Testimonios of Chicano Leadership in Texas Community Colleges

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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Testimonios of Chicano Leadership in Texas Community Colleges

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Jonathan Anthony Pérez

May 2021
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the factors that influence the leadership development of Chicano leaders who serve in the Texas community college system and how whiteness, white supremacy, anti-Mexican sentiment, and institutional racism impact their leadership style. While there is a revitalization to study the Chicano experience, few scholars have examined the concept of Chicano leadership within the context of Texas higher education. The strategy to use testimonios for this study provided an insight to the leadership identity development process of four Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges while exposing the racial inequities in higher education. Three prominent themes and six subthemes emerged: (1) racial micro-aggression, (2) racial micro-expectation, and (3) resistance. An in-depth analysis of the themes was further explored revealing subthemes that offered insight into how the role of whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism impact the leadership identity development of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges: (1a) resiliency, (1b) Chicano identity, (2a) negotiate Chicano identity, (2b) anti-Mexican/Chicano, (3a) organize, and (3b) protect other Chicanos. Results from this study provide a glimpse of the realities that Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges encounter. The researcher concludes that there is a real problem with race, institutional racism, Whiteness, and white supremacy in Texas community colleges and if not confronted, then these institutions will continue to operate as they always have. This study is an example of how Chicano leaders have the will, skill, and knowledge to be change agents that disrupts racism and white supremacy in higher education as Chicano leadership is rooted in a collective historia, comunidad, love for self and all people, organizing and activism, resistance, pride, and dichos.

Keywords: Chicano Leadership, Community Colleges, 21st century leadership
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1980, the U.S. Census adopted the term Hispanic to refer to people who were from countries where Spanish was the primary language (Salinas & Lozano, 2019). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), the Hispanic population is expected to reach 111 million by 2060. In contrast, the non-Hispanic White population is expected to decrease, from 199 million in 2020 to 179 million by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017, 2018). These changes within the United States’s population demographics will make the Hispanic community the [second] largest ethnic group in the United States, surpassing African Americans and Asians in the coming decades (Ballysingh et al., 2017; Excelencia in Education, 2015; Lazos, 2012; Reny, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2015).

In 2013, the Pew Research Center published a study indicating that there were 33.7 million Chicanos in the United States, representing 64% of the total Hispanic population, and 11% of the total U.S. population (Gonzales, 2019). Despite these increasing numbers, the Chicano community still lacked representation in leadership roles within higher education (Chang et al., 2014; León & Nevarez, 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2015). This lack of representation was also evident in community colleges, where a limited number of Chicanos were in administrative roles, such as presidents, vice-presidents, deans, department chairs, and faculty, which continued to be dominated by White men and did not reflect student demographics (Hernández et al., 2017; Mendoza, 2015).

Context

As demographics changed in the United States, it was imperative that community college leaders began to rethink the community college leadership pipeline for the 21st century and “reimagine what these institutions are and [are] capable of becoming” (American Association of
Community Colleges [AACC], 2014, p. 3). Each year, community colleges enrolled over ten million students, providing access to higher education for underrepresented students (Bailey et al., 2015). Community colleges enrolled 38% of all postsecondary students in the United States with about half of those students identifying as Chicano (Hernández et al., 2017). As of 2015, the State of Texas had 79 accredited community colleges with an enrollment of 712,478 students (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB] Almanac, 2015).

These institutions have played a key role in developing the future workforce by focusing on the talents and skills of their students, which was crucial for a thriving economy and society (Bailey et al., 2015). Because community colleges enrolled over ten million students per year, they were pivotal in creating opportunities for students to pursue a postsecondary degree. While community colleges have provided access to higher education for diverse student groups, low rates of persistence toward completion indicated a growing concern (McNair et al., 2016). In Texas alone, only 25% of students who began their education at community colleges earned a postsecondary credential within six years of their initial start (McKinney & Hagedorn, 2017). Despite the large enrollment numbers, access for underrepresented groups, and their important role within the U.S. economy, community colleges have continued to produce low completion rates for underrepresented students. This has caused economic consequences within socio-economically depressed communities, especially for Hispanics within those communities (Bailey et al., 2015).

Community colleges enrolled 46.1% of students in higher education in Texas, yet had less visibility within the legislature and received fewer financial and other resources (THECB & Community College Association of Texas Trustees, 2019). Due to these conditions, and to meet the growing demands of the current and future workforce, Texas community college leaders
were pressured to improve student outcomes by rethinking the way they had traditionally 
operated (Bailey et al., 2015; THECB, 2018a). Walter Bumphus, President and CEO of the 
AACC wrote:

Community colleges cannot be strong by being the same. Certain values remain constant: 
opportunity, equity, academic excellence. But as the commission report asserts, if 
community colleges are to enact values in the 21st century, “virtually everything else 
must change.” Taking on bold ideas and dramatic change is the only way to meet college 
completion goals. (AACC, 2014, p. 3)

Community colleges have played a key role in developing the future workforce by 
tapping into the talents and skills of their students, which has been crucial for a thriving economy 
and society (Bailey et al., 2015). Due to the important economic role of community colleges in 
Chicano education, Texas community colleges had to remove barriers to develop and retain 
Chicano leaders within the higher education leadership pipeline (Tajalli & Ortiz, 2018). Palacios 
(2018) described how the intentional and direct efforts to establish a pipeline for Chicano 
leadership in colleges and universities was critical to addressing the lack of representation of 
Chicano leadership in higher education. However, Hispanic leaders continued to encounter 
challenges in representation and promotion as they navigated the higher education leadership 
pipeline (Pertuz, 2018). Furthermore, the current demographics of Chicano students and the 
underrepresentation of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges showed a lack of will or 
commitment that current leaders had to disrupt the status quo (Doran & Hengesteg, 2019).

Chicanos in the Context of Texas Community Colleges

The term Chicano has had various meanings for individuals with no clear scholarly 
definition, while Mexican American refers to people who were born in the United States with
Mexican ancestry (Montoya, 2016; Salgado, 2020). Other researchers, such as Acuña (1972), described how Chicano was a self-labeled term for Mexican American activists because it symbolizes resistance and the demand for self-determination. Since 1974, Chicanos have advocated for the improvement of educational and employment opportunities for Chicano higher educational professionals (Gutierrez & Gutierrez, 2013). Today, Chicanos have raised issues with both Texas university and community college leaders about the lack of Chicanos in leadership roles and the leadership pipeline.

