conceptualized consumption in modern times as a form of empowerment that seemingly promotes feminist ideals and full integration into society (Harris, 2004). Girls who consume are seen as on the right path to success. Take, for example, the phrase “girl power,” a phrase used at the end of the 1990s in conjunction with a variety of media personalities and products (e.g., the Spice Girls, Britney Spears, *Tomb Raider*). This “movement” seemingly promoted the agency of girls. At its heart, however, it can be seen as a means of constituting individuals within a consumptive structure. After all, being a girl who has power in this incarnation means buying the products of the Spice Girls and watching the *Tomb Raider* movies.

In the past twenty years (with the rise to prominence of teen magazines and with the realization that girls have disposable income), girlhood has become a desired commodity (Durham, 2004; Harris, 2004). Girls have buying power. While magazines like *Seventeen* have known this for a while, the new millennium made it evident to other media and businesses. The television network WB (now the CW) focused on teenage girls as its primary demographic (Harris, 2004). Movies and television shows featured teenage girls as their protagonists; concepts like “girl power” gained traction. Very specific ideas about girlhood were developed and propagated. These ideas were similar to what had come before (a focus on physical

beauty and relationships/sexuality) but were couched in terminology of “empowerment” (Harris, 2008, p. 20).

Girl power implied that girls could achieve anything—they could be anything. However, a study of specific examples of girls’ success in entertainment media fictional narratives (television and film) found that their achievements were still relegated to traditional gendered roles (Harris, 2004). Girl power meant that girls should be proud of their bodies, but examples from media narratives found the same old ideals about body image and the striving to achieve it. Girl power meant that girls could talk about sex and sexuality freely, but this was not *actually* represented in the media (Harris, 2004).

What this new version of girlhood actually means is that girls are either considered to be “can-do” or “at-risk” (Harris, 2004). The “can-do” girls strive for careers, hold off marriage, and, importantly, are active consumers of products that reinforce their gendered identity. They buy the media targeted toward them. The act of consuming makes them model citizens. This is contrasted with the “at-risk” girl who doesn’t have a career, gets pregnant and/or married at a young age, and is not an active consumer of media products. The view of girls as either “can-do” girls or “at-risk” girls forces them into two distinct and limited roles. Girls are either good (“can-do”) or they are bad (“at-risk”) depending on their actions and consumptive practices. Thus, girl power (and by extension the feminism it purports) is tantamount to consumption, and the act of consumption is seen as a means of empowerment.

In order to resist this hollow form of empowerment, girls have taken to “jamming” mainstream culture by actively disturbing dominant media messages or producing their own media. Culture jamming (like subculture movements) involves using “the materials of consumer culture to undermine its messages and power” (Harris, 2004, p. 168). For example, Merskin (2005, p. 54) examined the ways in which the “false dichotomy” of being either a good or a bad girl was disrupted by members and contributors of the Web site About-Face.org. The dichotomy consists of defining good girls as those who are wholesome and bad girls as those who are sexually promiscuous. Girls are constantly bombarded with these two views of girlhood. However, there are pockets of resistance. About-Face.org serves as a means of exposing the “myths, stereotypes, and strategies” of these two views and allows members and contributors to the site (girls themselves) to act as “jammer girls,” as girls who “are critical of popular culture messages and who actively work to subvert such messages both for themselves and for others” (Merskin, 2005, p. 55).

These jammer girls are indoctrinated in the skills needed to be media literate: the ability to critically consume and create media by learning various skillsets. For example, the girls learn how to access information from various sources, how to situate the messages given to them by the media against their own ethical and moral principles, and how to express and create their own messages through the media tools at their disposal (Merskin, 2005). As such, jammer girls are given the skills necessary to navigate and critique mainstream ideological messages.

Another example of cultural jamming is Kearney's (2006) work on girls who publish their own online magazines ('zines) and design their own Web sites. In examining the numerous 'zines produced by young girls, Kearney (2006, p. 148) focused on how "female youth use 'zines to 'try out' various forms of identity." She found that instead of falling in line with the typical ideologies espoused in corporate-made magazines, girls used their self-made 'zines to voice opposition to those ideologies. Calling out the magazine *Sassy* for not being feminist enough is a prominent example of such counter-hegemonic behavior: "I'm sure most of you have heard of the trendy magazine called *Sassy*. Well, I'm here to say it's all just bullshit...If you think *Sassy* is such an enlightened magazine then think again" (Kearney, 2006, p. 140). Most of the 'zines Kearney examined were not online 'zines but instead actual hand-made 'zines distributed via an intricate network of friends. These 'zines tackled issues of body image, feminism, and myriad other subjects. In fact, most of them at one point or another featured re-appropriated media texts. The purpose of these products was to be an alternative to mainstream products and to, again, jam mainstream conceptions of girlhood and consumption as a good.

Harris (2004, p. 168) wrote that media re-appropriated or even produced by girls "encourage girls to be active producers of their own cultures rather than passive consumers of what is manufactured for them." Thus, while consumption is seen as a way to be a successful citizen in modern society, "real capacity to make change remains at the level of production" (Harris, 2004, p. 168). However, girls capable of producing media tend to have certain advantages over those who aren't—namely, leisure time, digital know-how, and monetary means. In short, girl

media producers tend to be White and middle-class (Kearney, 2006). This implies that Latina girls are usually left out of the mix.

There is a tendency in girl studies to overlook the very real differences involved in media consumption for girls who are not White and middle-class (Kearney, 2006). While some scholars do note the complexities of those differences—Durham (1999), for example—most tend to overlook them entirely.

### Girl Studies and Latinas

The primary media Latinas consume in the United States is television (Vargas, 2009). Starting at a young age, Latina girls use television as a means of keeping connected to their cultural heritage (Stilling, 1997; Vargas, 2009). However, since the media messages received tend to not feature them either at all or not in a positive light (Stilling, 1997; Vargas, 2009), then the media have might have a negative impact on young Latinas' identity formation. One study on high school and college-aged Latino youth found that the youths who consumed the most mainstream media developed traits consistent with lower self-esteem—a dissatisfaction with their body type and hair color, for example (Rivadeneira, Ward, & Gordon, 2007).

Another study showcased the impact a major animated film had on Latino youths' perception of their race and ethnicity. Boske and McCormack (2011) conducted in-depth interviews with a small group of high school-aged Latinos in order to garner their opinions about the movie *Happy Feet*. They found that the teenagers were able to recognize the negative stereotypes inherent in the Latino characters in the movie—they were uneducated and crass—but that the students,



when prompted and shown the skills to do so, were also able to relate to the main character. The students found commonalities between the main character's isolation and inability to fit in and their own experiences as being recent or first-generation Latinos living in a predominantly White society. The authors also stressed the import of having spaces available in schools which allowed for Latino students to "explore issues of race, class, gender, family structure, native language, immigration status and culture" as there was a lack of avenues available to Latino/a students to explicate any cultural misconceptions held by their predominantly White peers and instructors (Boske & McCormack, 2011, p. 176).

As stated earlier, an understanding of media is an important component of girl studies. This is especially true for Latina girls who are already in a disadvantaged position in terms of media consumption. This position comes from the minimal portrayals of Latinas in mainstream media and the lack of strong media educators in their culture and family: "Working-class immigrant parents are poorly equipped to guide their children's use of media. These parents lack the cultural competencies needed to navigate their children's complex media world" (Vargas, 2006, p. 276).

Vargas's (2006) intervention into the importance of media education was to run an after-school program for a small group of Latina girls in order to showcase for them how media texts function. Her approach consisted of:

A set of competencies that includes production skills as well as critical thinking skills, such as the ability to examine the connections between media practices and subjectivity; and the political economics of global media conglomerates, their power as socializing agents, and their role in the construction of identities. (Vargas, 2006, p. 269)

While half of her students did not finish the program, the other half fulfilled the program's objective, which was to acquire analytical skills in relation to media practices and consumption.

As she conducted the after-school program, Vargas (2006) also studied the media practices of the girls themselves. She found that the girls' media landscape was not confined solely to mainstream media (which seldom features Latinos in general) but was also occupied by U.S. Latino media (Telemundo and Univision), media geared toward African-Americans, and what Vargas called "panhemispheric media culture," which she stated comes from places where the integration of various racial and ethnicity identities is high (Vargas, 2006, p. 276). The students used the various media at their disposal to construct a sense of identity, thereby showcasing that when mainstream media falter in their representations of Latinos, girl can (and do) seek other media outlets.

For example, in an attempt to comprehend the ways in which girls might use a specific media product to facilitate communication about issues of identity, Mayer (2003) conducted a qualitative study on a small group of Mexican and Mexican-American girls living on the west side of San Antonio. She met with the girls at a local cultural arts center and talked to them about their media consumption. She found that the girls identified with one particular product, a telenovela called *Maria Isabel*, enough to watch it daily and to converse about it with friends. By both watching the show and then discussing it within a community of their peers, the girls used the telenovela as a means of maintaining a "communicative bond"

between themselves, their friends, and their surroundings in the United States, and their friends and family back home in Mexico (Mayer, 2003, p. 484). The telenovela allowed the girls a common topic of conversation when and if they went back to Mexico (for visits and holidays). It also was viewed as an important cultural maker—a part of Mexican heritage. While the girls understood their own media consumption as distinctly “American,” they used the telenovela as a means to bridge the gap between their own experiences and those of their Mexican brethren.

What girl studies means in terms of my project is an understanding of the role that girls can play in the media production/consumption process and the implications this has for ideology and identity formation. Also, importantly, girl studies allows for a distinction to be made between media products that aim at consumption and media products that aim at advocacy and media education. Much of media in relation to girls has been studied as having negative effects on identity formation. Media endeavors that promote “cultural jamming” and media education attempt to combat those effects. In the next chapter, I contend that the Latinitas organization is one such entity.

### **Research Framework**

This chapter and the one preceding it have explored the importance of identity. Chapter 2 examined how various schools of thought have conceptualized identity. Each has contributed to my understanding of identity and has influenced the trajectory of this project. From developmental theory, I understand the importance of exploration and the significance of adolescence. Developmental theory is also used as the framework for the literature on blogs and video logs

(vlogs). From discourse theory, I understand that language is a means by which identity is enacted (Butler, 1994). Discourse theory is also the theoretical and methodological framework used for my analysis of the blogs and video logs (vlogs) hosted on the Latinitas Web site. From both discourse theory and cultural studies, I understand that individuals can be constituted to specific identities via dominant discourses and/or dominant ideologies and that agency, while possible, is articulated within ideological systems. The content analysis of the two magazines is conducted via a focus on specific ideologies. There is also an understanding that acts of consumption can be means of resistance and that individuals produce identity within representation.

This chapter has examined ethnicity and gender through the lenses of cultural studies and girl studies. From cultural studies I understand the importance of nationality and its relevance to both modern and traditional cultures and the possible importance that identifying as a member of a nation has on an individual. From border studies, I understand that there are issues of loyalty that come from wanting to identify with the customs, languages, and ideologies of two different countries and the customs, values, and beliefs associated with them. Also, that the cultural products that individuals living in the borderlands use are indicative of the ways in which individuals attempt to understand and construct their ethnic identity.

From girl studies' predecessors, I understand that a possible way in which individuals resist dominant ideologies is by engaging with popular culture in subversive ways. I also understand that some modes of feminism have made a move against collectivism and toward individuality—this contrasts with the importance of

collectivism to ethnic identity. From girl studies I understand that resistance of dominant ideologies comes from critical (active) consumption and possibly media production.

All of these insights allow for the trajectory of this research study to be set. To reiterate, this project aims at exploring the media products of both the Latinitas magazines and the blogs and videos hosted on the Latinitas Web site. The general project consists of examining the types of ideologies espoused in the magazines and then exploring which of those ideologies are taken up by blogs and the videos hosted on the Web site. The research questions will use the theoretical perspectives that I have discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to identity as guides.

#### CHAPTER IV THE LATINITAS MAGAZINES

Having examined identity writ large and in relation to Latina girls, the next step is to explain just how these theories of identity and of media consumption and production tie into the Latinitas organization. As explained earlier, one of the main goals of the Latinitas organization is to promote media education among Latina youth. The organization's founders aim at teaching the girls involved in the organization how to produce content for and with media via their workshops, afterschool programs, and summer camps.

Some of the product of the girls' labor can be found on the two magazines the organization hosts online ([laslatinas.com](http://laslatinas.com)). The first magazine is targeted at young girls between the ages of 11 and 13, and the other is aimed at teenagers from the ages of 14 to 18. At first glance, the content from the girl magazine seemingly comes mostly from the founders and editors of the organization. The content from the teen magazine is apparently a mix of editorial and actual material produced by the teens themselves. Regardless, all the content on both magazines is chosen and filtered through the founding members of the organization.

As such, the founding members have the ability and seemingly the desire to help shape their readers' identity or at least help them answer the question at the heart of identity formation—Who are You? Before examining in more detail how the Latinitas founders and editors may use the magazine to help shape their readers' identity, it is important to review the importance of magazines to teenage girls in general.

### Ideologies in Girl and Teen Magazines

Substantial to the relationship between girls and media consumption and production is the role that traditional teen magazines play in girls' identity formation process. There have been myriad studies that focus on girls and the magazines targeted toward them.

While boys have magazines targeted toward their interests (video games and sports, for example), they do not have specific magazines that focus on their group as a whole. Boys do not have a *Seventeen*. *Seventeen* is the biggest magazine targeted at teenage girls (Labre & Walsh-Childers, 2003). The magazine began in the 1940s around the same time that psychologists like Erikson (1968) were developing theories on adolescence. It is the most profitable of the teen magazines, reigning over other magazines like *YM* and *Teen Vogue* in terms of higher subscription rates and circulation (Labre & Walsh-Childers, 2003; Massoni, 2004). Much of the work done on the relationship between magazines and girl identity formation uses *Seventeen* as an example. The authors that look at the relationship between teen magazines and girl identity formation find that *Seventeen* (and others magazines like it) espouse specific ideologies on sexuality, femininity, gender, and—importantly—consumption.

For example, Carpenter (1998) examined the role that *Seventeen* played in shaping young women's sexual desires and behaviors. She looked at issues of the magazine from 1974 through 1994 in order to see whether changing attitudes in society were reflected in the magazine. Specifically, Carpenter (1998) examined the role the magazine played in shaping the cultural scenarios girls used to form

attitudes and behaviors about themselves and their potential partners. Institutions such as school, religion, and the media influence cultural scenarios. When people find themselves in social interactions they use these cultural scenarios in conjunction with their own desires and fantasies to act accordingly. Carpenter examined the ways in which the magazine depicted sexual attitudes and behaviors. What she found was that the magazine first portrayed teenage girls as sexual objects and as victims, but as time went on the magazine shifted to portrayals of girls as sexual agents. However, the editors of the magazines still featured content that reinforced traditional gender and sexual ideologies.

The editorial content of teen magazines is also a possible means by which ideologies are propagated. Garner, Sterk, and Adams (1998) examined the ways in which the editorial content in five teen magazines (*Seventeen* among them) was rhetorically constructed. They found that the content that focused specifically on sex and sexuality remained relatively unchanged. The rhetoric was simple: “the sexual community belongs to men, and women survive by containing themselves and by adapting and subjugating themselves to male desires” (Garner et al., 1998, p. 71).

Another way that scholars have examined the ideologies of teen magazines is by examining the relationship among magazine readership, sexual attitudes, and feminist ideologies. Kim and Ward (2004), for example, built on previous research to state what is seemingly obvious about the intent of teen magazines: “to *teach* female readers how to function in their personal lives and how to maintain heterosexual relationships” (Kim & Ward, 2004, p. 49, emphasis in the original). They also stated (again echoing past research) that magazines targeted toward



teenage girls promote traditional sexual attitudes and feminine ideals. These attitudes and ideals focus on outward physical beauty and on subservient behavior (putting others ahead of themselves). Specifically, Kim and Ward surveyed more than 200 undergraduate students about reading habits and attitudes towards sex and femininity. What they found was that the more young women read teen magazines, the more their own attitudes and beliefs reflected those of the magazines: the women fell in line with the dominant ideologies thrust upon them.

One of the main tenets of the ideologies espoused by teen girl magazines is a focus on physical beauty. Ballentine and Ogle (2005, p. 47) examined the way that *Seventeen* focused specifically on what they termed “body problems.” They analyzed the editorial writing of the magazine from 1992 to 2003, focusing specifically on topics related to the body. The content of the magazine followed two tracks. First, the magazine constructed body problems. That is, it featured content around what was desirable and undesirable in terms of body image. This content tended to describe “ideal” body characteristics and attractive body traits. Second, if one (believed one) did not have a specific body type then the magazine urged its readers through its content to attempt to achieve said body type—by eating specific foods or going on radical diets. Thus, one of the main rhetorical tenets of the magazine was a focus on outward appearance and specific ideals on beauty.

Furthering the focus on physical beauty and a preoccupation with the body is Massoni’s (2004) work on the relationship between teen magazines and girls’ occupational aspirations. She examined the content of four issues of *Seventeen* and compared it to survey data on teen occupational aspirations. Four themes emerged

from her analysis. First, and not surprisingly, there was a tendency in the content to focus on jobs in the entertainment sector. There were aspirations regarding actresses, singers, and models. Second, 70 percent of the occupational-related content featured men as the workers, as the ones having an occupation or career. Third, the career options presented for women were for positions that were not as powerful, high-paying, or mentally demanding as those offered to men. To clarify, when the occupational content actually focused on women, the career options were gender-specific (e.g., nurse, aerobics instructor, secretary). Fourth, and relevant to the issue of body image and a preoccupation with physical beauty, Massoni (2004, p. 60) found that the career heralded as “the pinnacle of women’s work” was that of a fashion model. She writes that modeling was “promoted as the work venue where women could attain a standard of success and prestige that approached the status accorded to men workers” (Massoni, 2004, p. 60). Work that focused specifically on outward appearance and a very specific kind of physical beauty was heralded as paramount, further enforcing traditional gender ideologies.

In order to fully examine the ways in which the *Latinitas* magazines portrayed gender, I looked to the work of Peirce (1990) and Davalos, Davalos, and Layton (2007). Peirce (1990) did an analysis of the ideology constructed in the editorial content (advice columns, articles) of *Seventeen*. She wanted to examine the way socialization was portrayed in the magazine and whether that socialization espoused a feminist ideologies or a traditional ideologies. The feminist ideologies, Peirce (1990) wrote, would encourage the young women reading the magazine to take care of themselves, to be independent, and to not rely on a man for fulfillment

or identity. She found that articles that featured a feminist message tended to be about education, vocation, physical and mental health. She categorized these as messages that promoted self-development.

Conversely, traditional ideologies would stress the importance of looking good, finding a man, and taking care of home and children. Peirce (1990) found that articles that featured these messages were about fashion and beauty, dating behaviors, sex, relationship problems, and anything to do with household activities. She categorized these as messages that promoted appearance, male-female relations, and home. Ultimately, she found that 60 percent of the content in *Seventeen* was devoted to beauty, fashion, cooking, decorating, and crafts—all traditionally feminine (as opposed to feminist) subjects.

Davalos et al. (2007) used Peirce's (1990) work as a model for their own research on the headlines used in magazines targeted at women. Initially, they analyzed the headlines using the feminist versus traditionally message categories outlined by Peirce (1990). However, after reviewing the content of the magazine headlines, they made a greater distinction for certain categories. Namely, they separated out Peirce's combination of beauty and body issues into two categories. They ultimately came up seven categories for classification (plus a miscellaneous category). The first four promoted traditional feminine ideologies: sex and romance, beauty and fashion, diet and body image, domestic issues and child-rearing. The next three promoted feminist ideologies: mental and physical health, career, and other relationships. I used the categories adopted by Davalos et al. (2007) as a guideline for my own content analysis into the two magazines. But, because the

magazines are focused particularly on young girls and are a part of an afterschool program to promote media literacy, I also added the category of education to the feminist ideologies group.

The following research questions emerged as a result of literature on identity that states that individuals can be constituted within specific dominant discourses and ideologies. Also, the research questions are based on literature about the content of girl magazines that states that most of the content is intent on promoting a particular version of girlhood, and based on girl studies literature, which focuses on the way that girls can resist dominant ideologies by being active consumers and “jamming” culture. My hypotheses and research questions are as follows:

H1: Feminist ideologies will be mentioned more frequently than traditional ideologies.

RQ1: Which traditional ideologies are more frequently included in the magazines?

RQ2: Which feminist ideologies are more frequently included in the magazines?

H2: Feminist ideologies will be more frequently supported and traditional ideologies more often challenged in the two magazines.

RQ3: Which traditional ideologies are most supported, and which are most challenged?

RQ4: Which feminist ideologies are most supported, and which are most challenged?

