Background

- Critical consciousness (CC) – the ability to recognize systems of inequality (critical reflection), coupled with the desire to take action to remedy it – can be an important developmental asset for youth.
- The heightened attention to the murders of innocent Black people by law enforcement in 2020 has led to the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that included a more ethnically and racially diverse group of participants.
- However, few studies have examined BLM attitudes, support, and participation among Latinx youth and families.
- There is wide variability in appearance and racial-identification within Latinx communities, yet anti-Black sentiment rooted in colonization and White supremacy exists.
- Latinx individuals experience racial profiling by both police and immigration officers, which could make them either more or less supportive of the BLM movement compared to other racial-ethnic groups.
- STUDY AIM: Guided by models of CC and intersectionality, the current study aimed to examine how BLM attitudes and experiences differ according to participant demographics, CC, and experiences with law enforcement.

Methods

- Latinx families (N=293) consisting of one parent (M_age=39.8, SD=6.6) and one adolescent (aged 12-15; M_age=13, SD=1.41) were recruited in the US Southwest.
- Parents: 57.5% US-born 67.7% Mexican-origin 57.3% had a yearly household income of $40,000-$50,000 or lower (ranged from less than $10,000 to $150,000+)
- Youth: 95.1% US-born 68.3% Mexican-origin 47.7% identified as girls/females, 50.5% as boys/males, 3% as trans girls/female, and 1.4% as non-binary

Quantitative Measures

- Short Critical Consciousness Scale (α = .93): 4-items assessing critical reflection (CR), asked agreement with statements about inequality e.g., “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get ahead.” Higher scores indicate higher CR.
- Police and Law Enforcement Scale (α = .90-93): 10-items assessing negative experiences with police. Higher scores indicate more experiences.
- Perceptions of Police Survey (α = .92-.96): 12-items assessing attitudes/perceptions of police. Higher scores indicate less favorable perceptions.
- BLM Attitudes Scale (α = .95-.97): 6-items that ask about attitudes and beliefs about the BLM movement. Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes.
- Experiences with Protests and Black Lives Matter: three-items asking about involvement and experiences surrounding the BLM movement.

Statistical Analysis

- Independent samples t-tests, chi-square tests, & one-way ANOVAs were run to test differences in BLM attitudes/experiences by demographics. Regressions were run to test the role of CR and experiences with police on BLM attitudes and experiences.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

- Parents and youth were each asked to share in their own words, their feelings and thoughts about the BLM protests of Summer 2020 and police brutality.
- Responses were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Emergent themes were identified through memos and refined into parent and youth codebooks. Inter-rater reliability was high for both youth (93-94%) and parent (92-94%) coding teams.

Results

Quantitative Findings

- Parents: Foreign-born parents were significantly less likely to discuss the BLM protests with their children compared to US-born parents (χ² (1, 289) = 20.57, p < .001); however, nativity did not predict BLM attitudes.
- Age and self-reported skin tone did not predict BLM attitudes or experiences.
- Youth: Girls reported more positive BLM attitudes (M=5.82, SD=1.29), and were significantly more likely to watch BLM protests and related news compared to boys (M=5.37, SD=1.54, p < .01; χ² (1, 283) = 4.52, p = .034, respectively).
- Higher levels of critical reflection associated with more positive BLM attitudes (β = .23, SE = .05, p < .001).
- Age and self-reported skin tone did not predict BLM attitudes or experiences.
- Parents and Youth: More negative perceptions of police predicted more positive BLM attitudes among parents (β = .33, SE = .10, p < .001) and youth (β = .47, SE = .08, p < .001).
- However, experiences with law enforcement did not significantly predict BLM attitudes.

Qualitative Findings (Table 1, supplementary materials)

- Overall, of those coded for explicit BLM content, most youth and parents expressed Pro- and Mid-BLM attitudes. A large portion of parents and youth also discussed issues of inequality and racism.
- Parents and youth who expressed Pro-BLM sentiment were frequently coded for discussing inequality, racism, anti-police sentiment, and a personal experience with police or border patrol/ICE.

Conclusions and Implications

- Overall, quantitative and qualitative data revealed that a good portion of parents and youth expressed solidarity and support for the BLM movement, and many acknowledged of issues of inequality. Findings also suggest, however, that support for BLM may be higher among US-born Latinx parents, girls, older youth, and youth and parents with negative perceptions of police. Thus, generational status, gender, and lived experiences may intersect with ethnic identity to inform attitudes towards the BLM movement and future work should continue to explore this nuance.
- Qualitative data suggested that older youth, girls, and youth with negative encounters with police were more likely to identify issues of inequality and racism, which may help to explain their more positive attitudes toward the BLM movement. Additionally, Latinx youth with higher critical reflection expressed more support for the BLM movement, suggesting that greater awareness of inequality may help to promote cross-ethnic-racial group solidarity.
- Notably, there was a lack of diversity and representation within our sample. Most of the sample identified as Mexican-origin and there was a lack of variability in skin tone. Thus, we may have failed to capture the unique experiences and perspectives of Indigenous, Black, and Afro-Latinx individuals across different ethnic/racial backgrounds.
- Altogether, these findings have important implications for understanding Latinx BLM attitudes and experiences and for fostering solidarity and coalition building.