Chicano leaders who have navigated the higher education leadership pipeline described the lack of diversity with few leaders of color to ask for advice, which made their leadership path lonely (Garcia, 2018). The AACC (2006) launched its leadership agenda that placed special emphasis [on] developing community college leaders to meet the demands for the 21st century. Despite their efforts to meet the needs of the 21st-century student, the AACC failed to mention the needs of the Chicano student.

Texas has had the second-largest undocumented population in the United States, estimated to be around 1.6 million (Pew Research Center, 2019). In 2001, Texas legislators passed House Bill 1403 allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition in their pursuit of higher education (Jauregui et al., 2008). Because of HB 1403, community colleges were the ideal choice of higher learning for undocumented students due to access and low cost. The continued local and national growth and political climate, and the increase of the undocumented student enrollment in Texas community colleges, required a leadership approach that leveraged resources and advocated for Chicano (Mazyck, 2016).

Competing pressures and demands lead current community college leaders to avoid or even ignore difficult topics, yet impact student success (McNair et al., 2016). To truly meet the
needs of the 21st-century student, community college leaders must be prepared to name, expose, challenge, and critique institutional practices and norms that keep the leadership pipeline Caucasian or primarily White (Museus et al., 2015). Moreover, the application of a Chicano lens helped improve the educational outcomes in Texas community colleges and for all Texas college students, while decreasing the achievement gap between racial categories (Santiago et al., 2017).

Community college leaders were critical [of] creating opportunities for student success (Hernández, 2017). Community college leaders of color were critical, because [the] key characteristics of a 21st-century community college leader includes the advancement and respect of diversity, which had been the agenda for the past 20 years (AACC, 2011; Gibson-Benninger et al., 1996; Kezar, 1998; Laden, 1996). Researchers found that the ratio of student to employee racial representation on community college campuses was a predictor for student success; therefore, implying the need for interventions to advance the recruitment and retention of Chicano community college leaders (Hernández et al., 2017). Documenting the experience of Chicano leaders at Texas community colleges may provide more understanding of the current environment, which can be passed down to emerging Chicano leaders (Huber & Cueva, 2012).

**Positionality Statement**

As a Chicano and having worked in the community college setting, I noticed very few Chicano leaders within the institution. Furthermore, for the few that were in leadership roles, I would often hear about the many racialized experiences they would encounter as they worked toward moving up the leadership pipeline. Therefore, seeing very few Chicanos in leadership roles at the community college helped form my topic of interest: the factors that impact Chicano leadership in higher education.
When I moved into professional positions within higher education, I quickly realized that these spaces were not designed for me to be authentic. Growing up around gangs, I was taught about the value of being authentic in who you are and where you’re from. We called it “set-tripping” if we claimed to be from a barrio that we were not from and there were consequences. Trying to fit into White professionalism resulted in me leaving my full identity at home and becoming something that I was not. If I am going to disrupt the norms of Whiteness and White supremacy, I cannot and will not, again, leave my authentic self at home. To deny my authentic self is to deny my mom, dad, elders, community, and ancestors. Many communities have and continue to encounter oppressive acts by asking us to be something we are not. I know what it means to be “lost in a world of confusion, caught up in a whirl of a gringo society” (Gonzales, 2001, p. 16) that denies and silences the tunes of our black, brown, Native American, and indigenous brothers and sisters.

Problem Statement

The population of Chicanos has increased over the last four decades, making them the largest ethnic group of Hispanic origin in the United States (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2013). Chicanos make up 11% of the total population in the United States with 35% born in Mexico, 65% born in the United States, and 52% having at least one parent from Mexico (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Researchers have attributed this dramatic increase of Chicanos to three factors: (a) domestic migration, (b) international migration, and (c) high birth rates for Mexican Americans (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2013; Johnson & Lichter, 2016; Warren, 2016). Currently, the State of Texas ranks number two in having the largest Chicano population in the United States (Stepler & López, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). For this study, the term Chicano is defined as the ideology of Mexican consciousness that
emphasizes dignity, self-worth, pride, uniqueness, community, resistance, and systemic oppression.

The study of Chicanos has experienced a revitalization, as Chicano researchers begin to open up more areas of investigation, increasing the understanding and impact Chicanos have had on the United States (Gonzales, 2019). Chicanos have comprised the largest segment of the Hispanic population and encountered complications in how they identify ethnically (Salgado, 2020). Understanding the value of Chicano leadership in the context of Texas Higher Education became a starting point for the transformation of the United States’ higher education systems, by challenging the status quo and removing policies and practices that create and perpetuate systemic barriers, which eventually prevent success for all students (McNair et al., 2016).

The understanding of Chicano leadership was crucial as education systems and institutions moved toward social justice and a more equitable contemporary leadership model (Emerson & Yancey, 2011; Hickman, 2016; Johnson & Lichter, 2016; López, 2016; Museus et al., 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2015). The context of this proposed study was relevant because Texas’ Chicano population comprised 87% of the total Texas Hispanic population (Stepler & López, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Moreover, with the population of Texas being comparable to that of many countries throughout the world, its economic future and ability to remain competitive in a global market made this geographic area a vital context to study (THECB, 2018b). Therefore, a better understanding of the collective experiences of Chicano leaders who served in Texas community college systems may help contribute toward developing new inclusive leadership strategies for the 21st century.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the factors, if any, that influence the leadership development of Chicano leaders who served in the Texas community college system. At this stage, leadership development was generally defined as leadership that grows out of Chicano history, core values, and was responsive to the challenges Chicano leaders encounter today (Bordas, 2001). Chicano leaders who served in the Texas community college system were defined as individuals who work to improve the educational opportunities and professional advancement for Chicanos in higher education.

Research Question

A single, broad research question guided this study. And, as the inquiry progressed, subquestions surfaced and were included within the research: How do Chicano leaders understand their leadership identity development in Texas community colleges?

Definitions of Key Terms

Chicano. Ideology of Mexican consciousness that emphasizes dignity, self-worth, pride, uniqueness, resistance, systemic oppression, and community (Gutierrez, 1979; Montoya, 2016; Rodriguez, 2009; Rosales, 1997).

Cultural racism. As noted by Museus et al. (2015), Results from ethnocentrism and power, and describes how members of society favor the cultural values, beliefs, and norms of the dominant racial group over minority populations. Through this process, minority groups are racialized as inferior, which contributes to the oppression of these populations. (p. 84)
**Institutional racism.** “The patterns, procedures, practices, and policies that operate within social institutions so as to consistently penalize, disadvantage, and exploit individuals who are members of racial minority groups” (Museus et al., 2015, p. 84).