H3a. Content uploaded by the Latinitas administrators and editors will be less likely to contain traditional ideology than content uploaded by the members themselves.

H3b. Content uploaded by the Latinitas administrators and editors will be more likely to contain feminist ideology than content uploaded by the girls themselves.

RQ5a: Which categories of stories are more likely to contain traditional ideologies?

RQ5b: Which categories of stories are more likely to contain feminist ideologies?

### **Girls as Critical Consumers**

The Latinitas organization started as a graduate school media studies project that aimed at enabling “young Latinas to achieve personal and academic success through media and technology outreach” (LasLatinitas, 2013). The review of the literature on magazines and girls shows that there is an effort to promote a certain version of girlhood that helps propel consumption. All this points to a seemingly explicit attempt by the founders of the Latinitas organization to make girls into active media consumers (media literate) and (possibly) producers that not only look at their works as attempts to “jam” culture but as active attempts to be “resistant.” The question then becomes: How successful are they?

The literature on identity in general and ethnic identity in particular states that people use media products as a means to negotiate identity and to negotiate constituted subjectivities. However, since the Latinitas organization builds its magazines up as non-traditional and since the organization’s purposes are media awareness and female empowerment, I expected to find very little talk of

consumption. If consumption were to be mentioned, in conjunction with literature, it would be active consumption. Production, I believe, is the purview of the afterschool workshops and summer camps. The founders and editors of the organization use the workshops to teach media production; the media content (the magazines) serves to focus on the ideologies of the magazines—gender and ethnicity. Thus, I expected there to be little talk of production.

While I expected there to be little talk of production, I did believe that the magazines would be used to host productive endeavors (i.e., the girls' writing). If that were the case, then I expected that production would be done more by the older girls than the younger ones (the teen magazine would feature more content produced by the girls themselves) but discussed more in the girl magazine (girl magazine would feature more stories on production).

H4. When consumption is discussed, active consumption will be mentioned more often than passive consumption.

H5: The girl magazine will feature more stories about production than the teen magazine.

H6: The teen magazine will feature more girl-produced media content than the girl magazine.

### **Ethnicity in the Latinitas Magazines**

The Latinitas magazines feature work that was either written by or influenced by the founders of the organization. If the organization's purpose is to validate or improve upon the sense of ethnic identity the girls and teens possess, it is important to analyze not only the gender identities that the magazines

incorporate, but the ethnic identities as well. Literature on ethnic identity focuses on a few interconnected concepts: modern versus traditional, host and home countries. It also focuses on the importance of cultural values, customs, beliefs, language, and rituals. Two concepts that encapsulate these ideas are acculturation and enculturation. Acculturation speaks to the push and pull that comes from wanting to be part of the host country and wanting to maintain the traditions of a home country. Enculturation allows for an understanding of the importance of cultural values, rituals, language, customs, and beliefs.

#### Enculturation and Acculturation

Two major components of ethnic identity are enculturation and acculturation (Pizarro & Vera, 2001). Enculturation involves an understanding of the rituals and practices of an ethnic group. In particular, it is “a process through which individuals learn that they have specific ethnic role behaviors (e.g., celebrations of holidays) that are based on unique ethnic knowledge and lead to ethnic preferences (e.g., for music, food, friends) and feelings” (Pizarro & Vera, 2001, p. 92). Enculturation is inextricably linked to acculturation.

Acculturation can be defined as the change that two or more groups undergo when they interact with each other over a sustained period of time. These groups are usually categorized as the non-dominant (immigrants, for example) and the dominant group. The change that they go through is manifest in attitudes, behaviors, and values. Most acculturation literature focuses specifically on the ways in which the non-dominant groups adjust to a new society (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Acculturation can be thought of as a simple, linear process, but such a

conceptualization would miss the intricacies of the social changes involved. In thinking of it as linear, acculturation starts with having an original culture (Mexican, for example), adjusting to a new milieu (immigrating to the United States), and assimilating the beliefs, values, and behaviors of that new milieu. It also means leaving behind the original culture and the values, beliefs, and behaviors associated with it. This view of acculturation has been called “deficit-focused” and implies that attempting to maintain traces of a traditional culture (enculturation practices) act as a hindrance to “true assimilation” (Holleran & Waller, 2003, p. 338).

This perspective of acculturation has lost traction in academic circles. Instead, a more complex view of acculturation emerges. It assumes that individuals attempting to acclimate to a new society are focused on adapting to the dominant society, yes, but not at the expense of losing their heritage or original culture. Thus, acculturation stops being a simple, linear process of assimilation and turns into a process of amalgamation. In looking at acculturation in this way, being bicultural (or living in the in-between, in border studies parlance) is not a stop along the way to total assimilation but a desirable point of integration. Also, the values, attitudes, and beliefs of traditional cultures (the enculturation practices) are not dismissed off-hand but are instead lauded as a “source of strength that allows individuals and groups to adapt” to their new milieu and maintain solidarity and cohesion among themselves (Holleran & Waller, 2003, p. 337).

Understanding the enculturation process (via an examination of the language, values, and beliefs of a specific ethnic group) is important to understanding acculturation. Language is a prominent marker of enculturation



(Phinney, 2003). Learning the language of the dominant society and becoming proficient at it is indicative of a willingness to acclimate; making sure to not lose the “mother tongue” at the same time is indicative of integration.

The values and beliefs that a group holds and maintains through the enculturation process are also important. For example, Holleran and Waller (2003) wrote that a crucial value important to Mexican ethnicity and culture is collectivism. They stated that it differentiates the culture from the American mainstream. Collectivism “involves mutual empathy” and “subordinating personal desires to the interests of the group” (Holleran & Waller, 2003, p. 339). It is codified in terms like “familismo” (family-oriented) and “religiosidad” (religiosity).

Holleran and Waller (2003) examined the impact of holding this “traditional” Mexican value had on Mexican and Mexican-American adolescents living in the barrios of the Southwestern United States. They found that youths who identified strongly with this value were more resilient and had what they call “protective factors,” i.e., a “sense of safety, strength, and hope” (Holleran & Waller, 2003, p. 340). Further, recent research shows that identification with an ethnic group via shared values and beliefs leads to both positive protective factors and to a neutralization of the negative effects of discrimination (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Ong, Phinney, & Dennis, 2006; Quintana, Herrera, & Nelson, 2010).

The *Latinitas* magazines have a unique opportunity to impart enculturation (by focusing on stories that feature the language, customs, values, and beliefs of Latina culture) and impact acculturation (by promoting the importance in integration). As such, my hypotheses and research questions were as follows:

RQ6: How often do markers of ethnic identity appear in the magazines?

H7: Acculturation level included in the magazines will be weighted toward biculturalism.

H8: Collectivism values will be discussed favorably.

RQ7: Which types of collectivism values will be discussed the most favorably?

H9: Religiosidad values will be discussed favorably.

R8: Which types of religiosidad values will be discussed the most favorably?

### **Method**

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how identity is taken up and/or constructed by the members of the Latinitas organization. The process is two-fold. First, in order to discern the role that the founders and the editors of the organization play in the members' identity formation process, a content analysis of both magazines was conducted. The content analysis concentrates on the specific ideologies mentioned above (feminist vs. traditional) and well as on certain markers of ethnic identity (language use, enculturation and acculturation). The three primary schools of thought on identity (developmental theory, discourse, and cultural studies), coupled with the review of the literature on girl studies, ethnicity, girls magazines, and acculturation/enculturation all provide the theoretical foundation for this analysis. Second, the next chapter explains the methodology and results of the discourse analysis (a textual and visual analysis) of the blogs and videos hosted on the Latinitas Web site. The discourse analysis uses the findings of the content analysis as primary guidelines. That is, the content analysis sets up

which ideologies and ethnicity markers are prominent in the magazines while the discourse analysis explores whether the prominent ideologies and ethnicity markers are carried over into the work of the members of the organization. What follows, then, is an explication of the methods used to conduct the content analysis.

### Content Analysis

As stated earlier, the content of both magazines is, if not written by the founder and editors, at least heavily influenced by them. I chose to conduct a content analysis because this method helps reduce subjectivity (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). This is important as the analysis of the magazines provides a basis of comparison to how the girls and teens present their own identities in the blogs and videos. What follows is the description of the methods used in this portion of my dissertation and an explication of how the different markers of identity were analyzed.

### Sample

I conducted a content analysis of a census of the 68 articles found in the girl magazine and 76 articles found in the teen magazine. The 144 articles represented all the content found on the Web site that hosts the two magazines until August 2012, when I began coding. The unit of analysis was the paragraph. There is an understanding that by focusing on the paragraph instead of the whole article certain thematic and narrative observations were lost. That is, while it is possible that the overall story focused on particular ideological or ethnic issues, individual paragraphs did not. However, it was important to focus on the paragraph instead of an article because each paragraph potentially represented a different take on the markers of Latina identity. In the case of *Latinitas* magazines in particular, the

paragraph better captures the structure of many articles that employ a question-and-answer or “girl on the street” format that includes many voices in one article. The 144 articles contained 890 paragraphs, which constitutes the volume of content in this content analysis.

### Variables

Each paragraph was coded for the following variables. (A complete description of the variables’ definitions is found the coding guidebook in Appendix A.)

To test the first set of hypotheses (H1-H3) and research questions (RQ 1-5), each paragraph was examined for the presence or absence of the following traditional ideologies: Sex and Romance, Beauty and Fashion, Diet and Body Image, Domestic Issues and Child Rearing (Peirce, 1990). Each paragraph was also examined for the presence or absence of the following feminist ideologies: Mental and Physical Health, Career, Other Relationships (Davalos et al., 2007), and Education. Using the descriptions and examples from those qualitatively formed themes in traditional teen magazines, I developed operational definitions for each ideology that would allow me to reliably determine their presence or absence in each paragraph coded. Each set of ideologies comprised four separate variables representing the tenets of traditional and feminist ideology. Each paragraph could potentially contain multiple ideologies.

For **traditional ideologies**, mentions within a paragraph of romantic and sexual activities (not related to health prevention), getting and/or keeping a boyfriend, dating ideas, or keeping boys interested were coded as *Sex and Romance*.

What is considered beautiful or what is in style or tips about beauty and/or fashion such as a focus on what to wear, and how to do hair and makeup, were coded as *Beauty and Fashion*. Mentions of staying slim, finding the perfect diet to keep off the pounds, and/or having the kind of body that is seen as desirable to men and to society were coded as *Diet and Body Image*. Finally, activities that might traditionally be considered as the duties of women (housekeeping, taking care of children) were coded as *Domestic Issues and Child Rearing*.

For **feminist ideologies**, mentions within a paragraph of issues of health that focused on self-development, on staying fit (as opposed to staying slim) and on fighting depression were coded as *Mental and Physical Health*. Mentions of the kinds of jobs Latina women can and do have were coded as *Career*. Maintaining good grades, studying, college acceptance and college life were coded as *Education*. Relationships outside of the romantic realm –such as friends, mentors, and teachers -- were coded as *Other Relationships*.

In order to account not just for the mention of each particular ideology but also the **intent** behind the mention each paragraph that featured an ideology was also coded for the character of the ideology. Thus, each mention was also examined as to whether it *supported* the ideology, *challenged it* or was *neutral* in character.

To test the second set of hypotheses (H4-H6), I examined the ways the magazines approached what is one of the main goals of traditional magazines aimed at girls: consumption. Mentions of **consumption** were coded depending on whether the consumption was *passive* (the act of buying a product or service) or *active* (using the product beyond the scope of buying it).

Mentions of production were coded based on the **type of production** (video, blogs, news stories, Web design, magazine layout, photography, music production, television production, creative endeavors such as poems or songs, and well as others) and based on **who was doing the producing** (the author, the reader or the story subject).

### Ethnicity Variables

In order to fully grasp not just if but how the two magazines handled issues of ethnicity I first had to operationalize the term. To capture the complexity of the concept, I developed three markers. First, I operationally defined the **presence of ethnicity** as the mention of the cultural traditions and practices of a particular ethnic group (Holleran & Waller, 2003). Within these cultural traditions and practices I included such things as language, religion, common traits, food, sports, games, festivals, and holidays—always with the caveat that those traits had to be explicitly indicative of an ethnic value or tradition. Once operationalized, I was able to examine each paragraph for whether there was a general reference to ethnicity.

I also checked each paragraph for presence of **Spanish language use**; this is because, as stated earlier, language is a prominent marker of enculturation and thus ethnicity itself. If the paragraph featured either of these markers I then went on to examine it for features of acculturation and for specific cultural values.

I defined **acculturation** as the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact. Thus, any time the paragraph mentioned issues of being a part of one culture versus another I coded it as acculturation. If issues of acculturation were present, I then examined which type of

acculturation was being displayed. In conjunction with the literature (Sam & Berry, 2010), I divided the type of acculturation being discussed into five broad categories. The first was *separation*, which I defined as retention of cultural ideals and practices but at the expense of attempts to integrate with other cultures. The second was *retention*, which focused purely on the maintenance of cultural ideals and practices. The third was *adoption*, defined as the adoption of cultural practices not of one's own ethnic group. The fourth was *assimilation*, which was defined as the adoption of new cultural practices but at the expense of previous cultural ideals and practices. Finally, there was *biculturalism* (integration), which I defined as strong identification with both traditional ideals and cultural practices and new ideals and cultural practices. A paragraph mentioning acculturation could contain only one type of acculturation. If more than one type appeared to be present, I coded the paragraph for the dominant type.

Using Holleran and Waller's (2003) study as a guideline, I then went on to examine each paragraph for displays of the value of collectivism that they mentioned in their own work. In terms of **collectivism**, I examined whether the following traits were mentioned: *familismo* (family closeness and family loyalty), *respeto* (consideration for the sensibilities and needs of others), *dignidad* (dignity, honor), *fidelidad* (loyalty), *orgullo cultural* (ethnic pride), *machismo* (qualities of bravery, courage, protection and provision of others—usually associated with men), and *marianismo* (a focus on the centrality of a strong virtuous mother). A paragraph mentioning collectivism could contain more than one type of value. If more than one type appeared to be present, I coded for both.

I also examined each paragraph for the value of *religiosidad*. Unlike collectivism, which served as a concept under which separate values fell, **religiosidad** was a value in and of itself. Holleran and Waller (2003) took it to mean the valuing of God's will, the spirit world, the miraculous, and folk healing. Tangential to this concept were the values of *suffering* (the acceptance of hardship, suffering and death as inevitable and integral parts of life) and *transformation* (the possibility of death and transformation).

If values of collectivism and/or *religiosidad* were mentioned, I cataloged the character of the value under discussion. I coded whether the value was seen *favorably*, *unfavorably*, or whether the discussion was *neutral* in tone.

#### Intercoder reliability

15 articles were set aside in order to conduct intercoder reliability using Holsti's (1969) formula. Holsti's (1969) formula does not account for chance agreement. However, since most of the categories examined were measured binarily in terms of presence or absence, agreement was not an important component. The intercoder reliability sample was pulled from the content of both the teen and girl magazines at random. A trained coder was used to establish intercoder reliability. The coder did not speak Spanish and was not Latina.

A first round of intercoder reliability was conducted that did not yield adequate results. Consequently, the data sheet was revised. A second round of intercoder reliability was conducted with the same trained coder and with another set of randomly selected articles. In total, 139 paragraphs were analyzed in order to garner intercoder reliability. It should be noted ethnicity variables were mentioned



so infrequently that it was not possible to accurately calculate intercoder reliability.

Table 1 lists the variables and their intercoder reliability coefficients.

### Results

The purpose of my content analysis was to examine the ways in which the *Latinitas* editors and members presented both gender and ethnic identities in the girl and teen magazines. My primary focus was on traditional and feminist ideologies. The variables I developed were nominal-level, so the most appropriate analyses were chi-squares, which test for unequal distribution among cells. That is, if the two magazines had very different proportions of the presence of Sex and Romance, the chi-square would be significant. Statistical significance indicates that the findings did not occur by chance but that there are real differences in how data are distributed.

H1 predicted that feminist ideologies would be mentioned more frequently than traditional ideologies. Ideologies were summed into two variables, feminist and traditional, which had potential ranges of 0 (none mentioned in paragraph) to 4 (all four feminist or traditional ideologies mentioned in a paragraph). The hypothesis was tested with the two magazines combined. A paired-samples *t*-test indicated support for this hypothesis,  $t(888) = 11.75, p < .001$ . Feminist ideologies were included more than twice as often ( $M = .80, SD = .83$ ) as traditional ideologies ( $M = .35, SD = .62$ ).

RQ1 explored how frequently the four traditional ideologies were included in the magazines. Beauty and Fashion was the most often mentioned, followed by Diet

and Body Image. Sex and Romance was included about half as often, with Domestic Issues and Child Rearing rarely mentioned. See Table 2 for frequencies of traditional and feminist values.

RQ2 explored how frequently the four feminist ideologies were included in the magazines. Education was the most often mentioned, followed by Other Relationships (relationships outside the realm of sex and romance). Mental and Physical Health and Career were the least frequently mentioned feminist ideologies. In general, feminist ideologies were mentioned more often than traditional ideologies. Also, the feminist ideology with the fewest mentions (Career) was still mentioned more often than the traditional ideology with the most mentions (Beauty and Fashion).

H2 stated that feminist ideologies would be more frequently supported and traditional ideologies more often challenged in the two magazines. The girl and teen magazines were analyzed separately. The girl magazine was significantly more likely to challenge traditional ideologies (64.0%,  $n = 96$ ) than to support them, (36.0%,  $n = 54$ ),  $\chi^2 (1, N = 150) = 11.76, p = .001$ . It was significantly more likely to support feminist ideologies (93.7%,  $n = 295$ ) than to challenge them (6.3%,  $n = 20$ ),  $\chi^2 (1, N = 315) = 240.08, p < .001$ . The teen magazine was significantly more likely to challenge traditional ideologies (60.0%,  $n = 189$ ) than to support them (40.0%,  $n = 126$ ),  $\chi^2 (1, N = 315) = 12.60, p < .001$ . It was also more likely to support feminist ideologies (94.3%,  $n = 379$ ) than to challenge them, (5.6%,  $n = 23$ ),  $\chi^2 (1, N = 402) = 315.26, p < .001$ . Thus, H2 was supported.

RQ3 asked which traditional ideologies were most challenged and which were most supported in the two magazines. Overall, Diet and Body Image was the most challenged traditional ideology, with nearly 10 percent of the paragraphs presenting a challenge, compared to less than 2 percent supporting it. Both the girl and teen magazines challenged Diet and Body Image significantly more often than they supported it. (Tables 3 and 4 display the frequencies of support and chi-square results for each ideology in the girl and teen magazine, respectively.) For the other three traditional ideologies, the girl and teen magazine were inconsistent. The girl magazine was slightly more likely to challenge Beauty and Fashion than to support it, but the teen magazine supported this ideology significantly more than challenged it. In terms of Sex and Romance, the girl magazine was significantly more likely to support than challenge it, but the teen magazine was ambivalent. Domestic Issues and Child Rearing was the least mentioned ideology with less than 3 percent of the paragraphs referencing it. However, when it was mentioned, the teen magazine challenged it significantly more than supported it.

RQ4 asked which feminist ideologies were the most supported and challenged in the two magazines. Education was by far the most supported feminist ideology in both magazines, but the teen magazine discussed Education much more frequently than the girl magazine. The other three categories all supported more than challenged feminist ideologies. The teen magazines showed more support comparatively for Mental and Physical Health. The girl magazine showed more supported comparatively for Other Relationships. Both the teen and girl magazines showed equal support for Career. Each magazine's support and challenge to

feminist ideologies are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

H3a posited that content uploaded by the *Latinitas* administrators and editors would be less likely to contain traditional ideology than the content uploaded by the members themselves. The administrators and editors were responsible for 50.9% ( $n = 453$ ) of the paragraphs uploaded in the two magazines. The members were responsible for 49.1% ( $n = 437$ ). Of the paragraphs that the administrators and editors uploaded, 26.5 % ( $n = 120$ ) featured traditional ideology. Of the paragraphs that the members uploaded, 29.3 % ( $n = 128$ ) featured traditional ideology. H3a was not supported.

H3b stated that the content uploaded by the organization's administrators and editors would be more likely to contain feminist ideology than the content uploaded by the members themselves. Of the 453 paragraphs uploaded by the administrators and editors, 61% ( $n = 276$ ) featured feminist ideologies. Of the 437 paragraphs uploaded by the members, 53.1% ( $n = 232$ ) featured feminist ideologies. Thus, while both groups were more likely to feature feminist ideology than not, the *Latinitas* administrators and editors featured the ideology the most,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 890) = 5.58, p = .018$ , thereby supporting H3b.

