

Digitized Family History: Discovering the Roots of your Latinidad

Research Question:

How does the advancement in genealogical technology influence Latinx and their identities?

Abstract/ Introduction

Genealogy has disguised itself as modern technology but, this concept has been around for centuries. Spaniards and Empires of the Americas such as the Mexica, the Maya and the Inca all practiced linking together family trees to justify who had control. Genealogy was used as a power tactic, that affected people both racially and ethnically. In the 21st century, there are numerous forms of Genealogical research. I will be focusing on **DNA Kits** that can look at a person's genome and **online public records** that include but are not limited to Census, and Marriage Records. My interest for this topic began with my own inquisitiveness. I have always wondered where my family comes from and what my DNA and genes may say about me. I think that by doing genealogical research one must have an open mind and be mentally and emotionally prepared to learn about themselves because a lot can come to light. For some this kind of study can be a positive experience but others it could be different. This topic is not an easy one because it really challenges people to think about themselves and **challenge their own personal narratives** in different ways. For example, maybe you find out you are a little more X than you are Y. I think sometimes what motivates Latinx to explore their genealogy could possibly be a struggle of inclusion.

Through my research I want to find out how searching for your roots may or may not impact identity within the Latinx community.

Methods of Research

I surveyed a total of 71 people but mainly focused on those who are a part of the Latinx community. I asked various questions that were related to individuals background, and usage of Genealogical technology such as DNA Test Kits, and online genealogical public records. I also asked if it affected their identity in any way and considered their opinions and thoughts regarding this topic. In addition, I interviewed two individuals to gain more insight on their identity, thoughts, and personal narratives. Lastly, I gathered information from scholarly articles, and publications.

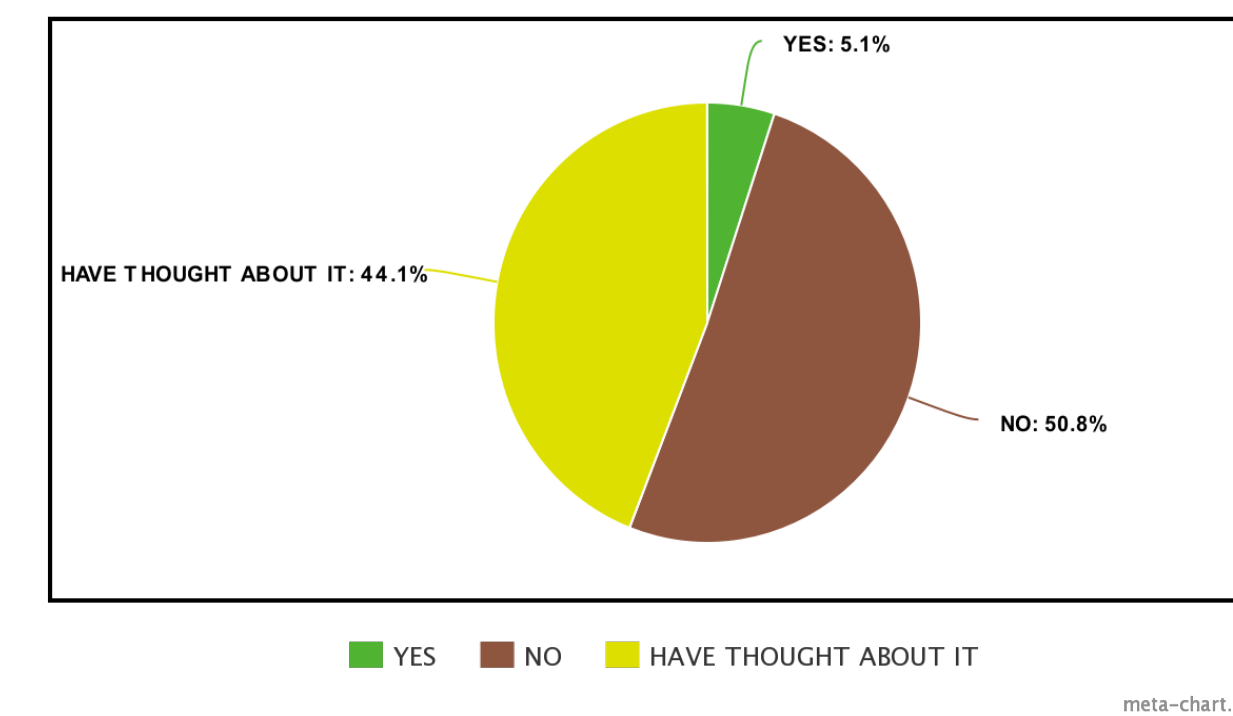
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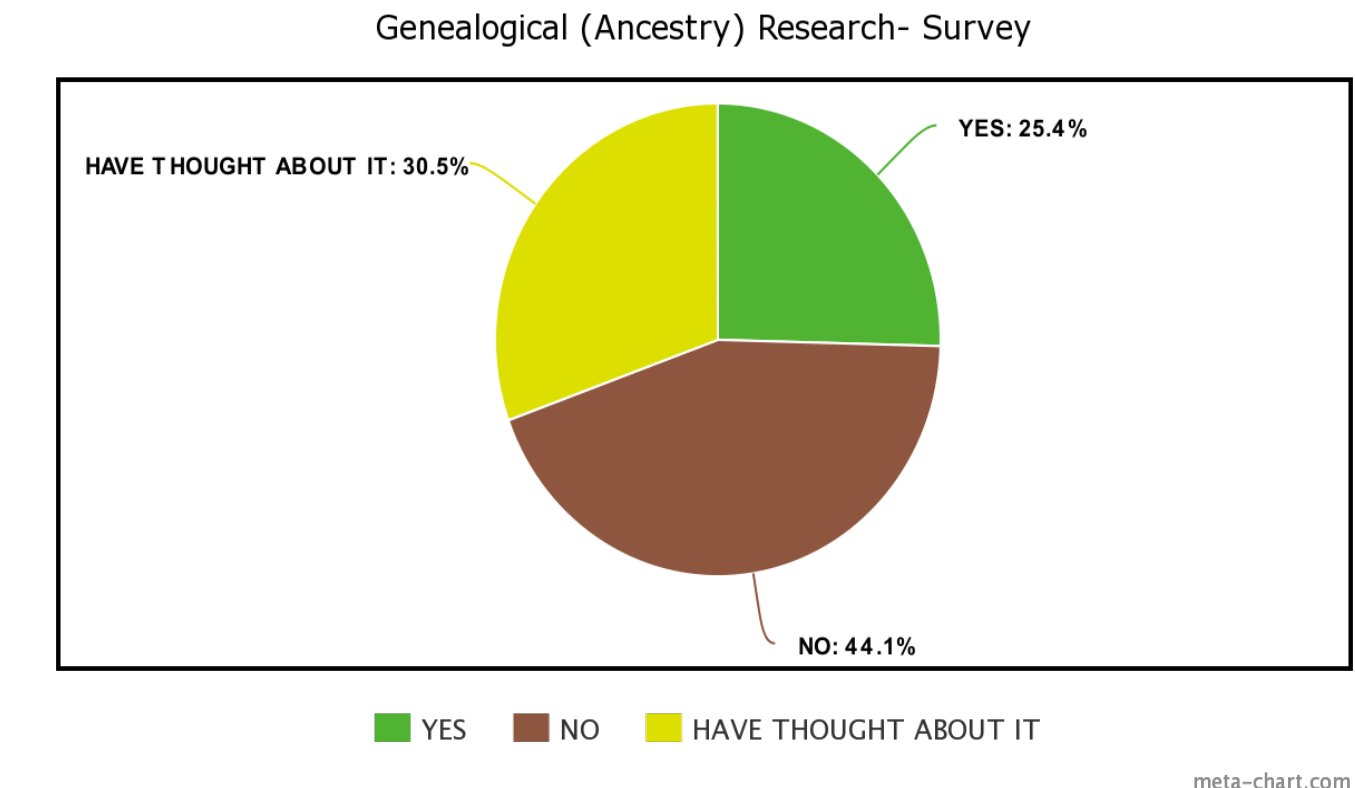