**Leadership identity development.** The social identity of being collaborative, relational leaders interdependently engaging in leadership as a group process (Komives et al., 2009).

**Whiteness.** Cabrera and Corces-Zimmerman (2017) identified Three central components of the discourse of Whiteness; (1) an unwillingness to name the contours of systemic racism, (2) the avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or minority group, and (3) the minimization of the U.S. history of racism. (p. 18)

**White supremacy.** “A political, economic, and cultural system through which Whites overwhelmingly control power and resources, conscious or unconscious ideas of White superiority and entitlement are widespread, and White dominance and the subordination of people of color are reinforced daily across a wide range of institutions social settings” (Museus et al., 2015, p. 86).

**Summary**

The future demographic shifts of student populations in Texas community colleges, the community college leadership pipeline, the call to redesign community colleges, and the pool of current leaders approaching retirement created a sense of urgency to begin developing 21st-century leaders required for institutional transformations (AACC Competencies for Community College Leadership, 2013; Bailey et al., 2015; THECH Almanac, 2015). Institutional transformation required current leaders to acknowledge how race had created norms that prevented Chicanos from moving up the ranks. Community college leaders needed to
“understand the role they play in perpetuating existing racist systems by confronting it rather than ignoring it” (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017, p. 11).

The following chapter, chapter two, provides a review of relevant literature describing community colleges both nationally and in Texas. The review also provides a historical overview of Chicanos, the Chicano leader experience, the role of Whiteness in higher education, and the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT), LatCrit, racial identity, and leadership identity development model (LIDM).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the factors, if any, that influence the leadership development of Chicanos who serve in the Texas community college system. A single broad research question guided this study: How do Chicano leaders understand their leadership identity development in Texas community colleges? As the inquiry progressed, subquestions surfaced and were included to gather more robust data regarding this subject. This literature review served as a lens for this study and was organized as follows: community colleges, the Chicano leader experience, systemic racism in higher education, Chicano identity, LIDM, CRT, and LatCrit.

Community Colleges

Established in the 20th century, the goal of community colleges was to provide surrounding communities access to education leading to upward economic mobility (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). This created a pipeline of opportunities for anyone who wished to advance in vocational training, increase their skill set, personal enrichment, or pursue a 4-year degree (Martin et al., 2014). These opportunities provided access to higher education for over 10 million students per year, including historically marginalized groups, allowing individuals to gain economic growth and upward mobility, eventually changing the courses, economic mobility, for many families (Bailey et al., 2015). Community colleges played a critical role as a driving force in meeting the economic demands of the United States.

Despite the increased enrollment, many students who started their educational journey at community colleges never finished, creating a loss to the overall economy (Bailey et al., 2015). The failure of low completion rates, graduation rates, or transfer rates to a university is relegated to the community college leaders, as it signifies that the existing educational system did not work
(Bailey et al., 2015; McNair et al., 2016). Leaders had to begin to shift their thinking from what was wrong with the student to what was wrong with the system (McNair et al., 2016). The declined continued trend of completion to graduation or transfer rates showed that current leaders were finding it difficult to stop doing the same thing while expecting different results. Pressure from policymakers, the challenges of today’s student, and the economic impact of an educated population required strong leadership to dismantle the status quo; therefore, preparing Chicano educational leaders provided institutions of higher education an opportunity to meet these challenges (Hernández, 2017; McNair et al., 2016). Recognizing the challenges while keeping their commitment to remaining accessible, current leaders needed to reevaluate the leadership pipeline, adapt to the realities of the 21st century, and identify strategies that fulfilled the institution's commitment to the communities they serve.

The Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) is comprised of 50 community colleges. Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education in Texas, serving a diverse and underserved population (TACC Fact Sheet, 2020). As shown in Table 1, Hispanic students were the largest demographic by race for Texas community colleges.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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Note. Adapted from TACC Fact Sheet, 2020, (https://tacc.org/tacc/fact-sheets-policy-briefs)
To begin the work needed for a systemic change within Texas community colleges, TACC launched an initiative to assist community college leaders through professional coaching. The following passage describes the Texas Pathways model:

An integrated, system-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence that guide each student effectively and efficiently from the selection of high school program to postsecondary entry through to attainment of high-quality credentials and careers with value in the labor market. (Texas Success Center, 2019, p. 4)

While this goal was admirable, it was important for a systematic change to happen. The higher education leadership pipeline had to work toward developing leaders that transformed the institutional culture of community colleges and understand that the status quo was no longer viable for student persistence (McNair et al., 2016).

**Chicano Historical Overview**

Scholars have noted that while there was no one clear definition for the term Chicano, those who identify as Chicano, developed a strong sense of pride and heritage (Acuña, 1972; Montoya, 2016). The Chicano Movement, also known as El Movimiento, ushered in a new era for those who identified as Chicano during the 1960s and 1970s (Rosales, 1997). El Movimiento gave birth to a new generation and new style of activism, the Chicano college student, which highlighted the struggles of the Chicano community (Montoya, 2016).

Initiatives from the War on Poverty increased the access to higher education for students who identified as Chicano, leading to many becoming politically involved and organizing for change on their respective college campuses (Montoya, 2016). Gaining momentum, Chicano college students led efforts that challenged the status quo in higher education, pressuring college
leaders to implement Chicano studies at their respective campuses. The power of the Chicano student, through their leadership, sent shockwaves across the country inspiring many more to begin organizing and become actively involved in changing how they were being treated on college campuses and in their communities (Montoya, 2016; Rosales, 1997). From California to Texas, Chicanos began to raise awareness on issues that directly impacted them, such as police brutality, labor exploitation, and educational inequities, as well as identifying strategies to begin developing leaders, which fueled the nationwide Chicano Movement.

**The Chicano Leader**

There were many challenges that Chicano leaders encountered as they navigated through the higher education leadership pipeline. These challenges contributed to the shortage of Chicano leaders, because of leadership models that were rooted in whiteness and acts of injustice, as well as being viewed as a threat to the status quo (Hernández, 2017; Okazi, 2009). These barriers impacted the community college leadership pipeline by discouraging those who genuinely wanted to make a difference through education. For example, they were more than likely to find themselves alone on various campus committees advocating for students of color (Hernández, 2017). This was critical for community college students who identified as Latina/o who often encountered systemic discrimination and trauma as they navigated a system that was not designed for them (Doran & Hengesteg, 2019). Rodriguez et al. (2015) found “an increasing need to consider how higher education institutions can better prepare, develop, and retain Latina and Latino leaders and scholars” (p. 138). Despite this, there have been numerous Chicano leaders that have answered the call to disrupt the status quo leading to systemic change.