While examining the content of the two magazines, I found that most stories (and, by extension, paragraphs) were tagged by the editors and administrators as falling into six different categories: 411, Fun Stuff, Latina Beat, Your View, Real Life, and Her Story. The 411 tag tended to feature stories that provided general information, and the Fun Stuff tag featured light-hearted stories that focused on

activities or hobbies. Your View, Real Life and Her Story tended to feature stories about the Latina experience, with Your View focusing presumably on the Latinas themselves, Real Life on situations and actions that would happen out in the real world and Her Story on Latinas that might be able to act as mentors.

A general examination of the categories found that 23.7% ( $n = 211$ ) of the 890 paragraphs analyzed fell into the Her Story category, making Her Story the most popular category tag. This was followed by the 411 category with 20.3% ( $n = 181$ ), the Real Life category with 18.8% ( $n = 167$ ), the Latina Beat category with 15.6% ( $n = 139$ ), the Fun Stuff category with 10.5% ( $n = 93$ ), and the Your View category with 8.7% ( $n = 77$ ). Less than 3 percent (2.8%,  $n = 22$ ) of the paragraphs were uncategorized.

RQ5a asked which categories were more likely to contain traditional ideologies. The presence or absence of traditional ideology was distributed significantly differently across the categories,  $\chi^2(6, N = 890) = 29.33, p < .001$ . All categories favored the absence of traditional ideology rather than the presence of it, with less than 30 percent of the stories featuring traditional ideology. The category that contained traditional ideology the most was Real Life with 38.9% ( $n = 65$ ) of the paragraphs. The category that contained traditional ideology the least was Her Story with only 17.5% ( $n = 37$ ) of the paragraphs; this was followed by the Latina Beat category with 20.1% ( $n = 28$ ) of paragraphs. The Your View, 411, and Fun Stuff categories featured traditional ideology in around 30% of the paragraphs. Uncategorized stories featured traditional ideology in 22.7% ( $n = 5$ ) paragraphs.

RQ5b asked which categories were more likely to contain feminist ideologies. The presence or absence of feminist ideology was distributed significantly differently across the categories,  $\chi^2 (6, N = 890) = 124.13, p < .001$ . Feminist ideologies were present in the categories 57.1% ( $n = 508$ ) of the time. The categories that favored feminist ideologies were Her Story with 73.5 % ( $n = 155$ ), Real Life with 68.3 % ( $n = 114$ ), and 411 with 68% ( $n = 123$ ). The categories that lacked feminist ideologies more than included were Fun Stuff with 40.9% ( $n = 38$ ) paragraphs featuring the ideology and Latina Beat with 22.3% ( $n = 31$ ). The Your View category was almost evenly split with the presence or absence of the ideology, as 50.6% ( $n = 39$ ) of the paragraphs featured the ideology and 49.4% ( $n = 38$ ) did not. Uncategorized stories featured feminist ideologies 36.4% ( $n = 6$ ) of the time.

H4 posited that consumption would rarely be discussed but that active consumption would be more often mentioned than passive consumption. The findings showed that only 5.4% ( $n = 48$ ) of the paragraphs included any mention of consumption; however, both magazines featured more passive consumption than active consumption. The girl magazine had mentioned passive consumption 4.9% ( $n = 21$ ) of the time and active consumption 4.2% ( $n = 18$ ) of the time, while the teen magazine only had 1 mention of active consumption and 8 of passive consumption. Because there were more mentions of passive consumption than active consumption, though the difference was not significant, H4 was not supported. Table 5 shows each magazine's percentage of passive and active consumption, along with the chi-square statistic.

H5 stated that the girl magazine would feature more stories about production than the teen magazine. It should be noted that only 10% ( $n = 89$ ) of the paragraphs analyzed focused on production. Less than 13 percent (12.8%,  $n = 55$ ) of the paragraphs in the girl magazine and 7.4% ( $n = 34$ ) of the teen magazine focused on production. The frequency of different production types for the girl and teen magazines is shown in Table 6. Because the girl magazine featured more stories on production than the teen magazine, H5 was supported,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 89) = 4.96, p = .026$ .

Finally, H6 focused on whether the teen magazine would feature more member-produced media content than the girl magazine. The girl magazine featured member-produced content less than 40 percent of the time while the teen magazine featured member-produced content more than 60 percent of the time. Table 7 shows the percentage of stories written by the members and the founders and editors within the two magazines. Thus, the teen magazine did feature more member-produced content than the girl magazine, thereby supporting H6,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 890) = 54.73, p < .001$ .

RQ6 asked how often the markers of ethnic identity occurred. As stated earlier, the two markers that were designed to capture evidence of ethnic identity were a general reference to ethnicity and Spanish language use. It should be noted that general mentions to ethnicity occurred in both magazines only 26.4% ( $n = 235$ ) of the time. When occurring, both magazines were equally likely to mention it. In terms of Spanish language use, only 10.9% ( $n = 97$ ) of the paragraphs included it,

but the girl magazine (14.9%,  $n = 64$ ) used Spanish twice as often as the teen magazine (7.2%,  $n = 33$ ),  $\chi^2 (1, N = 890) = 13.60, p < .001$ .

H7 posited that when acculturation appeared the type of acculturation that would be prominent would be biculturalism (integration). The five types of acculturation were separation, retention, adoption, assimilation, and biculturalism. I quickly realized that two categories were redundant. The redundant types were merged with logical equals. The first redundant type was separation, which I codified as a desire to retain cultural ideals and practices but at the expense of new culture. The distinction between separation and retention was vague, however, and the two were combined. The second redundant type was assimilation, which I codified to mean the receiving of cultural practices at the expense of traditional cultural practices. But again the distinction between assimilation and adoption was vague, and these two were also merged. Only 40 paragraphs (4.5%) included discussion of acculturation. Of those, more than half focused on retention (55.0%,  $n = 22$ ), 27.5% ( $n = 11$ ) suggested biculturalism, and the remaining 17.5% ( $n = 7$ ) referred to adoption/assimilation. A chi-square test indicated no difference between the two magazines in their discussion of acculturation level. Thus, H7 was not supported.

H8 stated that collectivism values would be looked at favorably. The values of collectivism were mentioned in 12% ( $n = 107$ ) of the paragraphs for both magazines. In the girl magazine, collectivism values were absent 85.8% ( $n = 369$ ) of the time, with 13.5% ( $n = 58$ ) favorable mentions and no unfavorable mentions. Three paragraphs featured collectivism values but were neutral in tone. In the teen



magazine, collectivism values were absent 90% ( $n = 414$ ) of the time, with 9.1% ( $n = 42$ ) favorable mentions and 0.4% ( $n = 2$ ) unfavorable mentions. Two paragraphs featured collectivism values but were neutral in tone. In several cases, I could not discern whether the mentions were positive, negative, or neutral, therefore the frequencies of collectivism values appear to be inconsistent in this paragraph and the next. Both magazines did feature more favorable than unfavorable mentions of collectivism; however, because the values were mentioned too few times, H8 was not supported.

RQ7 asked which types of collectivism values would be looked at more favorably. The most prominent collectivism value was orgullo cultural (ethnic pride) with 40 mentions. The next prominent one was marianismo with 32 mentions and familismo with 25. Dignidad had 5 mentions and respeto and machismo 4. The collectivism value with the least amount of mentions was fidelidad with only 2 mentions. A chi-square analysis indicated no difference between the girl and teen magazines in their use of the collectivism values.

H9 stated that Religiosidad values would be discussed favorably, and R8 asked which of the values would be looked at the most favorably. Religiosidad was mentioned three times in both magazines. Suffering was mentioned 19 times and transformation once. All three values were looked at favorably. None of the values were discussed unfavorably, and five of them were neutral in tone. Thus, all three values were discussed favorably more than unfavorably; however, because the values were mentioned too few times and there was not adequate statistical power, H9 was not supported.

## Discussion

Magazines targeted toward teenage girls have tended to focus on a specific version of girlhood. This version is characterized as one in which girls are praised for having specific physical traits and for matching predetermined characteristics of beauty. If girls did not have those traits or characteristics they were told to strive for them. This version of girlhood also promotes specific behaviors and aspirations such as subservience and consumption. In contrast, the Latinitas organization heralds itself as a “strong voice for Latina youth” (MyLatinitas, 2013) and has as its mission statement a desire to “empower young Latinas through media and technology.” Thus, the content of the two magazines would presumably reflect this mission statement and would be dissimilar to typical magazines targeted toward teenage girls. My hypotheses reflect the expected distinctions between the Latinitas magazines and traditional magazines for girls.

The first set of hypotheses addressed whether the content of the Latinitas magazines fell in line with the content (and ideologies) of prototypical magazines geared towards teenage girls. For the most part, the Latinitas magazines reflected a different agenda, one that promoted feminist ideologies and challenged traditional ones. Education was a key feminist ideology, being the most often mentioned and supported across both magazines. This is not surprising since a large part of what the organization does is media education.

All feminist ideologies in both magazines were supported more than challenged. Feminist ideologies were featured in twice as many stories as traditional ideologies. While the editors and administrators of the two magazines

uploaded more content that favored feminist ideologies (61%), stories uploaded by the members themselves still featured feminist ideology more than half the time. Within all categories, stories that focused on feminist ideologies were favored more than half the time. Thus, the magazines' content seemed to reflect the purpose of the organization to promote an agenda that featured education and empowerment, shying away from traditional notions of girl magazine content.

The messages were mixed for traditional ideologies. While they were challenged more than supported traditional ideologies, this was not universal for both magazines as some actually featured support for specific ideologies. In fact, the two most often-mentioned traditional ideologies were Beauty and Fashion and Diet and Body Image—major components of traditional girl-magazine content. While the girl magazine tended to challenge more than support the two ideologies, the teen magazine featured more stories in support of Beauty and Fashion than in challenge of it. Sex and Romance, another traditional ideology, tended to find more support than challenge in the girl magazine. Also, the members uploaded more content that favored traditional ideologies than did the administrators and editors.

All this implies that while the agenda of the magazine in terms of feminist ideologies was clear and reflected through the content, not enough attention was paid to how to discuss and combat traditional ideologies.

The next set of hypotheses focused on consumption and production. Consumption is relevant not only to girl studies and the notion of an active consumer but to cultural studies as well. Scholars within the cultural studies umbrella see consumption as a means by which individuals can negotiate with

ideologies embedded within media products (Hall, 1996b). Also, consumptive choices can be indicative of representation and identity. The magazines rarely discussed consumption but, in line with the literature that focused on cultural jamming and active consumption, I expected there to be more mentions of it than passive consumption. This, however, was not the case. While the difference in stories mentioned passive and active consumption was somewhat marginal (21 paragraphs mentioning passive consumption and 18 mentioning active consumption), passive consumption was mentioned more often. However, this could perhaps be explained as a result of the scarcity of the topic in the magazine.

Production was rarely mentioned. Production is not only relevant to girl studies but to cultural and border studies as well. It is relevant to cultural studies because of its potential to act as a means of resistance (McRobbie, 2004), and it is relevant to border studies because cultural products can be a means by which members of marginal communities can negotiate with their identity (Saldivar, 1997). It was posited that the girl magazine would feature more stories on production because the girl magazine would be read by a younger demographic, and that younger demographic would be prompted to produce media content. It was also posited that the teen magazine would feature more stories produced by the members themselves. This was because, presumably, the members of the organization would use the magazine as a means of hosting productive endeavors. Both hypotheses were supported. That production was rarely mentioned was somewhat expected since the purpose of the organization is to use the magazine as a means of hosting productive endeavors rather than as a means of talking about it.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the analysis of the two magazines was how infrequently ethnicity was mentioned. The organization states that its purpose is to empower Latina girls through education of media and technology. It also states that the focus on Hispanic girls is purposeful. To wit:

Latina girls are more likely than their non-Hispanic peers to face ... serious threats to achieving success. The solution lies in empowering these young Latinas, strengthening their confidence and expanding their opportunities. With a variety of enriching experiences, Latinitas discover their voice. (LasLatinitas, 2013)

Presumably, an important step to discovering their voice is in exploring their ethnic identity and how they fit that identity into their experiences as girls and as members of United States society. However, ethnicity was only mentioned in fewer than a third of the paragraphs across both magazines, and the Spanish language was only featured 97 (out of 890) times. Acculturation, a major component of ethnic identity, was mentioned in only 40 paragraphs, and the hypothesis that biculturalism would be favored was not supported.

The values and beliefs of an ethnic group (enculturation) are also important. However, the Latinitas magazines only mentioned the values encapsulated under collectivism 12% of the time. The values that fell under the umbrella of Religiosidad were mentioned only 2.6% of the time. Hypotheses that stated that both collectivism values and Religiosidad values were to be discussed favorably were not supported. The magazines did not feature ethnicity in any substantial way.

As stated earlier, all the content from both magazines is chosen and filtered through the founding members of the organization. As such, the administrators and editors of the magazines have the ability and seemingly the desire (as evidenced by

their mission statement) to help shape their readers' identity. This content analysis showcased the focus of the magazines on one aspect of identity: gender. It also showcased somewhat mixed messages on traditional ideology and almost no messages on ethnicity.

However, the organization does more than just produce two online magazines. It also provides an online location for its members that allows them to have their own blogs. The site also hosts videos that feature the members of the organization. The next chapter will analyze the content of that Web site. This will be done for three reasons: 1) to examine how members of the organization use the space to talk about issues of identity: 2) to examine which issues of identity are important to the members and 3) to explore whether the members, who have presumably read and perhaps even written some of the content of the magazine, take up the values of identity espoused by the Latinitas founders and editors (as evidenced by the content of the magazine).

Table 1. Intercoder Reliability Coefficients

Categories	Coefficients
Main Topic	.99
Subcategory	.92
Story type	.92
Visual	.92
Consumption	.96
Production	.96
Production Addendum	.92
Sex and Relationships	.98
Sex and Relationships Character	.98
Beauty and Fashion	.95
Beauty and Fashion Character	.95
Diet and Body Image	.96
Diet and Body Image Character	.94
Domestic Issues and Child-Rearing	.93
Domestic Issues and Child-Rearing Character	.93
Mental and Physical Health	.89
Mental and Physical Health Character	.84
Career	.87
Career Character	.87
Education	.95
Education Character	.94

Table 2. Frequencies of Traditional (T) and Feminist (F) Ideologies

Ideology	Girl Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 430 paragraphs)	Teen Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 460 paragraphs)	Overall ( <i>N</i> = 890 paragraphs)
Education (F)	74	139	213
Other relationships (F)	107	94	201
Mental and physical health (F)	63	88	151
Career (F)	70	76	146
Beauty and fashion (T)	60	73	133
Diet and body image (T)	54	46	100
Sex and romance (T)	24	35	59
Domestic issues and child-rearing (T)	12	11	23
Total	464	562	1,026

*Note.* Total mentions of ideologies add to more than the number of paragraphs in each column because each paragraph could contain multiple ideologies.

Table 3. Support vs. Challenge of Traditional and Feminist Ideologies in the Girl Magazine

Ideology	Percent supporting	Percent challenging
<i>Traditional ideologies</i>		
Beauty and fashion ( $n = 60$ )	41.7%	58.3%
Diet and body image ( $n = 54$ )	7.4% <sup>a</sup>	92.6% <sup>a</sup>
Sex and romance ( $n = 24$ )	75.0% <sup>b</sup>	25.0% <sup>b</sup>
Domestic and child-rearing ( $n = 12$ )	58.3%	41.7%
<i>Feminist ideologies</i>		
Other relationships ( $n = 107$ )	84.1% <sup>c</sup>	15.9% <sup>c</sup>
Education ( $n = 74$ )	100.0% <sup>d</sup>	0 <sup>d</sup>
Career ( $n = 70$ )	100.0% <sup>e</sup>	0 <sup>e</sup>
Mental and physical health ( $n = 64$ )	95.3% <sup>f</sup>	4.7% <sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 54) = 39.19, p < .001$

<sup>b</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 24) = 6.00, p = .014$

<sup>c</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 107) = 49.80, p < .001$

<sup>d</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 74) = 74.00, p < .001$

<sup>e</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 70) = 70.00, p < .001$

<sup>f</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 64) = 52.26, p < .001$



Table 4. Support vs. Challenge of Traditional and Feminist Ideologies in the Teen Magazine

Ideology	Percent supporting	Percent challenging
<i>Traditional ideologies</i>		
Beauty and fashion ( $n = 73$ )	67.1% <sup>a</sup>	32.9% <sup>a</sup>
Diet and body image ( $n = 46$ )	21.7% <sup>b</sup>	78.3% <sup>b</sup>
Sex and romance ( $n = 35$ )	37.1%	62.9%
Domestic and child-rearing ( $n = 11$ )	0 <sup>c</sup>	100.0% <sup>c</sup>
<i>Feminist ideologies</i>		
Education ( $n = 139$ )	100.0% <sup>d</sup>	0 <sup>d</sup>
Other relationships ( $n = 94$ )	80.9% <sup>e</sup>	19.2% <sup>e</sup>
Mental and physical health ( $n = 93$ )	95.7% <sup>f</sup>	4.3% <sup>f</sup>
Career ( $n = 76$ )	98.7% <sup>g</sup>	1.3% <sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 73) = 8.56, p = .003$

<sup>b</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 46) = 14.70, p < .001$

<sup>c</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 11) = 11.00, p < .001$

<sup>d</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 139) = 139.00, p < .001$

<sup>e</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 94) = 35.79, p < .001$

<sup>f</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 93) = 77.69, p < .001$

<sup>g</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 76) = 72.05, p < .001$

Table 5. Passive vs. Active Consumption in the Girl and Teen magazines

Consumption <sup>a</sup>	Passive Consumption	Active Consumption
Girl Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 39)	53.9%	46.2%
Teen Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 9)	88.9%	11.1%

<sup>a</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 48) = 3.76, p = .053$

Table 6. Frequencies of Production Types in the Girl and Teen Magazines

Production Type	Girl Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 430 paragraphs)	Teen Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 460 paragraphs)	Overall ( <i>N</i> = 890 paragraphs)
News Stories	18	2	20
Creative Endeavors	10	14	24
Photography	12	0	12
Blogs	7	6	13
Books	4	5	9
Movie Production	0	5	5
Music	3	1	3
Web Design	1	0	1
Public Relations	0	1	1
Total	55	34	89

Table 7. Founder/Editor-Produced vs. Member-Produced Content

Content <sup>a</sup>	Latinitas Founder/Editor- Produced	Member-Produced
Girl Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 430)	63.7%	36.3%
Teen Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 460)	38.9%	61.1%

<sup>a</sup> $\chi^2 (1, N = 890) = 54.73, p < .001$

Table 8. Frequencies of Collectivism and Religiosidad Values in the Girl and Teen Magazines

Values	Girl Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 430 paragraphs)	Teen Magazine ( <i>n</i> = 460 paragraphs)	Overall ( <i>N</i> = 890 paragraphs)
<i>Collectivism values</i>			
Orgullo Cultural	20	20	40
Marianismo	18	14	32
Familismo	16	9	25
Dignidad	5	0	5
Respeto	2	2	4
Machismo	3	1	4
Fidelidad	0	2	2
<i>Religiosidad Values</i>			
Suffering	13	6	19
Religiosidad	1	2	3
Transformation	0	1	1
Total	78	57	135

## CHAPTER V THE LATINITAS WEB SITE

The previous chapter explored the content of Latinitas magazines for feminist vs. traditional ideologies, for instances of production and consumption, and for examples of ethnicity. This chapter will examine the blogs and videos of the MyLatinitas Web site. The Latinitas organization has two primary Web sites. The first, LasLatinitas.com, hosts the two online magazines that were analyzed in the previous chapter. The second, MyLatinitas.com, is billed as an “online community by and for young Latinas” (MyLatinitas, 2013), the goal of which is to “give Hispanic girls a safe, moderated forum for self-expression” (MyLatinitas, 2013). The Web site was recently remodeled to include sections on photos, discussion boards, blogs, and videos. At the time of the analysis, only the blogs and videos were on display. However, before fully exploring the content of the site, it is important to examine what, if any, effect the type of technology being used may have on identity.

### **Technology and Identity**

As stated earlier, a basic tenet of this project is the idea that identity formation can be studied by examining the role of the media producer and the media consumer. This is because media products are embedded with meaning and can act as carriers of dominant ideologies and discourses. Media consumers are then able to read the discourses and ideologies embedded in media products and internalize them. These ideologies and discourses contribute to the formation of identity.

Previous chapters have explored how various schools of thought conceptualize identity and have examined how the relationship among consumption, ideology, and media product has been carried out in what could be considered “traditional” media. In fact, the content analysis of the *Latinitas* magazines was based, in part, on exploring ideologies found in typical teen girl magazines. Thus, it seems important to ask whether the media that are being examined in this chapter (that is, media housed on the Internet) are inherently different from the media that came before.

