

The University of California, Irvine

The Department of Education

presents

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10:30AM – 12:00PM

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“Immigrant Youth Organizations as Territories of Exclusion and Inclusion: A Case Study of Colombian Youth Acculturation Expectations”

Community-based programs in which immigrant youth share a common ethnic heritage and that focus on their cultural traditions are not uncommon, yet very little research explores how these programs shape and are shaped by youth's sense of identity and how youth in these programs draw and interpret ethnic boundaries. This paper discusses a case study of Colombian youth participants in an out-of-school program in Boston focused on Colombian folklore. It explores how these youth draw ethnic boundaries in the context of their experiences in the program and as ethnic minorities in the U.S. Using John Berry's acculturation framework, responses to a multicultural dilemma that "positions" youth as part of an in-group on the basis of their ethnicity are analyzed. I argue that understanding these youth organizations as territories can better illuminate the ethnic-boundary setting than frameworks limited only to the analysis of intergroup processes. Findings suggest that these youth have different ways of incorporating non-Colombians either by integrating, segregating, assimilating, or marginalizing them from the program. Findings shed light on the question of whether such programs designed to deepen adolescents' connections to their own culture might prevent them from positively engaging with people from other cultures.