While many believed that Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta were leaders of the Chicano Movement, the reality was they were not. Reis Lopez Tijerina, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzalez, and
Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez were just some of the influential Chicano leaders unified in fighting against systemic institutional racism in their communities during the Chicano movement. These Chicano leaders developed young people through grassroots and community organizing that changed the political, educational, labor, and leadership landscape for Chicanos everywhere (Gonzales, 2019; Gutierrez, 1979; Montoya, 2016).

Reis Lopez Tijerina organized Rio Arriba County residents, who were in poverty and under constant threat from bad policies established by National Forest Services (Gonzales, 2019). He began to call on the U.S. Federal Government for their mistreatment of Chicanos, arguing that the constant battle for land rights violated the guarantee of U.S. citizenship, including property rights, established in the Treaty of Guadalupe (Gonzales, 2019). Tijerina’s cause, the crusade to recover lost Hispano lands, sparked him to lead 20,000 New Mexico residents by establishing a shared struggle.

In the barrios of Denver, Colorado, Rodolfo Gonzalez realized the power young people had from these urban areas (Gonzales, 2019). His leadership experience began in the early 1960s where he turned to Democratic politics after his boxing career ended. Realizing that the notorious two-party system was not serving the Chicano community, he founded La Crusada Para la Justicia (the Crusade for Justice) which focused on young people and the injustices they were encountering (Gonzales, 2019; Montoya, 2016; Rosales, 1997). He influenced and joined student walkouts across Denver as a form of direct action against the injustices they were experiencing within the school systems (Gonzales, 2019). As student walkouts gained national exposure, he quickly realized the need for a unified organization leading him to bring together over fifteen thousand Chicanos for the first Chicano Youth Liberation Convention (Gonzales,
2019; Rosales, 1997). Gonzalez’s courageous leadership in challenging the status quo brought the Chicano struggle in America to the forefront in national politics (Gonzales, 2019).

At a young age, Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez realized that Chicanos were often left out of newspapers, magazine articles, movies, books, and even the educational curriculum (Gutierrez, 1979). Like other Chicano leaders, Dr. Gutierrez began to organize local activists in Crystal City, Texas, creating a grassroots movement that developed leaders for the political shift within Crystal City. Constant threats from White supremacy created a sense of solidarity among Chicanos, emboldening them to be more determined and motivated to change the political landscape. Combining his lived experiences with the education he received, he also led efforts in the development of La Raza Unida Party, which confronted the issues of ethnic intolerance focusing on Texas politics and eventually taking on a national stage. Dr. Gutierrez’s leadership has empowered Chicanos throughout the years across various socio-economic sectors in our society.

**Whiteness**

Racial dynamics within society were often visible throughout higher education institutions in the United States (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017). When racial incidents occurred on college campuses, campus leadership did not confront them directly, describing the incidents as isolated rather than a systemic or institutional norm (Cole & Harper, 2016). Failure to acknowledge the historical roots and evolution of racism in higher education contributed to the false notions that racial progress is present, further damaging the experiences of people of color on college campuses (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017; Golash-Boza, 2018; Museus et al., 2015). These dominant color-blind ideologies attempted to mask the permeation of racism in
higher education that includes standardized testing, policies, funding, faculty pipeline, and hostility in the classroom (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017; Museus et al., 2015).

White higher education leaders have often placed the onus on people of color for low graduation rates, as well as the lack of leaders of color in the leadership pipeline, without considering how Whiteness influenced every aspect of academia (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017). Leaders today did not factor in that higher education was specifically designed for White people and that the many microaggressions leaders of color encountered were directly related to White supremacy in academia (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017). The Whiteness in higher education created a hostile environment for higher education professionals of color (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017).

Kegan and Lahey (2016) described how cultural initiatives in the workplace give employees meaning, opportunities for self-improvement, and leadership development creating a place for them to flourish. Furthermore, Kegan and Lahey stated that deliberately developmental organizations (DDO) uniquely have “a set of routines and practices for getting work done, a unique language, and shared deep assumptions about how the world works, how problems get solved, and what is valued” (p. 115). The DDO culture was problematic for professionals of color because organizational cultures were derived from norms and standards that had been established and were deeply embedded by Whiteness, which often went unnoticed (Jones & Okun, 2001). If or when a person of color attempted to disrupt the norms and standards within the organization, he or she became a threat to the culture of Whiteness as their counternarrative challenged or disputed the narrative of White people (Sue, 2015).

Whiteness manifested and was maintained through the discursive practices that reified the expected social order higher education professionals are expected to maintain (Goldstein
Hode & Meisenbach, 2016). To truly get to a point of racial equity within higher education, White people must develop their racial consciousness and understand the impact of their White privilege and work toward dismantling it. Understanding and addressing Whiteness disrupts the cultural norms within higher education institutions that have historically put people of color at a disadvantage, especially in the higher education leadership pipeline (Allen, 2011; Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017; Singleton, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Rodriguez et al. (2015) described how leadership in effect was power and influence for transformation. For true transformation to happen, acknowledging the racialized realities of the United States, the growing Chicano demographic, and the system of oppression that existed in the P–20 pipelines for Chicanos was critical to the concept of understanding their leadership development. Chicano scholars used CRT to analyze the experiences of historically underrepresented populations across the K–16 educational pipelines (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Traditionally, CRT literature primarily revolved around the Black-White paradigm that denotes the racial discourse around racial experiences and conditions of blacks and whites while ignoring other racial groups (Museus et al., 2015).