A primary way that this question has been answered is by exploring the related concept of technological determinism (Buckingham, 2008). That is, by exploring whether the media being used actually determine the cultural values and social structures of a society. Viewing technology in this way means seeing technology as imbued with special powers – for example, stating that individuals who use new media are free of the constraints and influence of the media industrial complex. A technological determinist view regards technology as “influencing society yet beyond the influence of society” (Buckingham, 2008, p. 12).

Opposite of this view is the idea that technology is completely shaped by society and social interactions. That is, that new media technology does not, in and of itself, hold special properties. However, this view does not take into account the very real ways in which new media technologies actually do have particular properties that allow individuals to interact with them in different ways.

Williams (1974), when referencing television, made the claim that technology should (and does) fall somewhere in between, helping shape society but

still influenced by it. The relevant question then becomes whether this assertion holds true for new media technology as well. Buckingham (2008) wrote that an area where this argument is particularly salient is in the ways that young people interact with media. After all, “digital media are seen to be responsible for a whole litany of social ills” (Buckingham, 2008, p. 13). And society today is careful with the ways in which younger generations use media for fear that they will act as a corrupting influence or that young people will be exposed to unsavory content.

Proponents of the good of technology tout the ways in which new media act as a liberating means of self-expression for young people (Prensky, 2006; Tapscott, 2009). Prensky (2006, p. 25), for example, famously wrote that the younger generation is composed of what he called “digital natives.” That is, individuals who have grown up with media have very different styles of learning than do “digital immigrants”—adults who only come to understand and use new media later in life (Prensky, 2006, p. 27). Digital natives learn differently than other groups. They dislike instruction based on exposition and logic and instead learn by multitasking and by working with products hands-on. They also, according to Prensky (2006, p. 30), don’t understand digital immigrants, considering them as speaking in an outdated, even “alien” language.

This is comparable to how Tapscott (2009, p. 5) viewed what he called “Net Geners”—or the new generation of young people who have grown up with the Internet. Tapscott (2009) proposed this generation is markedly different than the generation that came before. It values things like freedom, speed, innovation, customization, and collaboration. It is active, hungry for discovery and new

experiences, and possesses an intuitive understanding of media technology. Conversely, the previous generations rely on older media like television and are composed of passive, media-wary technophobes who are complacent with the media they consume and are under the domain of the ideologies of the media conglomerates.

Buckingham (2008) stated that these proponents of the emancipatory power of the Internet among young people tend to ignore the downsides of the new technology. He wrote that they ignore the mundane nature of most media use by young people (most is not particularly groundbreaking or creative but instead consists of basic information gathering and/or entertainment), and the proponents refuse to examine that media use critically.

van Dijck (2009) echoed the warning against the celebratory nature of new media technology by stating that user agency in new media is not necessarily fixed. He discussed user agency in three contexts: in terms of culture, in terms of industry, and in terms of labor. While many new media scholars tend to herald the rise of a participatory media user who has the ability to change the world, most people who use the Internet are not actually contributing much in the way of user content. As such, agency that comes in the form of participation is not yet a fully realized concept. Second, agency that comes in the form of participation with the industry itself is questioned because it allows for a saturated advertising landscape. Thus, agency in the form of choice that the new media environment supposedly provides is lessened. Finally, van Dijck wrote of agency in the form of labor. His argument is similar to that made by Terranova (2004), who stated that members who

participate in content creation online are essentially doing nothing more than providing free labor for the media industry. As such, agency in the form of economic production is diminished.

However, the argument that new media technology does not allow for much in the way of agency is too limiting. There are examples of how new media and their use has afforded users with certain freedoms. For example, the place of the individual in traditional understandings of production and consumption has changed (Bruns, 2008). The traditional trichotomy of production, consumption, and distribution situated individuals and media corporations in separate and clearly defined places. The product itself was also concrete and singular. An example that showcases this trichotomy would be the production, distribution, and consumption of a notebook. There are different members at work within each step of the trichotomy (the factory where the notebook is produced, the trucks that distribute the product to different retail outlets, and the stores where the consumer can buy the product). Now, however, the product is constantly changing and being redone, reworked, or polished. The product is not a singular, concrete entity but is always in a state of flux. The Web site Wikipedia is one such example. The Web site itself is seemingly never closed off but is always in the state of being reworked. The rework comes from what would traditionally be considered the consumer.

Another example is a beta version of open-source software. The software goes out to interested members of the public who use it and continue to improve on it, either by sending suggestions to the original producer or by working on the software itself. This, then, is what Bruns (2008, p. 2) called “produsage.” He wrote



that individuals are no longer merely consumers but are also helping in the production process. He also argued that the process of production itself is not closed off but continuously open. Thus, the role of the consumer is active, echoing the literature on girl studies and cultural studies in general.

A point of consideration is the relationship between the individual (citizen) and the media industries. Gilmor (2006), in writing about the role of the news, stated that with the capability of constant connection and with the rise of media technology in ease of use and transmission, stories that have traditionally been controlled by media industries (stories of indiscretions by political figures or stories that are not on top of the media's agenda) are now being uncovered and told by everyday individuals. Gilmor (2006) wrote that information no longer leaks out but "gushes" out instead. In short, the ability of media industries (and industries in general) to control their public perceptions has diminished considerably.

What these examples have shown is that new media technology (much like the technology that came before it) does not afford complete freedom to its users and is not outside of the influence of society and its forces. Thus, it is with this understanding—that new media are not inherently free of the influence of society but that they still hold specific properties that change the way people interact with society—that a conversation about the characteristics of new media and their relationship to the consumer (audience, participant) can be carried out.

A primary characteristic of the new media landscape is convergence (Jenkins, 2004, 2006). Jenkins (2004) noted that the new media environment has two interested parties: media conglomerates and the collective intelligence of media

users. Convergence is what happens when the two groups come in contact with each other. This interaction is not smooth but is akin to a collision. A fully realized version of convergence is only possible when the two interested parties understand that their coming together is mutually beneficial, i.e., when media conglomerates become aware that the new media environment allows for different ways and means of distributing their products and when the voice of the collective community is wholly valued and heard. Until then, the two parties are “jerry-rigged” to each other (Jenkins, 2004, p. 34).

Deuze (2011) wrote that individuals in today’s society are moving from a life lived with media to a life lived in media. Today, media have become either too big (they are everywhere) or too small (literally, as in computer chips or by means of seamless integration). Thus, individuals are either too aware of media or not aware of them at all. This is similar to the argument made by Bolter and Grusin (1999), when they contended that media are characterized either by immediacy or as hypermedia. Immediacy, in their view, means that media are present but transparent, such that individuals are unaware that they exist. Bolter and Grusin (1999) discussed virtual reality to exemplify their point.

Today, members of society view the mediated world around them differently than people in the past (Deuze, 2011). For example, issues of privacy are not as relevant, and individualization (a value of modern identity) has changed to a form that is socialized. Deuze (2011) stated that modern-day individuals might value individuality but still want to be part of online communities and forums. This assertion echoes Wesch’s (2008) comments about cultural inversion. That is,

individuals express individuality in their media use and production but they still value community and relationships. Individuals can, in short, be alone but always connected with each other.

This is exemplified by the concept of interactivity. Matheson (2005) wrote that the social practices of people who interact with new media technology are somewhat different than those who interact with other kinds of media. The audience (the consumer, the participant) of the media is more active. This is in the sense that individuals who use new media technology must, by the very nature of the technology in place, interact with the media much more readily than the audience of, say, television. This comes in the forms of navigating Web sites, clicking on links, typing a Web address but also, and importantly, in the form of producing content for the Internet.

It is in the act of producing content for new media that interactivity flourishes. Interactivity, Matheson (2005) argued, is not dependent solely on the affordances of new media technology (the ability to post and read material on a Web site with relative ease). The interactions that take place by producing a blog, for example, come not only from the technology that is used but also from the ways in which the technology is capable of facilitating social relations. Thus, Matheson (2005) furthered the understanding that a characteristic of the new media landscape is the ability of individuals to be interactive (and social) without, for example, having to leave the confines of their own home.

What is important is the way in which individuals interact with new media—that is, the reasons for their interactions. Stern (2008) interviewed hundreds of

young people (between the ages of 12 to 21) in order to understand the reasons why they choose to write blogs. She found that blogs are means by which young people negotiate issues of authorship and identity. They use blogs as outlets for self-reflection, for releasing pent-up feelings, and for witnessing personal growth. Stern (2008) wrote that blogs afford individuals the ability to address the public. This is vital in that young people have not traditionally had a voice in public forums, but also because there is a sense of “feeling empowered by the mere prospect of mass reception” (Stern, 2008, p. 104). Further, she noted: “because the audience is never far from their minds, young authors demonstrate considerable awareness of how they project their ‘real,’ internal sense of themselves into their online self-presentations” (Stern, 2008, p. 106). In other words, they are able to reflect on aspects of their identity. As such, Stern concluded that blogs are a means by which young people establish agency. While she understood that the ability to express one’s self online is not inherently free or outside of the constraints of the media and cultural industries, Stern realized that agency is possible. She mirrored the work on identity in cultural studies, which states that agency comes with how individuals are able to negotiate the ideologies exposed by the media industries, and girl studies, which states that agency is possible via active consumption and media production. Stern also used developmental identity theory as a reference to explicate the ways in which young people use blogs to explore issues of identity.

This is similar to the work done by Davis (2009, 2010). She situated her research into why young girls write blogs under developmental theory and used Erikson’s (1968) concept of identity formation to make explicit the connection

between adolescence as a time for self-formulation and construction and blog use as a means to express that formulation. Davis found that girls who blog see their blogs as safe, digital spaces that not only allow for self-expression but encourage and validate it. Because blogs allow physical distance from the audience, girl bloggers perceive their ability to express themselves as greater than they would otherwise. This, Davis (2010) stated, allows them to be more creative, more deliberate and authoritative in their expressions of knowledge, and less likely to censor themselves. It also allows them to become somewhat aware of their online self.

In the works of both Stern (2008) and Davis (2009, 2010), self-presentation by means of self-expression is an important aspect of identity exploration. While both authors stated that self-presentation is positive, it should be noted that the ways in which young people present themselves online is not always accurate. Mazur and Kozarian (2010, p. 125) wrote that “blogs give their authors an unprecedented opportunity to control their public persona.” This opportunity allows young people to experiment with identity and self-expression, but can lead to deliberate distortions and misrepresentations of self—usually in the form of presenting themselves in a positive and “upbeat” manner (Mazur & Kozarian, 2010, p. 138). However, the authors concluded that in other areas of online self-expression, i.e., chronicling relationships or daily experiences, young authors are more prone to express negative interactions and characteristics.

#### Characteristics of Blogs and Vlogs

Blogs are examples of a new media technology that affords individuals special privileges but is still under the confines of societal forces (Davidson & Vaast,

2009). Identity exploration (in the form of self-expression, presentation, reflection) via blogs is a relatively easy endeavor—software requires nothing more from individuals than the ability to type and click. Blog entries are posted in reverse chronological order, and an individual can update her blog at will.

Blogs are also interactive. The blog user posts to an audience—known or not. The audience can respond back to a blog post either anonymously or with a self-selected username. Most blogging software allows bloggers to catalog and archive previous entries—allowing for individuals to go back and self-reflect (Stern, 2008).

Another characteristic of blogs is that the content comes from the individual. The individual chooses a topic and writes about it. There are, usually, no outside forces that impose topics upon the individual. Davidson and Vaast (2009) wrote that this results in most bloggers using the “I” narrative in individual blog posts, which makes reflection and introspection that much easier. They suggested that individuals blog for very particular reasons: to update their readers, to expression opinion, to seek opinion, to influence others, to release emotions, and to gain a sense of community. All of these reasons amount to blogs being good vehicles for individuals to reflect on themselves and their lives.

Blood (2004) furthered the discussion on the characteristics of blogs by cataloging three main types: Blogs can act as personal journals, notebooks, or filters. A personal journal is a blog focused on internal thoughts and writings. A notebook is focused on longer, more focused, essays. Finally, a filter blog is used as a means for individuals to post their reflections of the observed world. Although most

blogs tend to stick to one type, there are possibilities for different blog posts to express different characteristics.

### Vlogs

It should be noted that vlogs (blogs in video form) share most of the same characteristics as blogs (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2013). That is, they are vehicles for interactivity and self-expression (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2013; Warmbrodt, Sheng, & Hall, 2008; Miles, 2008). Vloggers, much like bloggers, share video content because they want their opinions to be validated, and they want to feel connected to their peers (Warmbrodt et al., 2008). Also, and importantly, vloggers post because vlogging allow them to act as “a producer as well as a consumer” (Warmbrodt et al., 2008). That is, vlogging allows individuals to do more than just consume media; they actively produce it.

Vloggers, like bloggers, also use their video posts to explore ideas of authorship (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2013; Miles, 2008). And some use their vlogs to showcase creative endeavors. For example, some vloggers edit their videos heavily, use music, and voiceovers. It should be noted, however, that most vlogs tend to be personal, video journals that feature the “single talking head” (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2013, p. 211). Other types of vlogs are entertainment-oriented or news shows (Warmbrodt et al., 2008).

Vloggers tend to post and upload videos on social media sites such as YouTube and Vimeo. The sites allow vloggers to catalog their videos for viewers. They also allow vloggers to set up their own personal pages. Viewers of a particular video can comment on the video, and the vlogger is free to respond. To reiterate,

then, vlogs are extremely similar to blogs. Individuals use vlogs for similar reasons. Those reasons allow for an understanding of identity via the self-expression and reflection shown in the videos. The biggest difference between the two is that vlogs allow for more channels of communication. Biel and Gatica-Perez (2013, p. 211) wrote that vlogs are “multimodal extension[s] of text-based blogging, where words—what is said—are enriched by the complex nonverbal behavior displayed on camera—how it is said.”

### Research Questions

So far this chapter has explored the role of technology in general before focusing on new media technology and blogging and vlogging. Much like the technologies that preceded it, new media technology is not inherently free. It is still under the confines and influence of societal and cultural forces. However, there are very real ways in which new media technology does offer individuals unique means to interact with and consume media. Blogs and vlogs, for example, afford young people the ability to explore identity via self-expression, reflection, authorship, and media production.

Having examined the role of new media technology in general and blogs and vlogs in particular, the following research question emerges:

RQ9: How do the members of the Latinitas organization use the blogs and vlogs to express issues of identity?

The previous chapter’s examination into the content of the Latinitas organization’s two magazines showcased the prominence of feminist ideologies and the neglect (for the most part) of issues of consumption, production, and ethnicity. A



primary purpose of this project is to examine whether identity portrayed is identity taken up. That is, whether the ideologies, in their capacity to act as carriers of identity, displayed as prominent in the magazines are the same ideologies displayed as prominent in the media products of the Latinitas members. The following research questions arose in an attempt to explore this issue:

RQ10: How is feminism expressed in the blogs and vlogs of the Latinitas members?

RQ10a: What feminist ideologies are expressed?

RQ10b: What traditional ideologies are expressed?

RQ11: How is media consumption expressed in the blogs and vlogs of the Latinitas members?

RQ12: How is media production expressed in the blogs and vlogs of the Latinitas members?

RQ13: How is ethnicity expressed in the blogs and vlogs of the Latinitas members?

RQ13a What acculturation values are expressed?

RQ13b What enculturation values are expressed?

What follows is an explanation of the methodology that the analysis of the blogs and videos will use.

### **Methodology**

The primary methodology that this chapter uses is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis sees language and the texts used in language as the subject of study (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Tonkiss, 1998; van Dijk,

2011). There are various approaches that analysts can take to the study of discourse. For example, a micro-level analysis would focus on word choice, sentence structure, and grammar, while a macro-level analysis examines the ways in which language is used to display instances of such things as community, gender, and identity (Herring, 2004; van Dijk, 2011). Regardless of the level, what separates a discourse analysis from another type of analysis is the importance placed on “language’s central role in social life” (Matheson, 2005, p. 3).

As stated in a previous chapter, discourse is implicated in the construction of identity. That is, acts of discourse can help shape identity. These acts of discourse are constructed via social interactions. As such, a primary assumption that analysts make about discourse is that it is socially constitutive (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Herring, 2011; Machin & Mayr, 2012, van Dijk, 2011). Another assumption that discourse analysts make is that discourse is ideological. Barker and Galasinski (2001, p. 65) wrote: “it is through discourse...that ideologies are formulated, reproduced and reinforced.” As such, much of the macro-level analysis done on discourse focuses on issues related to ideology: issues of power, dominance, and control. Finally, discourse analysts assume that discourse is a system of options (Barker & Galasinski, 2001). That is, when communicating, individuals catalog a range of choices in their heads and choose the way to communicate that they desire. The communicative choices are purposeful. Discourse analysts see value in examining why certain options of communication were chosen over others.

## Research Protocol

While there is no specific way to do discourse analysis (Tonkiss, 1998), I have formulated two rough templates that guided analysis. These templates are based on the types of research questions included in this chapter and the data to be analyzed (see Appendix B).

First, because this project is formulated on identity and identity construction, the analysis will be focused on the macro-level of discourse. That is, I will examine how issues of identity (in the forms of ideology) are expressed through discourse. Barker and Galasinski (2001) suggested that discourse (text) serves three functions: the ideational, the interpersonal, and textual.

The ideational function focuses on the formation of ideas or concepts, the interpersonal on the interactions between speakers, and the textual on the ways in which discourse becomes coherent. Further, Barker and Galasinski (2001) argued that a focus on the first two functions allows for an understanding of discourse on the macro level. They developed a tool-kit that researchers can use to analyze specific discourse texts. Examining each discourse text for the following characteristics actualizes this: process and participant, mood, and modality. My template is based off of these characteristics.

Process refers to what happens in a particular discursive interaction, while participant refers to the individuals involved in the interaction. For example, the following sentence, "I am going to the store," involves the *process* of going to the store by me (the *participant*). Important to the understanding of process is explicating "who is the doer of the action" and "who the action is done to" (Barker &

Galasinski, 2001, p. 74). These two tools allow for an examination of the ideational function of a discursive text.

Mood refers to the tone that someone takes in a discursive text. That is, whether individuals “order, command or request” that someone do something (Barker & Galasinski, 2001, p. 75). The authors established three primary moods that a text can take: declarative, interrogative, and imperative. They stipulated, however, that a researcher might identify other moods.

Finally, modality refers to a speaker’s attitude toward the subject of the discourse. The purpose of this tool is to examine whether a speaker (writer) commits or distances herself from the subject of the discourse. Both mood and modality allow for an examination of the interpersonal function of a discourse text.

Further, in order to fully take into account the differences in the media texts (blogs versus vlogs), I used the works of Herring (2004, 2011) and Machin and Mayr (2012) as guidelines.

### Research Protocol for Blogs

Herring (2007) established guidelines to help in the analysis of computer-mediated discourse (CMD), which she defined as the ways in which people interact with each other via computer. Her approach takes into account certain technical factors inherent in CMD. For example, this type of discourse is typically faster than discourse that is spoken and even discourse that is written (letters or books). CMD allows for individuals to communicate with each other on a mass level instead of just interpersonal. Also, it assumes that discourse participants are always aware of an unseen audience.

CMD is not as “rich” as that which is face-to-face (Herring, 2003, p. 56). In face-to-face discourse, individuals are afforded the ability to see and hear other’s expressions. CMD is mostly reliant on text and, as such, is considered a “lean” medium (Herring, 2003, p. 57).

Also, CMD can be either synchronous or asynchronous, meaning that discursive interactions do not need to take place at the same time. Instant messaging, Herring (2003) wrote, is an example of a CMD that can be both at the same time. If two individuals involved in a discursive action are logged on simultaneously, the interaction is synchronous. If not, then, the next time that an individual logs on, she can read the text and continue with the interaction. As such, turn-taking is important in CMD.

Herring’s (2007) guidelines for the analysis of CMD fell under two factors: the medium and the situation. The medium refers to factors afforded to CMD by the medium in place, i.e., by the technology being used. The situation refers to factors afforded by interaction itself. Herring stated that researchers should examine each discourse for instances of the following medium factors: synchronicity, message transmission, persistence of transcript, size of message buffer, channels of communication, anonymous messaging, private messaging, filtering, quoting, and message format.

Synchronicity refers to whether the interaction is immediate or delayed. Message transmission refers to the level of transmission, that is, on whether each text is transmitted on a line-by-line, message-by-message, or character-by-character basis. Instant messages are usually sent on a line-by-line basis. Persistence of

transcript refers to the length in which individual messages stay in a particular computer system or software program. Facebook, for example, keeps private messages in the system indefinitely.