Results

Have you ever done a DNA Test Kit such as: AncestryDNA, 23 & Me, National Geographic Geno 2.0 or other?
Genealogical (Ancestry) Research- Survey



Have you ever done any ancestral research such as creating a family tree, going on websites like Ancestry.com or maybe even traveled to search for family background?
Genealogical (Ancestry) Research- Survey



meta-chart.com

meta-chart.com

"This technology is opening a true Pandora's Box"- Professor Jose Cuello, Wayne State University.

"My hope that because of the "racial" complexity of Latinx identity that perhaps DNA in our community can serve as a powerful reminder both of the difficult realities of the past, but also the fundamental truth, that we are all human." – Professor Alicia Diaz, Wayne State University.

- I conducted a survey and, in my study, only 30.5% of Latinx individuals have done either a DNA Testing Kit or Genealogical Research.
- The rest either did not take or have considered completing a DNA Testing Kit or conducting Genealogical Research for themselves or their family members. There are many reasons why people choose not to participate in this kind of research; skepticism on how their DNA is being used, it's "a never-ending puzzle", it's high-priced, there's simply no interest, fear of what they may find and other reasons.
- Some of the types of feedback I received from people who answered my question of, "Did searching for your ancestry or completing a DNA Test Kit impact your thoughts on your identity in any kind of way?" was:
 - "Yes because we end up talking about all the people on the tree, sharing good memories and some chisme (gossip)"
 - "Yes, it does. Understanding where I come from helps me cherish them better and being more aware of everything that had to happen for me to be here."
 - "It did! This helped me understand and reclaim my Latinidad. Growing up in the US, calling myself a Mexicana and identifying with the Latinx culture was difficult. This made it easier to accept."
 - "I guess it did because it gave me insight into where my ancestors immigrated from and the different countries they came from"
 - "Yes, it really supported my Latinidad and made me think about where I come from and how honored I am to be from where I am. So yeah overall I felt a sense of pride"
 - Yes. I began to think about my ancestors and began to see how global the world is, so it changed my perspective regarding respect for diversity.

Conclusion

Through my research I have learned that those people who have searched for answers regarding their ancestors have gained a better understanding and appreciation of who they are. Latinx are a group whose family, culture, heritage and ancestral origins are deeply integrated it's a part of their Latinidad. But ultimately what matters is that we understand that we are all humans and that should be our **primary** identity. This was just the beginning to my research in this area in the future I'd like to explore this topic even further and search for the differences between someone who identifies as Latin American and someone who does not. This question and area of study is not a straightforward concept it's challenging but intriguing.

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