Progressive legal scholars of color, who argued that legal scholarship had not analyzed how the role of racism shaped the U.S. legal system, developed CRT (Museus et al., 2015). CRT provided scholars a lens to view how racism and White supremacy had been enacted in society as it challenges the normative standard established by Whiteness and grounded its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color (Closson, 2010). CRT described how
“deeply issues of racial ideology and power continue to matter in American life” (Patterson, 2001, p. 96). Five themes emerged to describe CRT, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*CRT Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The permanence of race and</td>
<td>Race and racism are central factors in the experiences of people of color and intersect with gender and class (Crenshaw et al., 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>racism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenges to dominant</td>
<td>Challenges the traditional claims of the educational system, dominant beliefs or meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity (Calmore, 1992; Crenshaw et al., 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>Employs transdisciplinary knowledge from history, ethnic studies, women’s studies, sociology, law, and other fields to better understand racism, sexism, and classism in education and analyzes racism in both historical and contemporary contexts (Delgado &amp; Stefancic, 2002; Garcia, 1995; Harris, 1993).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to social justice</td>
<td>Commitment to struggle for the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression (Matsuda, 1996).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality of experiential</td>
<td>Experiential knowledge of people of color provides legitimate and valuable tools for analyzing racial oppression and subordination (Bell, 1987; Delgado &amp; Stefancic, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The permanence of race and racism resulted from the generations of dominant structures that created oppressive systems aimed at silencing the racial experiences of oppressed marginalized groups (Freire, 2012). These structures had created a society where race and racism were a natural part of the American way of life (Asch, 2000). While race created confusion for all racial groups, everyday experiences that people of color encountered about racism became valid through the historical impact of racism in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Singleton, 2015). While the concept of race continued to be a critical factor in American society, scholars suggested that “race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 50).
Challenging the dominant ideology confronted the deficit framework, color-blindness, and meritocracy in institutions that were established by dominant White norms (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Traditionally, dominant groups had attempted to legitimize their status of dominance through policy, practices, and procedures to maintain whiteness within organizations (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Sleeter, 2017). Even concerning leadership, the dominant ideology was normalized as most leadership theories had not factored in the experiences of leaders of color, which further reinforced White supremacy (Latten & Pérez, 2019; Radd & Jamay Groslan, 2019). If left unchecked, operating under a color-blind ideology, whether conscious or unconsciously, maintained white supremacy as logical; therefore, CRT provided the necessary tools to challenge and disrupt the dominant ideology (Lee Allen & Liou, 2018; Radd & Jamay Groslan, 2019).

Interdisciplinary perspectives analyzed race and racism in a historical perspective and contemporary context by the transdisciplinary knowledge and methodological base of ethnic studies, women’s studies, sociology, history, law, and other fields that attempted to understand the experiences people of color encounter with racism, sexism, and classism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The tenet of CRT deconstructed the dominant structures of knowledge and attempted “to understand the oppressive aspects of society to generate societal and individual transformation” (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 311) as a form of resistance, which was critical as often the stories of the dominant group distorted or silenced the experiences of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

The commitment to the social justice framework attempted to eliminate racism, sexism, and poverty while empowering underrepresented minority groups through liberatory or transformative resistance (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). For people of color, the
commitment to the social justice framework was “political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible” (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 320). The need for a social justice framework within organizations was critical as oppression appeared in social institutions such as the K–16 educational system, politics, healthcare, economy, media, religion, family, and military (Vaccaro, 2011). Scholars have suggested that “the practice of social justice leadership begins with an awareness of inequities and unequal circumstances confronted by marginalized groups and a leadership orientation fixated on addressing these inequities” (DeMatthews, 2016, p. 8). CRT exposed the inequities and provided a voice for people of color, which then activated the commitment to social justice (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

People of color have provided valuable insight into how race is prevalent in every part of our society through the suffering they have encountered during their lived experiences (Kennedy, 1989). Scholars have noted that “the assumption follows that People of Color ‘lack’ the social and cultural capital required for social mobility,” which created a deficit mindset that they did not have “the knowledge, social skills, abilities, and cultural capital” to navigate systems (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). The application of CRT challenged these distorted notions of knowledge that often favored White people over people of color and revealed the valuable assets gained through lived experiences of people of color.

**Latina and Latino Critical Race Theory.** Similarly, to CRT, LatCrit has provided a voice for Chicano’s as it addressed the issues often ignored by CRT such as language, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and sexuality race, sex, class, culture, accent, and immigration status (Espinoza, 1990; Garcia, 1995; Hernández-Truyol, 1997). Furthermore, LatCrit has challenged the dominant discourse on race and racism as it considered the various intersectionality’s related
to Chicanos, such as language, culture, and immigration (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Like CRT, LatCrit has challenged the deficit mindset toward Chicanos, often held by white people, and recognized the value of knowledge gained through their lived experiences from “story-telling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, testimonios, cuentos, consejos, and chronicles” (Bell, 1987; Carrasco, 1996; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Finally, LatCrit has allowed scholars and activists to accept and legitimize the historical and cultural perspective from members of the Chicano community (Alemán, 2009a).

Traditionally, CRT scholars have studied race only on the Black-White binary making the current discourse on race for Chicanos inadequate (Alemán, 2009b). Utilizing LatCrit was “the best way to attack the effects of racism upon Chicanos” (Alemán, 2009a, p. 185); therefore, for the integrity of this study, I have focused on the experiences of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges because it was most appropriate and relevant (Rosales, 1997).

**Leadership**

Northouse (2016) suggested that the concept of leadership has changed over time with different meanings for different people. Therefore, for purposes of this study, leadership has been defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2016, p. 5). Leadership has been an ongoing transactional event, between the leader and follower, to which the leader used their influence to move groups of people toward a common goal. Leadership went beyond a trait or personal characteristic of an individual and was not restricted to a specific skill. Leadership omitted the use of cohesive power and directed people away from caring about their needs and concerns, which established trust and built alliances (Phillips, 1999).
Traditional attitudes toward leadership had perpetuated the romance of a heroic individual who was truly invested in the self-interest of others while failing to recognize how this view upheld the norms of Whiteness (Liu & Baker, 2016). The societal context to which leadership has been viewed was rooted in White Supremacy. Lee Allen and Liou (2018) stated:

“In describing White supremacy as a social system, we are referring to a larger society that, despite times of what may seem like racial progress (e.g., the Civil Rights Era or Reconstruction), is fundamentally arranged to ensure that Whites remain in control of society, as they work to unjustly and immorally construct a higher social status over people of color.” (p. 2)

In sum, to be a leader meant to be White (Liu & Baker, 2016). Northouse (2016) suggested that “the concept of power is related to leadership because it is a part of the influence” (p. 9), which was expected from leaders. However, when leaders of color attempted to disrupt discourses within organizations, they were often met with resistance from those who held positional power.