Size of message buffer refers to the number of characters each message can contain. A tweet on Twitter, for example, is limited to 140 characters. Channel of communication refers to whether there are additional channels displayed with each message, for example, videos or pictures. Anonymous messaging refers to whether systems allow for individuals to respond anonymously. Private messaging refers to whether individuals can respond privately. Filtering refers to whether individuals can filter out (delete) specific parts of a message (or even the whole of the message).

Quoting refers to whether individuals are able to quote others in their message. For example, some discussion boards allow users to simply copy-paste previous discussants' messages and put them into their own discussion board post. The system then automatically puts in the previous discussant's name (or handle) in the message. Finally, message format refers to the order in which messages appear: chronological, by theme, etc.

Herring's (2007) specific situation factors mirror those of Barker and Galinski (2001). For example, she suggested that researchers analyze the tone of a discursive interaction, which is similar to the mood guideline proposed by Barker and Galasinski (2001). However, there were a few factors that proved beneficial for cataloging purposes: participant characteristics and topic. Participant characteristics refer to cataloging the demographic factors of the participants under discussion, and topic refers to cataloging the topic under discussion.

Thus, my analysis used the works outlined above as guidelines for my examination into certain blogs posted by the Latinitas members. The primary purpose of the analysis was to explore whether the bloggers explored the topics of feminism, consumption, production, and ethnicity. What follows is the research protocol used to explore the vlogs hosted by the Latinitas organization.

### Research Protocol for Vlogs

The biggest difference between blogs and vlogs is that the discourse is visual. As such, a fully formed analysis of the vlogs must take into account the multimodal nature of the discourse. Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 6) stated that a multimodal analysis explores how meaning is communicated “not only through language but also through other semiotic modes.”

As stated above, one of the basic assumptions about discourse is that individuals are afforded choices in how they communicate. Language (verbal, written, or visual) can be seen as a set of options. What a multimodal analysis does is explore the meanings behind each language choice. For example, the meaning of an individual choosing to cross her arms as opposed to having them at her side can be indicative of level of comfort. Machin and Mayr (2012) proposed a toolkit that allows for a researcher to examine the choices individuals participating in visual discursive practices take.

A researcher can look at for the following characteristics or instances in visual discourse: objects, settings, salience, gaze, poses, distance, and angle (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Analyzing the objects and settings observed in a visual discursive interaction allows for an understanding of the connotative properties of discourse

(Barthes, 1972). For example, the connotative meaning of an interaction that takes place inside a classroom is different than an interaction taking place in a bar.

Analyzing gaze and poses affords the researcher with, for example, an understanding of the level of comfort of a discourse participant. A person looking down as opposed to at another person can be indicative of discomfort.

Finally, analyzing distance and angle allows the researcher to explore the attitudes that the author of the image (that is, the author/creator) of that image has toward the subject displayed within. For example, if discourse participants are shown at large distances away this can be indicative of dislike.

#### Accounting for Interpretation and Subjectivity

It should be noted that multimodal discourse analysis, like discourse analysis in general, is dependent on interpretation and, as such, is subjective. While subjectivity is inherently part of the process, attempts should be made to ensure that the work meets high-quality standards (Potter, 1996). Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote that those standards should focus on making the work as trustworthy as possible.

The main way of establishing trustworthiness is through triangulation. Jankowski and Webster (1991) identified four possible types of triangulation. There is triangulation of the data, triangulation of the researcher, triangulation of the theory, and triangulation of the method. Data triangulation refers to examining and varying the time, space, and analytical level of the data obtained. Researcher triangulation refers to having more than one researcher analyze the data. Theory



triangulation refers to examining the data by using more than one theory. Finally, method triangulation refers to examining data using various different methods.

Employing triangulation in research affords more valid results. As such, I attempted to make sure that my analysis of the blogs and vlogs employed different methods of triangulation. Data, theory, and method triangulation were used to varying degrees.

Each data set (for both blogs and vlogs) was analyzed numerous times. The analysis was non-consecutive. Also, each data set was analyzed on different levels. That is, data were analyzed once for a general overview, once for answers specific to the research question, and once for answers specific to the methodology. Different literature and theoretical frameworks were also used, e.g., the use of developmental, historical, and socio-cultural theories of identity. Choosing specific methods of discourse analysis constituted attempts to allow for method triangulation. It was assumed that choosing methods particular to the media used would allow for a more focused (and trustworthy) analysis to take place.

In sum, discourse analysis is the primary means by which the blogs and vlogs were analyzed. This is because discourse analysis allows for a fully formed examination of ideology and identity. Also, particular research protocols were established based on the type of discourse and media being analyzed. What follows is my analysis of the vlogs.

### **Discourse Analysis of the Blogs**

At the time I conducted my analysis, there were more than 2,600 individual blog posts on the LasLatinitas site, the first of which was posted in October 2008.

The site also had more than 1,000 registered individuals. In order to blog on the site, girls must register for approval. Registration is restricted by age and gender.

Individuals applying for approval must state that they are female and that they are more than 13 years old. They must also provide actual names (not just a user name) and valid email addresses. The organization's Web master informs girls of approval via email within a few days.

This means that anyone who matches these characteristics—and is approved by the Web master—is able to join and contribute to the site. Thus, the content on the site is not specific to the members of the Latinitas organization. A main tenet of this analysis is to explore the ways in which the girls involved in the organization incorporate in their own media production the issues of identity showcased in the two magazines. As such, certain steps were taken in an attempt to ensure that the blogs analyzed reflected individuals who were (are) more intimately involved with the organization.

An examination of the site revealed that registered users were able to join specific group pages. Presumably, the joining of a particular group meant that individuals were involved in the group's activities. Some groups were reflective of certain activities endorsed by the organization. As stated earlier, the organization hosts various workshops and afterschool programs, which the organization bills as "camps." Thus, there were online groups on the various camps the organization hosts: Body and Soul Camp, Spring Break Camp, Media and Arts Camp, Fashion Forward Camp, etc. The Web site revealed that most camp activities are geared toward girls in elementary or junior high school (4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade; LasLatinitas,

2013). As such, members of these groups who are also able to blog on the site would presumably be between 13 and 14 years old.

The remaining groups were reflective of job titles or positions: a group for Club Leaders and a group for members of the Youth Editorial Advisory Board. The Club Leaders Group is billed by the Web site as catering to “all the young women who serve as Club Leaders for Latinitas After School Clubs in Texas” (MyLatinitas, 2013). Further examination into the site revealed that club leaders consisted of older girls and women (between the ages of 15 and 25) who helped the organization’s founders to carry out various camp and after-school club activities (LasLatinitas, 2013).

The Web site states that members of the Youth Editorial Advisory Board group consist of “young writers ages 13-25 who assist with writing articles for our magazine, and focus on expanding an area of the magazine with their expertise” (MyLatinitas, 2013). Individuals who want to become a part of the board must submit an application to the organization. The application reveals additional requirements for membership. First, and importantly, the individual must commit a minimum of two hours per month to blogging and make a four-month commitment to the organization. She is expected to write either one or two articles for the magazines (one if the board member is in high school and two if the board member is in college) and four blog posts (one per month) for the MyLatinitas Web site.

I used membership in the different types of groups outlined above as my primary guideline for blogs to analyze. I did this because there was some assurance that the group members were in some way involved in the organization and were at

least familiar with the organization's purpose and content (either through the magazines or through exposure at the different workshops and camps).

Thus, a search of the Web sites of all the members of the various camp groups revealed 25 individual bloggers. A search for the Web site of all members of the Club Leaders group revealed 22 individual bloggers. Finally, a search for Web sites of all members of the Youth Editorial Advisory Board revealed 35 bloggers. Before exploring what the analysis of blogs revealed, a general description of the Web sites blogs and their characteristics is required.

#### MyLatinitas Blog Characteristics

As stated earlier, Herring (2007) proposed certain guidelines to help in the analysis of computer-mediated discourse. The medium guidelines focus on technical components of the discourse and tend to feature overall, structural characteristics. Aside from the channels of communication (the characteristic that identifies what other types of discourse are available), my analysis of the blogs revealed no differences in terms of particular blog posts—that is that all the blog posts held the same technical characteristics. An explication of the overall characteristics of the blogs hosted on the MyLatinitas Web site is displayed in Table 9.

The Web page provides a link that takes bloggers to a window where they can post individual blog entries. In that window, bloggers can type in the title of their blog post and then the text itself. Alternatively, they can choose to upload or paste in the text from a word-processing program. Bloggers can also decide to post the entry at the time of completion or pick a future date for the post. They can also choose who gets to read their posts (everyone, just friends, or just the blogger) and

who can comment (respond) on the post (registered members of the site, just friends, or just the blogger).

To reiterate, Herring's (2007) technical classification scheme asks researchers to examine each computer-mediated discursive interaction for the following characteristics: synchronicity, message, transmission, persistence of transcript, size of message buffer, channels of communication, anonymous message, private messaging, filtering, quoting, and message format.

Most blog posts in general are **asynchronous** (Blood, 2004; Davidson & Vaast, 2009; Herring, 2011). The posts housed on the MyLatinitas Web site are no different. What asynchronous blog posts tell us about the nature of discourse is that it is not immediate and that individuals are able to think deliberately about what they write. This implies that messages are purposeful and that the choices that individuals make are meaningful (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

The **message transmission** of the blog posts housed on the Web site was at the level of an individual post—however long that may be. That is, there were no limits on the length (**size of message buffer**) of the post, and bloggers could write as much or as little as they liked. Herring (2007) explained that message transmission and size of message buffer have an impact on the ability of discursive messages to be interactive. If messages are transmitted at the level of line-by-line and are limited to 140 characters (like a tweet), then individuals can more quickly read the message and respond. The level of transmission and the size of the message buffers of Latinitas posts thus imply that interaction was limited and, if it did occur, that it was purposeful.

As stated earlier, the first blog post on MyLatinitas occurred in October 2008, the year the Web site launched. This implies that blog posts are housed on the Web site indefinitely (**persistence of transcript**). The ability to house blog posts indefinitely allows bloggers to re-read past blog entries. Thus, they are able to reflect on what they have written. This can lead to a greater amount of identity exploration and development (Stern, 2008).

At the time of the analysis, the Web site afforded individuals with the ability to upload a singular picture to act as an avatar on their main Web page (most pictures were of themselves). Bloggers were also provided the ability to upload videos. Thus, the **channels of communication** extend to the visual realm. Herring (2007) wrote that discourse that features other channels of communication can offer researchers more information on the demographic characteristics of discourse participants, e.g., gender. While Machin and Mayr (2012) noted that visual discourse is capable of being read semiotically, the latter portion of this chapter will feature a discursive analysis of the videos. The analysis of the photos is housed within the analysis of the group members' blogs.

The Web site does not allow for **anonymous messaging** or **private messaging**. At the time of my analysis, any interaction that occurred between the bloggers and their audiences had to take place in the responses to particular blog posts. Because the blogger had the ability to filter out who got to read and respond to a blog post, she was afforded more control of her audience interaction. The lack of anonymity and the inability to respond privately mean that the interaction is

inherently public, thereby implying that the discourse is purposeful and self-edited (Herring, 2007).

Bloggers can **filter** out passages of posts that they do not like or even delete posts entirely, which means that they have the ability to think about issues of self-presentation (Davis, 2009, 2010). It also means that they have some measure of control over their public image. That is, bloggers can edit out comments and posts that they feel don't represent them accurately or favorably (Mazur & Kozarian, 2010).

The Web site does not allow for **quoting**. While individual bloggers can read other blogs from the site and manually transmit the quotes in their own posts, the lack of the feature on a software level means that they will be less likely to do so (Herring, 2007). This is important as it implies that, again, the level of interactivity between members of the site is lessened.

Finally, the **message format** of the blog posts is in reverse-chronological order. Herring (2007) wrote that message format is indicative of response-level. That is, readers are more likely to read messages that are on top of the queue rather than go back to various pages for other messages. Thus, the fact that the Web site posts messages in reverse-chronological order implies that the readers of the blogs will be kept up-to-date with the blogger's latest discursive interaction.

Bloggers can also choose to tag their posts as falling within certain categories. For example, if a blog post was about a vacation, they could choose the tag the post Vacation. At the time of my analysis, the Web master had catalogued the most popular tags as follows: college (56), school (32), scholarship (31), education

(25), Latinitas (22), Latinas (22), and culture (17). That is, 56 blog posts were catalogued as focusing on college, 32 on school, etc. The tags reflect the mission statement of the organization, which is to enable young Latinas to achieve academic success (LasLatinitas, 2013).

### Summary

An analysis of the general medium characteristics of the blogs hosted on the MyLatinitas Web sites suggests that the computer-mediated discourse is purposeful. The discourse that takes place via the blogs is thought out and readily controlled. This is demonstrated by the asynchronous nature of blogging in general but also, specifically, by the site's lack of anonymous and private messaging. An inability to interact outside of the public eye means that all messages are privy to discernment by that public.

This also implies that the bloggers are readily aware of their audience and consider the way that that audience perceives them. As such, they might be prone to filter out content and carefully choose message topics. That the site doesn't allow for anonymous messaging implies that responses back to individual blog posts are also carefully selected. This leads to diminishing of interaction in general. Other characteristics that imply limited interactions are the level of the message transmission, the size of the message buffer, and quoting.

Finally, the ability of the bloggers to reflect on past posts is heightened by the high degree of persistence of transcript. Because reflection is a primary purpose of blogging and it aids in the quest for identity formation (Davis, 2009, 2010; Stern, 2008), this characteristic of the Latinitas blog is vital to answering the first research



question laid out in this chapter (how the members of the site use the blogs to express issues of identity). Other means of answering that question will be discerned by examining the level of interactivity (Matheson, 2005), the bloggers' awareness of the audience (Stern, 2008), and the purpose of each blog post (Blood, 2004; Davidson & Vaast, 2009).

### MyLatinitas Blogs

An analysis of the medium characteristics of the blogs hosted on the MyLatinitas Web site showcases that interactivity will already be diminished. Therefore, I will pay special attention to it when it does occur. The bloggers' awareness of the audience will be examined by exploring whether the blogger explicitly mentions, questions, or prompts her reader for action. Finally, the purpose of each blog post will address whether the post was used to catalog daily activities, to express an opinion, to influence others to action, or to overtly reflect on issues of identity. Before delving into the analysis of the blogs themselves, an explication of the structure of the analysis is necessary.

As stated earlier, 25 bloggers were found to be part of the various camp groups hosted on the site. An examination of the Web pages of those group members revealed that some of the bloggers were actually younger than the 13 and 14 years of age required. There were examples of blogs that discussed interactions in elementary school and of bloggers identifying their ages as 11 or 12. One blogger described herself as 10 years old. One assumes, then, that camp members were afforded special access to the site—perhaps as part of their camp activities. After all, one of the camps was geared toward Media and Arts. Because of the supposed and

demonstrated differences in ages between members of these groups and those of the club leaders and members of the Youth Editorial Advisory board, the analysis of the blogs by members of the various camp groups was done separately. I expected the content of these blogs to more readily reflect the ideologies and mission statement of the organization—after all, these girls were more likely to be immediately subjected to those ideologies during their camp interactions.

### Camp Member Blogs

After examining the Web pages of the 25 members of the various club groups, I found that only 20 had posted on their blogs. These 20 bloggers accounted for 43 blog posts. Most of the bloggers posted one or two blogs. The blogger with the most posts, Hannah, had five.

The findings of the analysis were categorized in terms of research questions. Thus, attempts were made to separate out the analysis by various themes. That is, self-expression in the blogs, feminist and traditional ideologies in the blogs, production and consumption in the blogs, and ethnicity and ethnic values in the blogs.

### Self-Expression in Club Group Member Blogs

The blog posts were not particularly long in length. The longest blog post was written by Hannah and was three paragraphs (214 words) long. The topics of the blogs were mostly in relation to events going on at camp. For example, Paula wrote: “Today the body and soul camp had a guest speaker. She talked about healthy eating and what types of food are good for you.” There were a few exceptions. Karen, for example, wrote about bullying:

People who bully maybe have been bullied themselves or at home.maybe they have seen their parents arguing and they take out their anger on their children.this causes the children to bully other to take out their anger on violence or words.

Overall, however, the blogs were used as a means to chronicle the events of the day. In fact, all but seven blog posts were used for this purpose. Laura, for example, used her one blog post to talk about education. Karen, mentioned above, used hers to discuss bullying. Esmeralda used one of her two posts to talk about female empowerment, and Hannah used four of her five blog posts to talk about various issues, from a trip she had taken to Jamaica to the fact that she was moving to events occurring in her history class. This leads to an understanding that the primary **purpose** of the blogs by this group of bloggers was to chronicle daily activities. Using blogs for this purpose implies a lower level of **reflection** and self-expression. The beginnings of reflection were found, however. Hannah's blog post about the events going on in her history class illustrates this point. She wrote:

Right now in 4<sup>th</sup> grade we are learning about Texas in the past and I just feel sad. What they say all these things about Mexicans. And my classmate next to me who is also a Latina said "so basically we are just learning about how Mexico is bad." Then she crossed her arms. Me too I have to admit it was getting on my nerves. My teacher said "no." Then my friend rolled her eyes. I like my teacher but I wish we could learn about something different.

The response back to Hannah afforded one of the few instances of **interactivity**. One of the founders of the organization, Alicia, responded back to Hannah by stating:

That is a great point. I totally felt the same way when I took Texas history in school. The Mexicans seemed like such bad guys in the Alamo. It is important to remember that many stories have more than one side. If you go to school in Mexico, you would hear a different story about how this land belongs to

Mexico first. While many of the facts are true, a lot of our books here are told from the perspective of Texans.

Other instances of interactivity focused on telling the bloggers hello or that it was fun to meet them. As such, interactivity as a means of active participation (Matheson, 2005) or engagement with audiences (Stern, 2008) was mostly lacking.

There were only two instances of explicit **audience awareness**. One blogger, Sarah, in describing the events going on at fashion camp, stated: "You would like it." Another, Elizabeth, stated that her readers should make sure to go to the next Spring Break Camp.

As such, these groups of blogs were indicative of nascent levels of reflection and were primarily used to chronicle the events happening at the various camps. What follows is an explication of the ways these set of blogs reflected instances of feminism, production and consumption, and ethnicity. Because there were so few instances of each, they will be discussed collectively.

#### Ideologies in Club Group Member Blogs

Since the blog posts tended to reflect the events going on at camp, most focused on the ideologies promoted by those camps. As such, the two primary ideologies mentioned were Mental and Physical Health and Diet and Body Image. Most blog posts revolved around discussion of going to either the Fashion Forward Camp or the Body and Soul Camp. Most blog posts were similar in tone, and there were few instances where the girls actually did more than simply chronicling the events. Paula wrote about the same guest speaker mentioned above in reference to self-expression, calling her "the food lady." She stated: "she talked about how much

we're eating, what we're eating, how much we're exercising. It was all very interesting. Something I really took away from that: A tortilla is an entire portion!!!!!!”

And Esmeralda wrote about what she learned at Fashion Forward camp before expressing her opinion on the ways in which women are portrayed in the media. She wrote:

Women are so under-portrayed compared to men in the media, film, etc. WOMEN CAN BE LEADERS TOO! No I'm not gonna make you a sandwich, I can be out there doing anything a guy can. For years, women have been portrayed as having to work in the kitchen or doing things for their men. How many female directors have you seen in the film business that are given credit? When have you seen a woman doing a hard labor job such as a mechanic—getting down and dirty working on cars--, a police officer, firefighters, etc.? you don't. If I want to be an engineer, a lawyer, a pilot, a mechanic, gosh darnit I am going to be it! We can do anything a guy can and BETTER.

Her blog post is indicative of talk of female empowerment in general (which will be echoed in the blogs of the other two groups of bloggers) and proves as one of the few instances of talk of media. Some group members took a field trip to a computer store and talked to one of the store's representatives—numerous blog posts reference the trip. However, only one blogger reflects on what she learned. Alexa writes that the trip to the store taught her about the importance of social media and that “social media is how you can communicate and connect with people.” There were no mentions, aside from the one stated above about Texas history, of ethnicity.

### Summary

To reiterate, the blogs mentioned in this section tended to be written by the younger members of the Latinas Web site. These blogs were more readily reflective

of the ideologies espoused by the Latinitas organization. The bloggers, because of their younger age, were not willing to use their blogs as a means of identity exploration and instead mostly used the blogs to catalog events that happened throughout the day. The topics of the blog posts tended to reflect the events going on at camp. That is, if a particular camp group had a guest speaker, various blog posts by different bloggers that were presumably members of that camp group would report the action. If a camp went on an outing, there were corresponding blog posts about that outing. This leads to an understanding that the blogs by members of the camp groups were not used as a means of self-expression and reflection but rather as a depository for the various camp activities.

While there were only a few mentions of either feminist or traditional ideologies, the ideologies tended to mirror the camp activity. That is, if the blog post were about an event going on at the Body and Soul Camp, then it would tend to feature the Mental and Physical Health ideology. This implies that the messages the girls received at the camps were similar to the messages that the girls received via the content of the two online magazines. This also implies that the girls were capable of parroting back the messages (and ideologies) they received. In some instances this mirroring of ideologies featured beginning attempts at reflection. However, for the most parts, the ideologies were reflected back at as given.

There were also very few mentions of production and consumption. However, the blog posts themselves are the most demonstrative example of production. The posts themselves are the productive endeavors.

What follows is the analysis of the rest of the blog posts. The bloggers that wrote these blog posts skewed older and were more erudite in their writing. As such, it is expected that their blogs will focus more on self-reflection and that the blog posts will demonstrate attempts at identity formation.

#### Club Leader and Advisory Board Members Blogs

There were, in total, 57 members of both the Club Leader and Advisory Board Member groups. An examination in the Web pages hosted by these members found that only 30 had posted on their blogs. However, those 30 bloggers accounted for 123 blog posts. Only three members posted singular blog entries. Most posted more than three. The blogger with the most blog entries was Dominique, with 20. The length of the blog entries was also considerably longer than those of the club group members, with most entries being longer than three paragraphs and a few reaching more than 1,000 words.

#### Self-Expression

The **purpose** of the blog posts tended to fall under three main categories: to inform, to express an opinion, or to reflect. It was not uncommon to find a particular blog post that featured all three. There were very few instances where the blogger used a post to simply chronicle events of the day. Blog posts that were used to inform were written as a means to discuss an issue, to inform about a past historical figure or situation, or, less frequently, to announce an event. For example, there were posts with topic titles such as English-Only Laws, The Importance of Cesar Chavez, and Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.

Blog posts used to inform tended to also compel the audience to action. For example, Laura, in reference to the most recent presidential election, wrote that since she is not a U.S. citizen she cannot vote. That, however, should not impede her audience from doing so: "So today, vote for Obama. Vote for marriage equality. Vote for women's health and equal pay. Vote for healthcare. Vote for the dream act. Vote for hope. Faith. Forward." This tendency to address the audience is indicative of the overall **audience awareness** exhibited in the blogs. Most posts tended to either address the audience ("you") or include them in the interaction ("We" and "Us"). Giselle, in writing about what is or is not acceptable behavior for Latinas, stated:

"As Latinas living in the United States, there have most surely been moments where we have experienced the struggle to define what behavior is considered appropriate. The Hispanic culture has very different expectations of women than the American. I am sure most of us can relate to acting a certain way in school, but having been questioned about it at home."

The proclivity toward writing blog entries with the audience in mind is in accordance with the literature on the characteristics of blogs (Davis, 2009, 2010; Stern, 2008) but also might have to do with the fact that the bloggers are members of a Web site that does not afford them much in the way of anonymity (Herring, 2007) and has a particular theme: Latina girls. The awareness of the audience did not, however, translate into much **interactivity**. There was a grand total of 25 comments written in response to blog posts. Most were short interactions that featured generic words of encouragement ("nice post") or were used to state a level of agreement with the blogger. For example, Jessica, in response to a blog post by Dominique about the difficulty of long-term relationships, stated: "I totally



understand the difficulties in a long distance relationship. Trusting the other person is so much harder when you're hundreds of miles away."

In fact, only one instance of the interactivity on the site was as a means to compel conversation and/or debate. This instance is also a prime example of the ways in which the blogs were used to express opinion. One of the bloggers, Taty, wrote a blog post about what she preferred to be called. That is, whether she preferred the term, Latina, Hispanic, or Mexican-American. She stated:

However, I on the other hand, reject the term "Latina." To me a Latina, is someone from Latin/South America and dances Salsa. I am neither. I am first generation Mexican-American. And if you know anything about Mexico is that Salsa is not from there!

There were four responses back to the post. Two were used to state an agreement with Taty. One respondent, Martha, asked her if she liked the term "Chicana." Taty responded by stating:

"According to Mexican-born immigrants, Chicana is a negative term. Under their definition, Chicana is someone who's parents are Mexican and live in the U.S., but has no education or any kind of manners. And usually someone who doesn't want to better their lives."

Essined responded back by saying that she was offended by the blog and Taty's response back to the commentator. She also wrote that, while she understood that Taty was uncomfortable with the term "Latina," she felt that it was a means of inclusion and brought different subgroups together, e.g., Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Colombians. Further, in response to Taty's comment on the term "Chicana," she wrote:

It is up to us to change the definition of Chicano/a for the next generations. Just because I refer to myself as Chicana does not make me ill-mannered or

uneducated. Can you imagine if we were to keep up those misconceptions about our culture? You and I would be afraid to speak Spanish in public and would be afraid to be out in public in general. To that I say: NO GRACIAS.

This interaction afforded the only instance of debate about identity. Which isn't to say that identity and the overt talk about identity was lacking. It was just that that talk was couched in terms of **self-reflection**. As stated earlier, the three main purposes of the blog posts were to inform, to express an opinion (as exemplified by Taty's post), and as a means of reflection. The majority of the posts featured instances of reflection—as indicated by the use of the first-person voice (“Me” and “I”). The topics of these ranged from relationships, to education, to family, and to identity. For example, most of Michelle's seven blog posts were used as a means to catalog her struggle with identity. One post was dedicated to talk of which country she most identified with:

Understanding all the opportunities that I've gotten from this country—education, jobs, and security—I still struggle with which country I identify with the most. I was born here and have built my life in the U.S. but my heart is in Latin America. It's spread across Mexico, reaches the southern cone but lives and breathes in the United States, well, Texas. I identify with being Latin and with people who are Latina but would never change the fact that I was born the States.”

In sum, the posts by these two groups of Latinitas bloggers were used to as a means of self-expression in numerous ways. First, the posts tended to be purposeful. That is, most posts featured specific topics and were used as more than just a means to chronicle the events of the day. Second, the posts reflected a high level of audience awareness. This was indicated in the tendency of the posts to address the audience and include them in the conversation. Also, in accordance with the literature (Herring, 2007; Matheson, 2005), the posts did not feature many

instances of meaningful interactivity. Finally, the posts tended to be means by which the bloggers reflected on their lives and specific aspects of their identity. Whether those aspects of identity mirror those proposed by the ideologies featured in the magazines is examined below.

### Feminist and Traditional Ideologies

The two primary ideologies featured in the blog posts were Education and Other Relationships. Discussion of education tended to focus on the importance of it and the need for the bloggers and their audience to take advantage of it as much as possible. One blogger, Emily, wrote that her father had sacrificed for his education: “my father came to the U.S. from Mexico when he was just 12,” she wrote. “His mother sent him here so that he could have better opportunities. He suffered but he made something of himself.” She went on to state that her father’s dedication to getting an education motivated her own quest for institutional knowledge.

An understanding that the bloggers and their relationships with each other were important drove the focus on Other Relationships. Christina, for example, wrote about what she wanted to do with her life but expressed this in terms that encouraged her fellow Latinas to do the same:

I have finally found my passions: social media and writing. I tried out nearly every option I could think of until I found what really interested me. So do not be scared or worried if you are not sure what you want to do when you get older. Take a bunch of different classes and try volunteering in different industries to find out what you like best. It takes time to figure out what you like but we will all get there!

Michelle echoed that statement by writing that education leads to power and it was through education that Latinas could prosper. She reiterated: “I believe in the empowerment of Hispanics—particularly Hispanic women.”

This mention of empowerment via support was echoed by Sandra, who wrote:

As a common thread, I see that females fail to support one another. I’m not exactly sure why either. We’re so incredibly quick to judge—I know because I do it sometimes. How will we ever overcome *anything* if we fail to support each other? I think it’s time for a change.

Another example would be a post Lorena wrote to inform her audience about an exchange she had with a girl she babysat. She wrote that the girl asked her about what she wanted to be when she grew up. Lorena informed the girl that she, herself, wanted to be an activist and that the girl could be anything she wanted. Lorena wondered if the girl’s parents would “hate” her for turning their daughter into a feminist. However, she wasn’t particularly worried and stated that the best part of her day was when the girl’s mom walked into the house. She wrote that the girl responded by saying: “MOMMY! Miss Lucia is going to fight for women’s rights when she grows up!”

There were a few mentions of traditional ideologies. Three blog posts by three different bloggers were dedicated to talking about romantic relationships (Sex and Romance) and two were dedicated to talking about fashion (Beauty and Fashion). The topics of the posts that featured romantic relationships were questioning the ability to carry on a romantic relationship long distance, to talk about a recent breakup, and to pontificate on whether a relationship was over. One

of the posts about fashion was dedicated to talking about a fashion designer whom the blogger, Jasmine, admired. The other post was dedicated to talking about the dresses that various actresses wore to an awards show.

Overall, however, traditional ideologies were ignored. So, too, were other ideologies I sought to examine, aside from a general theme of education and of other relationships. It should be noted that the talk of other relationships, explained in terms of empowerment and support, was reflected in most of the blog posts. Because the bloggers were generally aware of their audience and because the blog posts were not anonymous but were centered on a common theme -- Latinas -- most blog posts tended to feature a tone of togetherness and inclusion. This was reflected in the ways in which the bloggers also talked about issues of ethnicity.

### Ethnicity

More than two-thirds of the blog posts analyzed featured some talk of ethnicity. Usually, it was mentioned in conjunction with talk of gender. That is, the blog posts tended to feature conversations not on Latinos in general but on Latina women and their experiences. The importance of Latina women as role models was a common theme. For example, Michelle used one of her blog posts to talk about Latinas in politics. She stated that there were instances of Latinas in other countries holding prominent positions of power and urged her readers to emulate their success. Further, she wrote: "Latinas make strong leaders because it's in our blood. We are the neck, shoulders and spine of our family and we strive to become an effect part of our loved one's lives."

The tone of the post was indicative of the general sense of *ethnic pride* that pervaded most talk of ethnicity. That is, ethnic pride was a primary **enculturation** value mentioned in these types of posts. Giselle, in explicating the importance of celebrating traditional Mexican holidays, wrote:

There have been many instances where girls take their Hispanic heritage for granted and try to forget where they came from either because they are embarrassed or, for some reason, ashamed. Be proud who you are, and where you came from because that's how you're going to get places in life.

Two other types of enculturation values that emerged as important were *tradition* and *family*. For example, Kristyn, in writing about the importance of celebrating El Dia De Los Muertos (the Day of the Dead) stated that it was her favorite tradition because “Hispanic culture is extremely family oriented,” and the holiday afforded her the ability to spend time with them. Further, she wrote that the culture created “a great support system for every member of the group” and that no one got “left behind.”

There was also discussion about the importance of specific family members. This is exemplified by Emily’s talk of her father and his sacrifices mentioned above. This is also illustrated by Kristyn’s explications of her mother’s struggles and why she sees her as a role model. She stated that her mother taught her that: “we all make sacrifices that develop into something worthwhile. I am a better person for it.”

Some bloggers struggled with just how much tradition they should implement in their lives. For example, Dominique wrote that she “wasn’t always proud to be a Latina” and that she associated being Latina with “dropping out of school, getting pregnant and living off of food stamps.” It wasn’t until she went to

college and became part of the Latinitas organization as a Club Leader that she started to change her perspective on her culture and its traditions. She wrote that she began to “read beautiful literature about Latina authors” and familiarized herself on the importance of holidays and historical figures. Ultimately, however, most discussion about enculturation values was positive and featured a sense of what Laura termed “Latina Power.”

Talk of **acculturation** tended to revolve around the specifics of growing up in a border state (Texas) or on issues of immigration. Posts mentioning growing up Texas were usually in reference to the specific personality traits afforded to those individuals or described what the experience was like to move away from the town. Giselle wrote that she had “lived between borders” her whole life and that the background led to her “personality and character” being formulated by “a mixture of cultures.” As such, issues of acculturation were never far from her mind.

Laura wrote that she didn’t realize how comfortable it was to “live in a world where mostly everyone else was of Hispanic descent.” Moving away for college proved to be a “culture shock.” Further, she wrote that she “was able to really appreciate my culture” by moving away and used that time to learn about Mexican and Latin American History.

Posts that featured acculturation were also couched in terms of issues of immigration. There were posts that protested the word itself. Giselle wrote: “I think nowadays people associate the word ‘immigrant’ with ‘undocumented’ and ‘undocumented’ with ‘bad.’” There were also posts that explained the ways in which current U.S. immigration laws are affecting children. Samantha wrote that children

are “negatively being affected by their own status as immigrants, legal or not legal” and that there is a “great sense of fear of deportation for themselves and their parents alike.” Further, she wrote of the conversation she had with a child that prompted her post:

The conversation went a little something like this:  
 Me: Hi, What’s your name?  
 Her: Flor  
 Me: Flor, how old are you?  
 Her: I’m 7 years old.  
 Me: You just moved here, do you like your new school?  
 Her: Ummm...Yes, but I wish I were still in Argentina.  
 Me: What, why?  
 Her: Well, because I’m an immigrant.

She stated that the conversation so disturbed her that she had to post about it and to make sure that her readers understood that immigration affects more than just the general Latino population.

In summary, most of the blog posts analyzed featured some mention of ethnicity. These mentions of ethnicity were framed in terms of a general sense of ethnic pride, and of the importance of the values of tradition and family. Also, acculturation was demonstrated by discussion of living in Texas and on issues of immigration. What follows, then, is an analysis of the way the blogs mentioned the media and issues of production and consumption.

### Media, Production, and Consumption

Literature on girl studies states that media production and active consumption afford girls with a sense of agency (Kearney, 2006). As such, it was necessary to analyze whether and how the two topics were discussed in the blogs. There were very few mentions of production and consumption. When the issues



were discussed, they were usually in conjunction with a particular media product that the blogger enjoyed. Jasmine, for example, wrote that she really liked the movie *This is War* because it featured the actress Reese Witherspoon. Lucia wrote that when she was younger she “wasn’t listening to the Spice Girls” but was instead a fan of the music of The Beatles. There were, however, two times in which there was a general critique and analysis of media products—that is, **active consumption**.

Samantha wrote a post that critiqued the television show starring Latino actor George Lopez. She wrote that George’s mother on the show was portrayed stereotypically as “always drinking” and “meddling,” but that the humor did afford certain instances of reflection. Ultimately, she stated that even with the negative stereotypes the show was helpful to the promotion of Latino representation in the media.

The other analysis was on the ways in commercials targeted Latina women. Jasmine, who provided the analysis, stated that commercials reflected Latina women as “being vulnerable” and dependent on men. She wrote that there needed to be “a greater awareness of how women are portrayed in the media.”

The main way that **production** was shown in the blogs was via the blog posts themselves. However, there were two instances in which the bloggers used the blog to showcase creative endeavors. Both were written by the same blogger, Angela. One poem spoke of status as “mixed”:

Yo soy Morena-clara  
 I am in the middle of the spectrum  
 Between dark cocoa and light vanilla skin.  
 I am caramel mocha.

The other she titled as a “Poem on Feminism.” She wrote:

I am not an object  
 I am not some toy you can play with  
 I am not some flower you can display in a vase  
 I am not an animal you can cage in.  
 It may be easy for you too look at me as just a piece of meat  
 However I have more honor than that, I have dignity.  
 Unless I consent, please move on.  
 I am not a challenge or a future conquest.  
 Please don't honk at me or whistle or leer,  
 that's just rude, and I am not in the mood.  
 I'm not wearing a steak on my shirt or  
 trying to get your attention.  
 This may be a free country,  
 but when your looks and stares  
 make me fear walking the streets alone  
 don't even dare.  
 I don't know you, I don't care,  
 try and intimidate me if you dare.  
 I will stand my ground and yell back loud:  
 I AM NOT AN OBJECT!

The few mentions of production and consumption were reflective of the overall purpose of the blog in general. That is, the blog was themed to talk about issues of Latina identity. When consumption was mentioned, it was either to talk about a movie or television show. Instances of active consumption and of productive endeavors (aside from the blog posts themselves) were limited.

### Summary

In general, the blogs written by the members of both the Club Leaders Group and the Youth Advisory Board group were purposeful and themed. There was an awareness of the audience that was reflected in the ways in which the posts were written (“You” and “We”). Interactivity was limited by the characteristics of blogging in general. There were also various instances of self-reflection—a few of which resulted in overt examinations of identity.

Discussion of feminism was mostly structured in terms of support and empowerment, although mentions of the feminist ideologies of Education and Other Relationships were filtered throughout. There were very few mentions of traditional ideologies.

Ethnicity and conversation about ethnicity pervaded the blog posts. Most of discussion was themed in terms of Latina role models, ethnic pride, and of appreciation for cultural traditions and family. Acculturation was framed in terms of the value of living in a border state and in terms of immigration. The following analysis will explore the themes of self-expression, feminism, ethnicity, and media production and consumption found in the videos housed on the site.

### **Discourse Analysis of the Videos**

At the time of the analysis, there were 98 videos posted on the site. After removing videos that were uploaded by the founders of the organization and videos that were not original content, 53 remained. Videos could be searched for by popularity, date, or the name of the uploader. The uploaders could also title the videos and give them brief descriptions. Each video was analyzed for the specific characteristics set up by Barker and Galasinski (2001)—process, participant, mood, and modality. However, in order to account for the multimodal nature of the discourse, guidelines set up by Machin and Mayr (2012) were also used. Thus, each video was also analyzed in terms of the following characteristics: objects and settings found in the video, the gaze and pose of subject participants, and the distance and angle of the camera shots.

### Self-Expression

Self-expression was demonstrated differently in the videos than in the blogs. Literature suggests that if the videos were used as vlogs (as video logs or video diaries), then the means of expression between the two media would be similar (there would be instances of reflection and interactivity) and the subject of those videos would be the video uploaders themselves (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2013). What soon became apparent upon analysis of the videos hosted on the MyLatinitas Web site is that the videos were more likely than not to be byproducts of the interactions going on at the various camps the organization hosts. That is, they were uploaded onto the Web site, not as a personal means of expression, but more as work product used at the camp.

There were a few exceptions. All three videos uploaded by Maya and one video uploaded by Andrea were characterized as vlogs. In agreement with the literature (Morris, 2008), these videos featured self-reflection. Andrea, for example, used her video to talk about her college experience. The video was shot in her dorm room—she stated as much—and featured her talking to the camera about her conflicted feelings on college. While she enjoyed college, she missed home. Although she didn't explicitly address her audience, she did talk to them and looked directly at the camera.

Maya spent two of her videos expressing her admiration for the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. She stated that when she first heard about Frida, she didn't know whether she liked her or not. She said: "I remember when I was young. I remember seeing this woman with a mustache and one eyebrow and I thought, 'ugh, who

would like that?” However, she changed her mind and spent the two videos reflecting that Frida is not only a role model for her as an artist, but also as a “Mexican woman.”

The third video uploaded by Maya started out like a typical vlog (her speaking in front of a computer camera), but soon ventured into a performance piece. The video started by Maya, dressed in a scarf and glasses, talking about how she wanted to be a role model for her Latina students (Maya was a Club Leader). It then shifted into her talking about the problems inherent in how Latinas are seen in the media. Maya stated: “I see such a problem and a stigma attached to being a Latina.” The video then cut to Maya without the scarf, glasses, or a shirt (bra only). She stated: “We’re seen as these sensual beings.” The video then cut back to Maya wearing her original clothing and concluding, “but that’s not all we are.”

Overall, however, the videos did not feature moments of interaction between the video uploader and audience or the camera. In fact, aside from the four videos mentioned above, there was only one instance of the video uploader appearing on camera and addressing the audience. The topic of the video, according to the topic title and description, was to catalog a talk that the video uploader gave elementary school students who were a part of an afterschool program hosted by the organization. The uploader, Anna, addressed the audience in the beginning of the video. She announced that she was at the school to teach the girls to be “really strong, powerful women.” The video then cut to various young girls commenting on the importance of education.

Because the videos were used more as byproducts of camp activities, the analysis will shift first to mentions of production and consumption.

### Production and Consumption

Most videos uploaded on the site were either used to catalog various interviews that the camp members enacted, to document camp activities, or were short clips and promos about the Latinitas organization produced by the video uploaders.

*Interview videos* featured the Latinitas camp members (on camera or off) asking interview subjects various questions. That is, the videos were used as a means to practice interview techniques. A few of the videos that did feature the girls on camera showcased them fumbling with the microphone or looking down instead of at the camera. Some questions were asked numerous times, and most questions tended to be straightforward.

The subjects of the interviews (the persons interviewed) were mostly members of various music groups, teachers, or, in one instance, the Latino owners of a local (Austin) burger restaurant. As such, what the subjects said was not a primary concern. Most of the questions were along the lines of: “what’s your favorite band?” and “how long did it take you to learn to play the guitar?”