**Racial and Cultural Identity Development Model**

A common struggle within the Chicano community has been the struggle for self-identification (Ramirez, 1996). Self-identification has developed through inter-personal interactions starting at home, communities, and schools (Diego Vigil, 1988). History has also shown a strong anti-Chicano and anti-immigration sentiment toward Chicanos in the United States, which dates as far back as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (López, 2016). The anti-Chicano sentiment and issues of race created an identity crisis within the Chicano community, as many began to question their identity and reject the term Chicano. Rodolfo Gonzales eloquently described the Chicano identity crisis in his 1967 poem, “I Am Joaquin: An Epic Poem:”
I am Joaquin.
Lost in a world of confusion,
Caught up in a whirl of gringo society,
Confused by the rules,
Scorned by attitudes,
Suppressed by manipulations,
And destroyed by modern societies.
—Gonzales, 2001, p. 16

The search for true self-identity extended beyond the Chicano community, especially as they “have become a part of a larger identity rubric, Latinos, encompassing them as well as millions of others with origins of Latin America and the Caribbean (e.g., Salvadorans, Dominicans, Colombians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, etc)” (Montoya, 2016, p. ix). Sociopolitical influences and the effects of racism and oppression contributed to the shaping of racial identity for many individuals (Sue & Sue, 2015). The inferior status of Chicano’s continued to be reinforced and perpetuated by national, state, and local educational outcomes which upheld white supremacy in the higher education leadership pipeline (Museus et al., 2015; Sue & Sue, 2015). To provide a counternarrative, it was imperative that Chicanos develop their own racial consciousness leading to a true sense of identity.

Sue and Sue (2015) provided a model that proposed five levels of development oppressed people experienced as they develop their racial consciousness within the dominant social system they navigate. These five levels of development were: (a) conformity, (b) dissonance, (c) resistance and immersion, (d) introspection, and (e) integrative awareness. As shown in Table 3 constructed by Sue and Sue, the attitudes and beliefs a person held were an integral part of their
identity and were reflected in how they viewed themselves, members of their racial group, other racial groups, and the dominant group.

**Table 3**

*Racial/Cultural Identity Stages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of minority development model</th>
<th>Attitude toward self</th>
<th>Attitudes toward others of the same group</th>
<th>Attitude toward others of a different marginalized group</th>
<th>Attitude toward the dominant group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Self-depreciating or neutral due to low race salience</td>
<td>Group-depreciating or neutral due to low race salience</td>
<td>Discriminatory or neutral</td>
<td>Group-appreciating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance</td>
<td>Conflict between self-depreciating and group-appreciating</td>
<td>The conflict between group-depreciating views of minority hierarchy and feelings of shared experience</td>
<td>Conflict between dominant-held and group-depreciating</td>
<td>Conflict between group-appreciating and group-depreciating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance and immersion</td>
<td>Self-appreciating</td>
<td>Group-appreciating experiences and feelings of culurocentrism</td>
<td>Conflict between feelings of empathy for another minority</td>
<td>Group-depreciating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introspection</td>
<td>Concern with basis of self-appreciation</td>
<td>The concern with the nature of unequivocal appreciation</td>
<td>Concern with the basis of ethnocentric appreciation for judging others</td>
<td>Concern with the basis of group depreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative awareness</td>
<td>Self-appreciating</td>
<td>Group-appreciating</td>
<td>Group-appreciating</td>
<td>Selective appreciation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice, by D. Sue and D. Sue, 2015. Copyright 2015 by John Wiley & Sons.*

The racial/cultural identity development model helped Chicanos make meaning of their identities, as they navigated White frameworks that had discouraged many to be their authentic selves. Like all people of color, Chicanos had to navigate White systems that were filled with incidents of racial microaggressions delivered either consciously or unconsciously by Whites.
Microaggressions encountered by people of color, including Chicanos, included “assumption of criminality, lesser intelligence, alien in own land, color blindness, the myth of meritocracy, second-class citizenship, and pathologizing communication styles” (Sue, 2015, p. 126), which had major effects that made them question their identities.

**Leadership Identity Development Model**

Although leadership research has focused on the development of leadership capacity for specific groups of people, such as women, youth, or business executives, far less attention has been devoted to leadership development across an individual’s lifespan or to an individual’s development of leadership self-concept or identity (Komives et al., 2009). As shown in Table 4, Komives et al. (2009) described the key stages to leadership identity development, which included: (a) awareness, (b) exploration/engagement, (c) leader identified, (d) leadership differentiation, (e) generativity, and (f) integration/synthesis.

**Table 4**

**LID Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Becoming aware that there are leaders ‘out there’ who are external to self like the President of the United States, one’s mother, or a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Exploration/engagement</td>
<td>A period of immersion in group experiences usually to make friends; a time of learning to engage with others (e.g., swim team, boy scouts, church choir).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leader identified</td>
<td>Viewing leadership as the actions of the positional leader of a group; an awareness of the hierarchical nature of relationships in groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership differentiated</td>
<td>Viewing leadership also as nonpositional and as a shared group process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Generativity</td>
<td>A commitment to developing leadership in others and having a passion for issues or group objectives that the person wants to influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Integration/synthesis</td>
<td>Acknowledging the personal capacity for leadership in diverse contexts and claiming the identity as a leader without having to hold a positional role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptual Framework Discussion

The struggle to incorporate racial equity in the higher education leadership pipeline was a real task that has required bold and courageous leadership. Chicano leaders in the higher education leadership pipeline who are committed to racial equity, access, and excellence have encountered increased challenges and “will need to be armed with more skills” (Rodriguez et al., 2015, p. 145). Institutional racism, Whiteness, and microaggressions were some of the challenges Chicanos have historically fought against in many areas.

Rodriguez et al. (2015) argued that scholars have advocated for the critical connection of using a CRT framework that acknowledged the racialized experiences of Chicano leaders to better advocate for the Chicano community. Therefore, as scholars have argued regarding “advocacy that brings race to the center can be powerful” (Rodriguez et al., 2015, p. 139), this study utilized LatCrit as a lens to understand the leadership identity development of Chicano leaders who served in the Texas Community College system (Alemán, 2009a).

Summary

The literature discussed in this chapter stressed the urgency of a new leadership approach within the higher education leadership pipeline. If community college leaders do not begin to prepare, develop, and retain leaders for the 21st century, the changing demographics, current economic crisis, and status quo will harm the United States. This becomes imperative, especially as “current practices continue to fail students” (Rodriguez et al., 2015, p. 148). Higher education leaders of today must begin to disrupt the status quo leadership pipeline and work toward intentionally developing Chicano leaders. In a system that attempts to take on a color-blind approach and silence, the voices of people of color in higher education, CRT, and Lat/Crit describe how racism impacts the leadership identity development process of Chicanos in Texas.
community colleges, which is not stated in LID model developed by Komives et al. (2009).