It should also be noted that the videos did not feature much, if any, editing, and no videos used to interview featured special lighting. Thus, the primary purpose of the interview videos was to chronicle the interviewing techniques used by the camp members and, perhaps, to familiarize the camp members with asking questions on camera.

### Documenting Camp Activities

Another main way the videos were used was to document various camp activities. Videos were used to chronicle things like a fashion show or plays that the camp members put on. Five videos featured the camp members putting on mock talk shows, and one featured the girls putting on a mock news show. The talk show videos showcased the girls sitting on stools side-by-side and being interviewed by other girls. The questions, again, were not of primary concern and were such things as “what’s your favorite color?” or “how are you doing?” What was important was the ways in which the girls presented themselves on camera.

One of the videos featured three girls sitting side-by-side. One of the girls was dressed as a rapper—indicated by her backwards baseball cap; one as a robber—indicated by the handkerchief worn over her face; and one as a princess—indicated by the plastic crown and feature boa the girl wore. The girl dressed as a rapper sat leaning back, with her legs spread and an arm hanging over the back of her chair. The girl dressed as a robber sat leaning back with her arms crossed and a menacing expression on her face. Finally, the girl dressed as a princess sat up straight with her legs crossed and her arms on her lap. The rapper was the most talkative of the bunch and looked at both the interviewer and at the audience. The robber did not say much but spent her time looking at the audience and the camera. The princess, however, was the least talkative of the bunch and spent her time looking down at her lap—she was soon replaced by another girl wearing the exact same outfit. The demonstrated behavior of each type of participant is indicative of the girl’s level of awareness of media—it is indicative of media consumption and

awareness of media representation. The rapper was much more assured, the robber was much more quiet, and the princess acted as one would expect princesses to act.

The video of the mock news show was one of the few instances where setting, props, editing techniques, and sound became relevant. The video featured two girls sitting in front of a table (the stand-in for the news desk). The girls were dressed in blazers and were holding sheets of paper. The video began with the sound of the telegraph. One of the girls began the newscast by stating "This is Blue Bonnet News." She then stated what the "top new stories" were. Once she was done talking, the second girl began her conversation about the top sports stories. Once she was done she stated, "and now, the weather." The camera cut to another girl, also in a blazer, standing in front of a whiteboard with drawing of the sky and the sun. That girl then stated the weather report. Once the segment was over, the video cut to three other sets of girls doing the same exact thing. That is, wearing the blazers, holding the sheets of paper, and reading the news.

#### Clips or Promos

Finally, the videos were used as a means of promoting the organization. This, then, is where the uploaders themselves showcased their production skills. One uploader, Brooke, was responsible for four. The videos featured Brooke experimenting with what she called stop-motion animation. However, the inanimate objects being moved were actually the girls themselves. That is, she was really experimenting with editing techniques. These videos featured various members of the organization in groups where they appeared relaxed or laughing. Upbeat music



played, and either text or a voiceover appeared that prompted girls to join the camp and its various activities.

Most other videos used to promote the organization were similar in tone. That is, they featured Latina girls laughing and looking like they were having fun, upbeat music, and an urging to become involved. For example, one video featured both live-action and pictures of the girls. The video and pictures showcased the girls in groups, laughing, and interacting with each other. The video then cut to scrolling text and a voiceover that stated, "She will make a difference." The video then cut to more pictures and/or videos of the girls: "She is the future." Then another cut to pictures and/or video: "We are Latinitas. Volunteer. Donate."

Because the videos were primarily used for the reasons mentioned above (interviewing, documenting camp activities, and as clips and promos), and because what was asked and said was not of primary concern, there were very few mentions of ideology and ethnicity. In fact, there were only two overt examples.

#### Ideologies and Ethnicity

The first was actually an instance of one of the mock talk shows the organization put on. This one, however, featured guest speakers and hosts who were older, and the questions were purposeful. The "host" of the show began by stating that the topic of the show would be "Is Peer Pressure Good or Bad?" She then introduced the three talk show participants. The participants walked on "stage" and sat down in chairs. The host then asked the first participant the peer pressure question. The participant stated that she had felt "peer pressure to do drugs but I didn't listen." The host then asked the second participant whether peer pressure

affected body image. The participant responded that peer pressure usually had a negative effect on body image -- "how girls feel about their own bodies." Finally, the host asked the third girl how she felt about her body. The girl responded: "I feel fairly confident. Thankfully, though organizations like Latinitas, I feel more positive about my body." This, then, was one of the only instances where a particular ideology was mentioned (Diet and Body Image).

The other, mentioned above as an example Ana talking to the camera, made reference to the importance of Education. After Ana's introduction, the video cut to various girls talking about why they chose to participate in the afterschool program. The girls said they joined because they wanted to learn about how to get in to college.

The second overt example was a chronicling of a play that members of the organization put on. One of the girls wrote the script and had other members of the camp act it out. The basic premise of the play was that the girl was transported back in time to talk to various important Latino figures. The girl first met with Cortes (another girl who was dressed as the explorer), then with an Indian woman (as indicated by the "actress's" headdress), and finally with Isabel Allende. Although ethnicity was not mentioned, the fact that the girl chose to focus the script on important Latino figures is indicative of talk of ethnicity. In general, however, talk of ideology and ethnicity was mostly absent in the videos analyzed.

In summary, the videos analyzed were not used as a means of self-expression or as a means to talk about ideologies or ethnicity. Instead, the videos were used to showcase the ways in which the camp members learned about media and media

production. Some videos were also used to showcase the productive endeavors of the uploaders.

### **Summary**

This chapter has explored some of the media products housed on the MyLatinitas Web site. The purpose of this exploration was to examine the ways in which the blogs and videos housed on the site were used to discuss issues of identity. Particular attention was paid to the ways in which those discussions of identity mirrored and contrasted with the ideologies mentioned in the two online magazines.

In order to guide the analysis of the blogs, an overall examination of blog characteristics was conducted. This examination allowed for an understanding of the ways in which technology influenced how talk of identity would be directed. That is, the talk of identity was purposeful and the blogs reflected an awareness of the audience. This had implications for how identity was discussed. Thus, there were very few instances where identity was seen as a struggle. Instead, blog posts by the members of the Club Leader Group and the Youth Advisory Broad group featured thought-out and developed topics that were used to inform or state an opinion. Instances of reflection also tended to be fully developed, and few featured stream-of-consciousness or half-finished thoughts. Those that did were mostly written by the younger bloggers (members of the camp groups).

In terms of the ideologies mentioned, the blogs were lacking in most. The blogs by members of the various camp groups featured feminist ideologies parroting the topics of the camps. That is, posts by members of the Body and Soul

camp featured the Mental and Physical Health ideology, and posts by members Fashion Forward Camp featured the Diet and Body Image ideology. There were no instances of specific traditional ideologies.

The most prominent feminist ideologies featured in the blogs by members of the Club Leader and Youth Advisory Board groups were Education and Other Relationships. Those two ideologies aside, most talk of feminism was general and was conveyed by talk of empowerment and support. Specific traditional ideologies were not prominent.

The blogs did not prominently feature discussion of consumption or production. Consumption was discussed rarely and mostly in terms of passive consumption—although the few examples of active consumption in the terms of engagement with the media were explained. There was no talk of production in the blogs. The blogs themselves were the products. Production in terms of other creative endeavors was only featured twice—as poems.

The biggest difference between the ways the blogs conveyed issues of identity and the ways in which the magazines did so was in talk of ethnicity. While the magazines and the blogs posts by the camp group members featured few mentions of ethnicity, it was prominent in the rest of the blog posts. Discussion revolved around ethnicity in general but also was expressed in terms of the specific enculturation values of ethnic pride, a focus on tradition, and family. Acculturation values were framed in terms of discussion of living in a border state and in a focus on immigration.

The analysis of the videos revealed that most were not used as a means of self-expression and to talk about issues of identity but were instead used as a means to convey the productive endeavors of both the video uploaders and of the camp members. The videos were productivity in action and their examination afforded an understanding of how the video uploaders and the camp members were learning about the media. Production and consumption were not discussed. There were also only a few instances of the videos featuring ideologies and discussion of ethnicity.

The analysis of some of the blogs and videos housed on the MyLatinitas Web site showcased the productive endeavors of its members. The analysis afforded an understanding of the ways in which technology influences how identity is discussed. Finally, the analysis showcased both differences and similarities between the two online magazines and the blogs and videos.

Table 9. Medium characteristics of the MyLatinitas Blogs

Medium Characteristics	MyLatinitas Blogs
Synchronicity	Asynchronous
Message transmission	Multi-paragraph
Persistence of transcript	Indefinite
Size of message buffer	Indefinite
Channels of communication	Text, visual
Anonymous messaging	Not Applicable
Private messaging	Not Applicable
Filtering	Individual posts and whole messages
Quoting	Not Applicable
Message Format	Reverse-chronological, Tags

Source: Herring, S. C. (2007). A faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse. *Language@ Internet*, 4(1), 1-37.

## CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of this dissertation was to examine issues of identity. This was done by exploring the ideologies and discourses inherent in the media products of the Latinitas organization. The choice of the organization was not random. That is, the organization's stated focus on ethnicity, gender, and media production aligned with literature on the importance of gender and ethnic identities to modern conceptualizations of self (During, 2005) and with literature that stated that engagement with, and production of, media potentially affords individuals agency (Harris, 2004; Kearney, 2006). What follows is an explication of the ways each part of the dissertation helped to formulate the analysis of the media products of the organization.

### **Theory and Literature**

This examination of the media products as examples of identity construction would not have been possible without a thorough exploration into how identity itself has been conceptualized. Notions of identity were conceptualized as falling under three different but interconnected schools of thought: developmental, historical (as actualized by discourse theory), and socio-cultural. All three contributed to my overall understanding of identity, but also to the ways in which my project was conceived and executed.

My project's focus on adolescence was justified in part by the developmental view on identity. This view sees adolescence as a crucial time in the identity formation process (Erikson, 1968). In fact, it is during adolescence that identity is

truly established. The developmental view of identity also showcased the importance of exploration. The focus on exploration as a means of identity formation helped further enhance my understanding of the blogs in general. Also, it helped in my analysis of the discourse of the blogs as a means of self-expression.

The historical point of view on identity contributed to my understanding that identity is a reflection of the time one lives in as well as of the social factors that are in place—it is socially constructed. The understanding that identity is a social construct permeated the whole of the dissertation. If identity were not socially constructed then any analysis into media products to discern identity formation would be mostly irrelevant and the ability to read media products for instances of identity formation would be highly diminished. Also, and importantly, the historical point of view on identity provided an understanding of discourse and its relevance to identity formation. That is, that identity is constructed via discourse and that individuals are subject to specific dominant discourses. As such, my analysis of the blogs and videos consisted of examining the discourses inherent within both types of media products.

The socio-cultural point of view, couched in terms of cultural studies, proved to be the most influential to my understanding of identity and to the ways in which the project was executed. From it came the importance of ideology, agency, and, consumption.

I came to understand that, like dominant discourses, ideologies were capable of situating individuals into certain subject positions. The idea that media were purveyors of ideology was key. Media are capable of constricting individuals within



specific ideologies. The two magazines housed by the Latinitas organization are media infused with ideologies. Thus, the ways in which the magazines conceptualized issues of identity was paramount. As such, my analysis into the content of the two online magazines was filtered through an examination of ideologies.

From the socio-cultural point of view also came awareness for what people do with media and what media do to people. That is, media constrict individuals within specific ideologies. Agency is afforded in those instances where individuals can interact with the media product. This was couched in the literature as resistance to dominant ideologies by either negotiated or oppositional readings of a media text (Hall, 1980). The focus on how consumption was talked about in the magazines, blogs, and videos was partially influenced by this understanding.

Cultural studies also contributed to my understanding of the importance of border studies. That is, the acknowledgment that the way in which people living on the borders of society constructs identities is unique. Aside from being relevant to me personally, I was able to use my understanding of border studies to further illuminate the ways in which the bloggers talked about ethnic identity. Much of the talk on ethnic identity in the blogs of the club leaders and youth advisory board members was filtered through what it meant to live between two worlds, two cultures, and two sets of traditions and values. The analysis of the discourse of the blogs was done with this understanding in mind.

In line with what the three schools of thought afforded me, I also understood the importance of girlhood as a crucial time for identity formation. Literature states

that girlhood has been commodified (Durham, 2004; Harris, 2004). Media have couched resistance to dominant ideologies that situate girls as weak through terms like “girl power” (Harris, 2004). This empty form of empowerment could only be negated by either active consumption or production (Kearney, 2006).

Thus, the literature on identity writ large and in terms of ethnicity and gender allowed for a better understanding of the ways in which identity is constructed and helped to clarify the questions that this dissertation asked.

### **Analysis of the Magazines**

The analysis of some of the media products housed on the Latinitas Web sites was done in two parts. The first part was a content analysis of the two online magazines. The Latinitas organization bills itself as promoting media education among Latina girls. The focus is not just on girls, but also on Latinas. The organization’s Web site states that Latina girls are “more likely than their non-Hispanic peers to face the four most serious threats to achieving success: depression, pregnancy, substance abuse and becoming a high school drop out” (LasLatinitas, 2013). Also, the Web site states that the solution to this is to help “Latinas discover their voice” (LasLatinitas, 2013). Presumably, this discovery comes via the means of exploring issues important to their ethnic identity.

The results of the analysis showcased that ethnic identity was seldom talked about. Without actually talking to the founders of the organization to garner intent, learning the true motivations and reasons for why the talk of ethnicity was so diminished is not possible. What is known is that the findings reflected a primary focus on feminism and on feminist ideologies.

What this implies is that the organization's intent and focus were more clearly in line with that of the organizations mentioned in the literature review on girl studies. The literature on girl studies (Kearney, 2006) situates media education programs for girls as focused on issues like active media consumption and media production. The theorists state that it is active consumption and production that girls are able to "jam" culture and resist the dominant ideologies afforded to them by the mainstream media. Kearney (2006), for example, wrote of the ways that some girls use fan-made magazines (or 'zines) to directly oppose the ideologies found in mainstream teen magazines targeted for girls. In this sense, the Latinitas organization was successful. Feminist ideologies were mentioned much more frequently than traditional ideologies in the magazines. While production and active consumption were rarely mentioned in the magazines, this can be attributed to the fact that the various afterschool programs and camps were responsible for those endeavors.

The analysis of the content of the magazines was also done to be able to determine what, if any, ideologies were picked up by the girls in their own writings. That is, whether ideologies established by the media producers were internalized by the media consumers. Again, because no actual interviews or participants observations occurred, determination of intent and of the thoughts and feelings of the girls was not possible. However, by examining a portion of the girls' media production, some understanding of what aspects of gender and ethnic identity were important to the girls was discerned. So, too, was the ability to explore the role that media consumption and production had in their identity-formation process.

### **Analysis of the Blogs and Videos**

The analysis of the blogs was first broken down in terms of analysis of overall blog characteristics. What that analysis revealed is that blogs are mostly used as vehicles of self-expression that afford bloggers the ability to test out various components of identity (Stern, 2008). The blog characteristics of the MyLatinitas blog also indicated that anonymity was diminished. This meant that the blogs themselves would inherently be more purposeful in intent and suggested that bloggers would be more aware of their audience. The findings of the analysis of the blogs revealed this to be the case. That is that, aside from the blogs by the girls who were members of the various camp groups, the particular blog posts were used as a means of stating opinion, information, and self-reflection. Even in those instances where the blogs were used to reflect, the particular make-up (grammar and style) of the blog posts was well defined.

The bloggers who were members of the various camp groups were different. They were presumably younger in age and their blog posts were used mostly to chronicle the daily activities that they had completed in camps. Also, like the videos hosted on the site, the blog posts could be read as more of a byproduct of the camp activities. While the ideologies (both feminist and traditional) exhibited in their blogs posts were few, they were specific and tended to reflect the ideologies showcased in the camps. As such, this demonstrates an instance where message sent is message received. That is, where the ideologies exhibited in the magazines were reflected in the bloggers own work.

The rest of the blogs analyzed were by members of the Club Leader and Youth Advisory Board groups. There were only a few mentions of traditional ideologies and only two types of feminist ideologies were noticeably featured. A prominent feminist ideology that carried over from the magazines into the blogs was Education. This was also the only feminist ideology that I added to the list. That is, the ideology of education was not featured in the original types of feminist ideologies proposed by Peirce (1990) or in the updated list of feminist ideologies used by Davalos et al. (2007) to conduct their content analysis of women's magazines. That Education would be prominently featured is not surprising since it is one of the stated purposes of the organization.

The other feminist ideology that carried over from the magazines was a focus on Other Relationships, that is, on friendships or relationships that were not family related. This was framed in the blog posts by a tone of inclusiveness and of a general sense of empowerment. By inclusivity, I mean the sense of the girls belonging to a welcoming group that encouraged success and positivity. The concept of empowerment was also one of the stated purposes of the organization. As mentioned above in relation to ethnicity, the organization's Web site states that Latinas face specific trials. The organization aims at helping the girls through education and by "empowering these young Latinas" (LasLatinitas, 2013). However, aside from talk of empowerment, the word had a murky definition and was not actualized in the blog posts as anything other than positive energy and the promotion of women being able to achieve what they set out to achieve.

That these two concepts (Education and empowerment) were the most prominently featured in the blogs speaks to the power of the organization to promote specific ideologies. That is, the content of the magazines was infused with the ideologies of the organization. The content of the blogs reflected these specific ideologies. As such, in this instance, message sent could be read as message received.

As stated earlier, the magazines featured almost no talk of ethnicity. As such, ideologies about ethnicity were not infused in the content of the magazines. The blogs, however, noticeably featured ethnicity discourse. In fact, the blogs by this group of bloggers proved the only instance where Latina girls talked prominently about ethnicity. What this demonstrates is that, when left to their own devices, the girls were able to explore identity on their own and talk about the aspect of identity that interested them. This is in reflection to the literature that states that ethnic identity is an important, if not *the* most important, identity of Latinas (Pizarro & Vera, 2001; Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). The blogs by this group of bloggers was also the only place where identity exploration was exemplified (Prensky, 2006; Tapscott, 2009).

The videos, like the blogs by the members of the various camp groups, were mostly used to showcase the work product of the camp participants. As such, they are indicative of the way the organization is promoting active consumption and production. That is, one of the stated purposes of the organization is to promote media education. Media education for girls is done mostly through engagement with media and with a hands-on approach to media production (Harris, 2004; 2008).

That the videos were mostly used as a means to convey the media production of the organization's camp members showcases the success of the organization in this endeavor.

In summary, the analysis of the content of the two magazines afforded me an understanding of the ideologies found in the magazines. It illustrated the ways in which feminist ideologies were prominently featured and the ways in which talk of ethnicity was mostly ignored. While talk of production and consumption was also diminished, this was rationalized by a belief that most talk of the concepts would be carried out at the various workshops and camps hosted by the organization. The blog posts by members of the various camp groups and most of the videos helped further this understanding, as most were tangible evidence of that work.

The blogs by the members of the Club Leader group and members of the Youth Advisory Board group afforded the only prominent instance where ethnicity was mentioned. This corresponds with literature that situates blogs as technology that affords self-expression and the capacity for identity formation (Davis, 2009, 2010; Stern, 2008). That this was the only instance where ethnicity was prominent also showcases that the organization's message in regards to ethnicity is not yet fully formed and/or executed. That is, the organization purports to empower Latina youth. The analysis of the magazines, blogs, and videos demonstrates some measure of success in terms of feminist ideologies, empowerment, and production. The same analysis also showcases the lack of success in terms of ethnicity.

### **General Observations, Limitations, and Future Studies**

My initial interest in the Latinitas organization was personal. I saw myself in the members of the organization. The information that I initially gathered about the organization led me to conclude that more likely than not most of the members were Mexican or first/second-generation Mexican-American. I came to this conclusion for numerous reasons. First, as stated in the introductory chapter, Latinos account for more than 16 percent of the U.S. population— of that 16%, about two-thirds identify Mexico as their country of origin. Second, the percentage of Latinos that identify Mexico as their country of origin increases to more than 90 percent when referring to Latinos living in Texas (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2012). Third, of that 90%, close to 35 percent are foreign-born. That is, more than a third of the Latinos living in Texas were not born in the United States. However, the close proximity to the border meant that the ties to Mexico were stronger. In short, the members of the Latinitas organization are a lot like me.

As such they are subject to the same risk factors that I am subject to as well. For example, Mexican-American and Mexican girls living in this country have the highest teen pregnancy rate of any group (Richardson & Nuru-Jeter, 2012). They are affected by teen pregnancy at a rate that is more than three times of White teens and more than twice of all teens in general. Studies have shown that some of the reasons for this high teen pregnancy rate among this group can be attributed to enculturation factors, e.g., religious beliefs and cultural values (Cardoza et. al, 2012).

Another example comes from education. Latinos in general are more likely than any other ethnic/racial group living in this country to drop out of high school



(Fry, 2010). More than 37 percent of Latinos who enroll in high school drop out. Comparatively, about 10 percent of Caucasians enrolled in high school drop out and about 18 percent of African-Americans. The number is actually higher among Latinos not born in this country; they have a 52% drop-out rate.

The Latinitas organization's focus on media education for Latina girls is important for the reasons outlined above. The members of the organization are part of the fastest-growing minority group in the country (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2012); they are also subject to numerous risk factors, some of which the organization tries to address. The focus of this project was to examine identity formation. A byproduct of that examination allowed for an understanding of the ideologies and markers of ethnicity that the organization privileged. As stated in my content analysis chapter and reinforced in my discourse analysis chapter, the organization is the most successful in promoting education as important and is more successful in talking about issues of gender rather than in issues of ethnicity/race. The lack of focus on ethnicity/race is troubling and should be addressed.

Further examination into the organization, along with understanding gained from the literature, will be used as a framework for my future academic goals. This project, aside from allowing me to examine issues of identity, served as my first foray into exploring how others have approached media education for Latina girls. I would like one day to start an organization like Latinitas. An organization that caters to women and girls, that promotes media education via production, and that allows girls to question and explore issues of identity. The insights garnered from this

project will hopefully help in honing in on the importance of ethnicity/race to any future organizational framework. To reiterate, this project focused on the media works housed on the Latinitas Web site. While this allowed for an examination of the ideologies and dominant discourses read from the products, there were limitations.

The primary limitation of this study was that it was restricted to analysis of text. While the analyses of text via content analysis and discourse analysis provided a focused view on the ways in which ideologies about gender and ethnicity were constructed through the media products of the organization, they were unable to garner intent. As such, proposed future methods of study would be interviews and participant observations. Interviewing the founders of the organization would afford an understanding about the conceptualization of the organization and its stated purposes. The interviews would provide a means by which to discern the ways in which the founders planned on putting those purposes into action. That is, the interviews would showcase more readily the mission statement of the organization.

Participant observations could then be conducted on the various camp groups and activities in order to discern success in terms of mission statement purpose. These observations would be aided by interviewing the camp group members and leaders. An examination into how the camp groups are structured and the interactions that occur at various camp activities would provide insight into the success (or lack thereof) of the organization's philosophies, ideologies and mission statement. Both participant observations and interviews would also

provide a means by which to examine more readily how the club leaders and club members of the camp groups formulate identity.

The discourse analysis into the blogs revealed a difference in terms of blog use between the younger members (the bloggers who were members of the camp groups) and the older ones (the bloggers who were members of the Club Leader and Youth Advisory Board groups). The younger members used the blogs mostly to chronicle camp activities while the older ones used the blogs as means of self-expression and, thus, identity exploration and formulation. A primary question that could be answered via participant observation and interviews of the various camp activities would be the ways in which these differences are played out in actuality. That is, are the younger members less capable of formulating own concepts of identity, and do they rely more readily on the ideologies of the organization? Also, are older members (the club leaders) more capable of discerning ideologies proposed by the organization, and do they demonstrate capacity to resist those ideologies?

Future studies into the organization would primarily be focused on answering the questions that other research methods and methodologies would provide. However, aside from just the differences in methods and methodology, future studies would also allow different questions to be asked. For example, participant observations and interviews would allow for an ability to explore the degree to which the role that individuals play in the afterschool programs, camps, etc., contributes to the identity-formation process. That is, whether an individual's

status as club leader, blogger, or club member contributes to her understanding of identity and her articulation of specific ideologies.

In summary, there is a clear divide in literature on Latina girls. The literature is either focused on issues of ethnicity (actualized by concepts like border studies, nationality, and acculturation/enculturation) or on gender (actualized in girl studies by the focus on girls as critical consumers and producers). There are only a few studies (outside of exploration of risk factors) that focus on the combination of both. Vargas' (2006) study into the media consumption of Latina girls is one of the few.

This study, with its focus on ethnicity, gender, and media production contributes to the literature in both fields readily. It provides insight into how a media product is imbued with ideology and capacity to which that ideology can be read and interpreted by the audience. The ability to explore the media product of the members of the organization affords an understanding into how identity is formulated. Also, and more broadly, this study contributes to the literature on girl studies that focuses on the importance of media production and active consumption. As stated earlier, much of that literature has tended to ignore the very real differences involved for girls that are members of a minority group. This study showcases the flaws inherent in promoting and actualizing an organization that does not have ethnicity/race in the forefront of its purpose and mission statement. This is not to say that what the organization does is without merit. If anything, that it exists and that it focuses on Latina girls is vital. The organization stands as a framework for future projects in media education and while there is work to be done, its focus on issues of girlhood should be lauded.

APPENDIX A  
CODEBOOK: LATINITAS GIRL AND TEEN MAGAZINES

*Please note that paragraph constitutes more than one sentence. As such a short question and a few sentences for an answer constitute one paragraph. Also, a poem should be divided by stanzas.*

**A. Magazine**

1. Girl
2. Teen

**B. Paragraph Number:** (Each article is numbered and categorized by whether it belongs to the teen or girl magazine; the paragraph is categorized by letter) T14a

**C. Upload Date:1/11**

**D. Written Date:1/11**

**E. Uploader By-line**

1. diesteadmin
2. latinitasadmin
3. Other

**F. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**G. Article By-Line:** *Does the article have a byline other than the one listed as the uploader by-line?*

1. Yes
0. No

**H. Article By-Line Write In:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Main Magazine Categories**

1. 411
2. Fun Stuff
3. Latina Beat
4. Your View
5. Real Life
6. Her Story
7. Other
0. None stated/not defined

**J. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**K. Subcategories**

11. beauty
12. body and soul
13. buzz
14. fashion
15. school
16. tech girl
21. Art
22. Books
23. Music
24. Quizzes
25. TV and movies
26. Sports
31. Culture
32. Mi Barrio
33. Mundo News
34. My family
35. My quince (my fifteenth birthday)
36. Passport
41. Art Gallery
42. Do-It-Yourself
43. Girl Talk
44. OMG Moments
45. Poetry
46. Get Published
51. Advice
52. Dating
53. Dealing
54. Hot Topics
55. Take Action
56. True Stories
61. Big Sis
62. Careers
63. Cool Clubs
64. Leading Latinas
65. My Diary
66. Superstars
70. Other
0. None stated/not defined

**L. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**M. Story Type**

1. First-Person account/testimonial
2. Advice column author to reader
3. Advice column girl to girl

4. Profile- describes individual(s) experience(s)
5. Review
6. How-To--*Instructions/Recipes*
7. Girl on the street--*questions posed to different girls about a certain topic—author to reader*
8. Question and Answer --*girls ask questions and answer to each other—girl to girl*
9. News/Feature story-*has a lede and a nutgraf*
10. Poem
11. Other

**N. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**O. Visual**

1. Photo (includes girls)
2. Photo (includes cultural image)
3. Photo (does not include girls or a cultural image)
4. Clip Art
5. Can't Tell
6. Other
0. None

**P. Other Write In:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q. Consumption:** *Focus on whether the paragraph promotes consumption as simply the act of buying something and thus becoming engaged in the economic market-place (becoming a good consumer) as opposed to how one uses the product (which can be attributed as a means of resistance—using the product in ways not intended, engaging critically with the product—admonishing beauty ads, for example). Does this paragraph feature consumption?*

1. Passive consumption: *the act of buying a product or service*
2. Consumption: *using the product or service beyond the scope of buying it*
3. Can't Tell
0. No

**R. Production:** Does the paragraph mention Latina-produced media?

1. Video
2. Blogs
3. News stories
4. Web Design
4. Magazine layout
5. Photography
6. Music production
7. television production
9. Creative endeavors (poems, songs, etc)
10. Can't Tell

- 11. Other
- 0. No

**S. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**T. Production Addendum:** Who is or should be producing the media content?

- 1. Author: *I am currently producing a blog*
- 2. Reader: *You should produce a blog*
- 3. Story subject: *This Latina is producing her own blog*
- 4. Can't tell
- 5. Other
- 0. Not Applicable.

**U. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Girls—Traditional Ideologies and Feminist Ideologies

#### Traditional Ideologies

*These categories have to be established as a means of striving to obtain an unreachable ideal (i.e., how to be a pretty girl) for a male audience (how to look good for your boyfriend). As such, the **INTENT** of the message is not about promoting personal agency. These ideologies stress “the importance of looking good, finding a man, and taking care of home and children” all subservient positions*

**V. Sex and Romance:** *This category focuses on romantic and sexual activities (not related to health prevention), getting and or keeping a boyfriend, dating ideas, keeping boys interested.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

- 1. Yes
- 2. Can't Tell
- 0. No

#### W. Sex and Romance Character

- 1. Supports this ideology: *the character of the content is one that goes in line with the traditional ideology*
- 2. Challenges this ideology: *the character of the content is one that goes against the traditional ideology*
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Can't Tell
- 0. Not applicable

**X. Beauty and Fashion:** *This category focuses on beauty and fashion tips—how to do hair, makeup, what to wear, grooming issues.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?



1. Yes
2. Can't Tell
0. No

**Y. Beauty and Fashion Character**

1. Supports this ideology: *the character of the content is one that goes in line with the traditional ideology*
2. Challenges this ideology: *character of the content is one that goes against the traditional ideology*
3. Neutral
4. Can't Tell
0. Not Applicable

**Z. Diet and Body Image:** *this category focuses on staying slim, finding the perfect diet to keep off the pounds, having the kind of body that is seen as desirable to men and to society.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

1. Yes
2. Can't Tell
0. No

**AA. Diet and Body Image Character**

1. Supports this ideology: *the character of the content is one that goes in line with the traditional ideology*
2. Challenges this ideology: *character of the content is one that goes against the traditional ideology*
3. Neutral
4. Can't Tell
0. Not Applicable

**AB. Domestic Issues and Child-Rearing:** *this category focuses on things that typically fall into a women's role: keeping a clean room, cooking, how to take care of children or younger siblings.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

1. Yes
2. Can't Tell
0. No

**AC. Domestic Issues and Child-Rearing Character**

1. Supports this ideology: *the character of the content is one that goes in line with the traditional ideology*
2. Challenges this ideology: *character of the content is one that goes against the traditional ideology*
3. Neutral
4. Can't Tell

0. Not Applicable

### **Feminist Ideologies**

**The intent in these categories is to promote personal agency and to promote a sense of self outside the traditional realms subscribed to women. These messages emphasize taking care of oneself, being independent, and not relying on a man for fulfillment or identity.**

**AD. Mental and Physical Health:** *This category focuses on issues of health that focus on self-development in terms of health—staying fit: as opposed to staying slim, fighting depression.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

- 1. Yes
- 2. Can't Tell
- 0. No

### **AE. Mental and Physical Health Character**

- 1. Supports this ideology: *The character of the content is focused on advocating for action*
- 2. Challenges this ideology: *The character of the content is focused on conformity*
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Can't Tell
- 0. Not Applicable

**AF. Career:** *This category focuses on the kinds of jobs Latina women can and do have.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

- 1. Yes
- 2. Can't Tell
- 0. No

### **AG. Career Character**

- 1. Supports this ideology: *The character of the content is focused on advocating for a career.*
- 2. Challenges this ideology: *The character of the content is focused on conformity (not seeking a career/staying at home/getting married)*
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Can't Tell
- 0. Not applicable

**AH. Education:** *This category focuses on maintaining good grades, studying, how to get into college.* Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

- 1. Yes
- 0. No

### **AI. Education Character**

1. Supports this ideology: *The character of the content is focused on advocating for an education*
2. Challenges this ideology: *The character of the content is focused on conformity (not seeking an education/not furthering education beyond what is mandatory)*
3. Neutral
4. Can't tell
0. Not applicable

**AJ. Other Relationships:** *this category focuses on relationships outside of the romantic realm but that don't include family members: friends, mentors, teachers.*  
Does the paragraph feature this ideology?

1. Yes
2. Can't Tell
0. No.

**AK. Other Relationships Character**

1. Supports this ideology: *advocates for healthy relationship management*
2. Challenges this ideology: *conforms to traditional ideologies (fighting over boyfriends, being petty, etc.)*
3. Neutral
4. Can't tell
0. Not applicable

**Ethnic/Racial Identity:** *Ethnicity refers to the cultural traditions and practices of a particular group. This encompasses such things as religion, common traits, language, food from a particular region, sports, games, festivals, holidays etc. Race is any reference to being of a common descent or heredity, as such any mention of a family member is automatically included in this definition.*

**AL. Ethnicity/Race Mention:** Does the paragraph reference ethnicity and/or race?

1. Yes
2. Can't tell
2. No

**AM. Spanish Language:** Are there Spanish words in the paragraph?

1. Yes
2. Can't Tell
0. No

**AN. Spanish Usage.** What amount of the paragraph is written in Spanish?

1. Heavy amount: *most/all in Spanish*
2. Medium amount: *there is an intermixing of Spanish and English*
3. Low Amount: *there are, at most, a few words written in Spanish*
4. Can't Tell
0. Not applicable

**The following categories focus on ethnic identity formation. NOTE: YOU ARE DONE CODING IF YOU ANSWERED 0 TO ALL THREE OF THE PREVIOUS (AL-AN) QUESTIONS. If you are unsure on any of the three previous questions please proceed to answer all of the following.**

**AX. Acculturation:** *Acculturation is defined as the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact.*

Does the paragraph exhibit acculturation?

1. Yes
2. Can't Tell
0. No

**AY. Acculturation Level: If yes, what is the level of acculturation that is being displayed?**

1. Separation: Maintaining a Latino culture/focusing on tradition without any attempt to integrate with the other culture. *We only speak Spanish at home and refuse to speak English.*
2. Retention: Retention of cultural ideals and practices. *We speak Spanish at home so that I don't forget the language.*
3. Adoption: Adoption of receiving cultural practices. *I like to listen to American music.*
4. Assimilation: Adoption of receiving cultural practices at the expense of previous cultural ideals and practices. *I only listen to American music.*
5. Biculturalism (Integration): Strong identification with both groups. *I listen to both traditional music and American music.*
6. Can't Tell
0. Not applicable

**Values: These categories are based on Holleran and Waller's (2003) study. The authors distinguished between deficit-focused studies and social adaptation studies. They stated that deficit-focused studies characterize traditional Mexican-American values as "cultural deficits" that interfere with assimilation. They found, however, that a focus on core values and beliefs actually help in social adaptation. In their view, adhering to core values and beliefs allows for individuals to more readily adapt to new cultures and is a source of resilience and strength.**

**AZ. Values Collectivism.** Collectivism is defined as mutual empathy, subordinating personal desires to the interest of the group and conformity to the expectations of the group. *Encompassed in this concept are values and beliefs like being family-centered, a focus on respect, dignity, fidelity, ethnic pride, machismo and marianismo. Again, because the focus here is on ethnic identity the values have to be related to*

*ethnicity/race and not other aspect of identity like gender*)? Does the paragraph feature any of the following values?

1. Familismo: *family closeness and family loyalty*
2. Respeto: *consideration for the sensibilities and needs of others*
3. Dignidad: *dignity, honor*
4. Fidelidad: *loyalty not related to the family*
5. Orgullo Cultural: *ethnic pride*
6. Machismo: *qualities of bravery, courage, generosity, respect for others, protection of and provisions for loved ones*
7. Marianismo: *the centrality of a strong virtuous mother in the family*
8. Can't Tell
9. Other
0. Not applicable

**BA. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BB. Collectivism Valence:** How does the author/speaker evaluate the value/belief in question?

1. Favorably: *I like that my family and I are so close*
2. Unfavorably: *I don't like that my family and I are so close*
3. Neutral Public Regard: *The value is mentioned but there is not talk of whether that is a positive or a negative.*
4. Can't Tell
0. Not applicable

**BC. Values Religiosidad:** *This is in reference not just to being religious (a mix of Roman Catholic and native beliefs), but the values that come from a strong religious background.* Does the paragraph feature any of the following?

1. Religiosidad: *valuing of God's will, the spirit world, the miraculous, and folk healing*
2. Suffering: *the acceptance of hardship, suffering, and death as inevitable and integral parts of life.*
3. Transformation: *Valuing the possibility of death and transformation.*
4. Can't Tell
5. Other
0. Not applicable

**BD. If other please write in:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BE. Religiosidad Variance:** How does the author/speaker evaluate the value/belief in question?

1. Favorably: *I like that my family goes to church every Sunday*
2. Unfavorably: *I don't like that my family goes to church every Sunday*
3. Neutral Public Regard: *The value is mentioned but there is not talk of whether that is a positive or a negative.*
4. Can't Tell

0. Not applicable

APPENDIX B  
 TEMPLATES FOR BLOG AND VIDEO ANALYSIS

B1. Template for Blog Analysis

Participant	
Blog Post #	
<b>Purpose of Interaction</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	
<b>Tone</b>	
<b>Voice</b>	
<b>Process.</b> What Happens or is the Case?	
<b>Participant.</b> Who is being represented as active through which actions? <i>Who is the doer? Who is it done to?</i>	
<b>What is the mood?</b>	
<i>Declarative.</i> This is done.	
<i>Interrogative.</i> Why isn't this being done?	
<i>Imperative.</i> This should be done.	
<i>Other?</i>	
<b>What is the modality?</b> What is the speaker's attitude towards the subject?  Do they commit or distance themselves from what they say?	
<b>Feminism.</b> General?	
<b>Ideologies.</b> (MPH, C, OR, E, BaF, DBI, SaR, DICR)	
<b>Feminism.</b> Other.	
<b>Ethnicity.</b> General?	
<b>Acculturation.</b> Retention, assimilation, biculturalism.	
<b>Enculturation.</b> Values: Collectivism and Religiosidad. <i>Respeto, dignity, honor, loyalty, ethnic pride, machismo, marianism, religion, suffering, transformation</i>	
<b>Spanish Language.</b> Topic or Use?	

<b>Ethnicity. Other?</b>	
<b>Production/Consumption/Media Use?</b>	
<b>Interactivity?</b>	
<b>Self-Expression. Reflection?</b>	
<b>Issues of authorship?</b>	



## B2. Template for Video Analysis

Uploader	
Video 1	
Given Topic	
<b>What Type of Video?</b> (Chronicling Camp Events? Creative Endeavor? Video Blog?)	
<b>Who is the subject of the video?</b> (The uploader? Camp members? Others?)	
<b>Purpose of Interaction</b>	
<b>Tone</b>	
<b>Voice</b>	
<b>Process.</b> What Happens or is the Case?	
<b>Participant.</b> Who is being represented as active through which actions? <i>Who is the doer? Who is it done to?</i>	
<b>What is the mood?</b>	
<i>Declarative.</i> This is done.	
<i>Interrogative.</i> Why isn't this being done?	
<i>Imperative.</i> This should be done.	
<i>Other?</i>	
<b>What is the modality?</b> What is the speaker's attitude towards the subject?  Do they commit or distance themselves from what they say?	
<b>Feminism.</b> General?	
<b>Ideologies.</b> (MPH, C, OR, E, BaF, DBI, SaR, DICR)	
<b>Feminism.</b> Other.	
<b>Ethnicity.</b> General?	
<b>Acculturation.</b> Retention, assimilation, biculturalism.	
<b>Enculturation.</b> Values: Collectivism and Religiosidad. <i>Respeto, dignity, honor, loyalty,</i>	

<i>ethnic pride, machismo, marianism, religion, suffering, transformation</i>	
<b>Spanish Language.</b> Topic or Use?	
<b>Ethnicity.</b> Other?	
<b>Production/Consumption/Media Use?</b>	
<b>Interactivity?</b>	
<b>Self-Expression. Reflection?</b>	
<b>Issues of authorship?</b>	
<b>Objects?</b> (Are there any objects on display?) CONNOTATOR	
<b>Lighting</b> (is it high or low—natural?)	
<b>Saliency</b> (What features are made to stand out by the camera?—Which are in the front? Which are in the back? What is the focus on?)	
<b>Distance?</b>	
<b>Angle?</b> (What is the camera angle?)	
<b>Pose</b> (Leaning Forward? Leaning Back? Arms crossed?) CONNOTATOR	
<b>Gaze</b> (What is the gaze of the subjects in the story? Do they look up? Down? At the camera? At each other? )	
<b>Posture</b> (What is the posture of each of the participants in the video?)?	
<b>Setting?</b>	
<b>Thoughts? Observations?</b>	

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