Furthermore, the literature reveals the importance of acknowledging, understanding, and identifying how the role of Whiteness impacts the Chicano experience in higher education and how these experiences become assets for a 21st-century educational system.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the factors, if any, that influence the leadership development of Chicanos who served in the Texas community college system. A single, broad research question guided this study: How do Chicano leaders understand their leadership identity development in Texas community colleges?

The use of testimonios, as a methodical approach, helped expose the racial inequities in the higher education leadership pipeline that impacted the leadership identity development of Chicanos. Furthermore, testimonios shed light on the oppressive encounters Chicanos experience in higher education, as well as their concerns regarding their voices being silenced, unrepresented, or misrepresented while achieving new conocimientos, or understandings (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). Finally, the research method in this study sought to understand the problems Chicanos encounter in the higher education leadership pipeline. This chapter contains the following subtopics: research paradigm, qualitative research, site and participants, data collection, data analysis, researcher’s role, limitations, and summary.

Research Paradigm

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described a paradigm as a set of basic beliefs or worldviews that humans hold and filter knowledge through. The paradigm that humans exist in created meaning which was gained through events and experiences one encounters (Krauss, 2005). Rubin and Rubin (2012) implied that the interpretive paradigm sought to understand the way people view the world and the experiences that lead to their understanding. The dominant view, a white view, has created a status quo sentiment within the educational system preventing it from reflecting a 21st-century society.
Historically, scholars have studied the White male perspective in research, which has created institutional paradigms of knowledge rooted in White supremacy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). To better understand the experiences of Chicanos and the development of their leadership identity it was decided to utilize a radical humanist paradigm lens for this study. Burrell and Morgan (1979) described the radical humanist paradigm as the attempt to create radical change from a subjectivist viewpoint. Chicano leaders navigate educational systems that were designed for white men in mind. The white system attempts to create harm by alienating, silencing, and disempowering Chicano leaders who are in these systems, which becomes a form of divide and conquer against them (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The radical humanist paradigm approach aligned with this study as it attempts to seek a new approach of leadership that dismantles the current social structures (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). To help understand the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants for this study and how they manifested their viewpoints, broad and open-ended questions were asked that found emergent themes through inductive reasoning (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Creswell, 2013; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Qualitative Research

Researchers have compared qualitative research as a unique, learn-as-you-go approach which was similar to on-the-job training in the workforce (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Within any paradigm, researchers utilized various methods to justify theories, such as consumer researchers who examined at-risk populations, for example economically disadvantaged or physically impaired students (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). Philosophical, empirical, and sociological factors influenced the emergence of the interpretive consumer paradigm. Moving beyond this traditional paradigm, I attempted to promote a culture of information and knowledge sharing
with the results of the findings through participatory action research (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008; Thiollent, 2011).

Roller and Lavrakas (2015) suggested that human beings engage in some form of qualitative research all the time. Scholars have utilized qualitative research to shed light and address issues surrounding equity and social justice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Researchers conducting a qualitative study began with the research design, the purpose of the study, and the strategies most effective to obtain the data. Operating in a complex historical field, qualitative research incorporated social science and humanities by including conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community. Creswell (2013) described how qualitative research was used for “the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, data analysis that is inductive…and establishes patterns or themes” (p. 44). To assist in understanding the phenomenon of Chicano leadership, the method of testimonio was selected for this qualitative study.

**Testimonios**

Chicanos have used testimonio as a form of inquiry to legitimize their lived experiences with race, gender, and sexuality (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). Chicano scholars have also used testimonio as a methodology in their scholarship to demystify oppressive work by mainstream scholars. This study employed the struggles and resistance experienced by Chicano Texas community college leaders gained through their personal and academic experiences in the leadership pipeline.

Scholars have deployed the use of testimonios to capture personal narratives in areas of Chicano studies (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). Using testimonio as a research tradition has revealed deeper meanings and interpretations of data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). This tradition
has helped to understand how Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges developed their leadership, as well as how their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences affected their leadership development. These experiences included stories, performances, films, songs, memoirs, and autobiography (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

**Roots of Testimonios**

The roots of testimonio were intentional and political as it provided a unique expression of spoken accounts to oppression (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). Since the 1970s, testimonio has been used in liberation efforts and geopolitical resistance movements to imperialism in third-world countries. The use of testimonios was founded in Latin America, providing Chicano scholars a tool to address the racialized lived experiences in the United States. For people of color, testimonios have recovered the knowledge produced and documented the struggles encountered for educational rights. Testimonios provided a voice and gives a narrative account for historically marginalized and oppressed groups of people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Forms of testimonio included speeches, newsletter columns, corridos, spoken word, and short writings (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). Testimonios aligned well with the purpose of this study to understand the factors, if any, that influence the leadership development of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges.

**The Use of Testimonial.** This research tradition exposed the inequities and injustices encountered by individuals that kept them from sharing their lived experiences (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). The use of testimonios has increased as scholars frame it as a methodological and social justice tool to stand up against systems of oppression in the field of academia. Using testimonio allowed participants to share their lived experiences by critical reflection, which then unveiled new approaches to understanding and addressing issues of inequity in the field of
education. The experiences of people can be represented in various forms such as myth, stories, films, songs, memoirs, and rituals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In short, testimonio linked the stories and narratives of individuals who have experienced discrimination and used them as a source of knowledge, empowerment, and political strategy to bridge the gaps of understanding and create social change (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

**Legitimizing the Chicano Experience.** The goal of testimonio was to name and disrupt the oppression that individuals experience including racism, classism, and institutional marginalization (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). Testimonios have provided hope, faith, and autonomy while challenging pervasive theories and policies that perpetuate educational failure through systemic institutionalized practices of oppression. Furthermore, the use of testimonio has focused on the collective experiences that Chicanos encounter in the leadership pipeline and used as a tool to “inscribe the struggles and understandings, creating new knowledge, and affirming their epistemologies” (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 367) in the leadership pipeline.

Through the testimonios of participants, an understanding was gained of how Chicanos in Texas community colleges developed their leadership identity and the factors that contributed to their development. The use of testimonio allowed me to capture “an experience that was not only liberating in the process of telling but also political in its production of awareness to listeners and readers alike” (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012, p. 526) of the Chicano experience in higher education, specifically Texas community colleges. Racism was deeply rooted in higher education, and the historical underrepresentation of Chicanos, in the leadership pipeline and leadership roles, were the focus of this study. Their testimonios shed light on the systemic barriers that either hindered or strengthened their leadership identity development.
Site and Participants

Saldaña and Omasta, (2018) stated that “site selection is a component of research design when fieldwork is necessary to provide data and thus possible answers to the research questions of interest” (p. 178). To generate rich data, I selected participants from different regions in Texas through purposive sampling (see Appendix A). Participants for this study included members of the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE), who served at a community college. This sampling strategy was defined as “the deliberate selection of participants who are most likely to provide insight into the phenomenon being investigated due to their position, experience, and/or identity markers” (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018, p. 418). Purposive sampling allowed me to select participants who identified as Chicano and provided meaningful data from identity markers, such as their race and ethnicity (see Appendix B). The selection criteria consisted of two current or past members of TACHE who had or currently serve at Texas community colleges.

Recruitment and Selection

Founded in 1974, TACHE is a professional association committed to the improvement of educational and employment opportunities for Chicanos in higher education. The organization’s purpose is to provide state, regional, and local forums for the discussion of issues related to Chicanos and Latinos in higher education and to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to create workable solutions for these issues. The goals for TACHE are educational advocacy, networking, recruitment and retention, and cultural promotion.

For over 42 years, TACHE has advocated for the historically underrepresented in higher education by speaking out against public policies that threaten to increase inequities in higher education. TACHE currently has six regions throughout the state of Texas with each having a
representative who serves as a bridge between chapters and the state board. Selecting and studying the experiences of two current or past members of TACHE provided a full picture of the firsthand experiences that Chicanos encountered within the higher education leadership pipeline (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). According to Saldaña and Omasta (2018), the purposive sampling approach served the study well, because as a former member of TACHE it was possible to approach members willing to take part in the research.

For confidentiality purposes and to protect the interest of the participants, I developed a detailed plan that stated how the participant’s confidentiality will be maintained and how nonparticipants will be prevented from identifying actual participants. Arrangements were made based on the participant’s preference to identify a location for the interviews, whether it be in person, via Zoom videoconference, over the phone, through emails, or on a questionnaire, and the time that best fits their schedules (see Appendix C). A consent form that included information about the research process on human subjects from the federally required Institutional Review Board (IRB) was developed and reviewed with each of the participants before the interview (see Appendix D). After the recorded interviews were completed, they were transcribed and the data collected. The integrity of the data was preserved by avoiding the changing or omitting of words provided by the participant (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Finally, the data collected were stored on a secure password-protected privately owned computer as a measure to protect the identity of the participants.

Data Collection

Interviews

Testimonio scholars recommended interviews (recorded or transcribed), diaries, letters, journals, memories, or oral histories, empowering Chicanos to “develop the narrative format as
“redemption” (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012, p. 526). Since testimonio was based on a sustained dialogue, I conducted conversational interviews via phone calls, in-person, Zoom videoconferencing, and email exchanges with past and current members of TACHE who serve or have served at community colleges in the state of Texas (Benmayor, 2012). Furthermore, given the global COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing requirements interviews were video-conferenced via Zoom. Interviews conducted through Zoom were password-protected, preventing any type of Zoom bombings or other interruptions (see Appendix E). Recordings from Zoom were stored on a password-secured privately owned computer and the audio recordings were uploaded via the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) compliant transcription software TranscribeMe. A second round was conducted in order ensure to all pauses and auditory responses were captured.

Saldaña and Omasta (2018) advised researchers to record interviews and refer back to them if clarification was needed. In addition to note-taking, an audio recorder was utilized while conducting the interviews. Creswell (2013) suggested that research seeking to understand lives, such as life stories, was best when attempting to capture the lived experiences of an individual or a small number of individuals. Working in tandem with this practice, this study sought to capture the in-depth testimonios of two Chicano leaders along a timeline for data collection as described by Creswell, as shown in Table 5.
Table 5

Data Collection & Analysis Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Obtain IRB approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Call and speak to participants inviting them to be a part of the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Follow up with participants who accepted the invitation for times and dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conduct two interviews with the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Complete interviews with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Transcribe data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data Analysis

Listening to the testimonios during the interviews was key, as the responsibility of the listener was to engage the subject in an attempt to understand their lived experiences (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). Testimonios allowed a view into the subject’s world as their hearts and minds were opened during the interview process, creating a sense of solidarity with the researcher. Through testimonio, data were gathered regarding feelings, emotions, knowledge, silences, and identities in an attempt to understand the experiences of Texas community college Chicano leaders. This approach fits best for the study as the experiences of Texas community college Chicano leaders were often dismissed by the power structures in academia, hence, the reasoning for the development of TACHE and the organization's longevity.
**Chronological Ordering**

Data were organized chronologically to ensure the testimonios of the participants were completely captured and recorded. In addition, the recommended steps were followed as suggested by Vagle (2016):

- Focus on intentionality and not subjective experience.
- Balance verbatim excerpts, paraphrasing, and personal descriptions and interpretations.
- Understand that the researcher is crafting a text rather than just coding, categorizing, making assertions, and reporting.

Finally, as suggested by Vagle, the whole-parts-whole process strategy was initiated: (a) read the entire text holistically, (b) first line-by-line reading, (c) follow-up questions, (d) second line-by-line reading, (e) third line-by-line reading, and (f) subsequent readings.

**Coding**

The purpose of the process coding method was to “identify forms of participatory action, reaction, and interaction suggested by the data” (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018, p. 126). This approach was best for the study as it described the participant’s role and experience within the stories they were sharing and disrupts the silence of the Texas community college Chicano leader by challenging the status quo (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Cultural intuition helped to reenter a foundation that included knowledge built from personal and academic experiences that shaped the way the data were understood and how it was interpreted in the research process (Pérez Huber, 2010). Another source of cultural intuition was found in the analytical process itself that brought meaning to the data. Recording the experiences of the participants individually allowed evaluation of each story equally as patterns or themes were identified through the analysis process (Clandinin, 2013).
The performance of member-checking with the participants helped initiate the process code analyses in two cycles using motif and inductive coding. The coding process was conducted manually. For the integrity of this study, descriptive codes were used through testimonios from the participants. Codes from the participants’ testimonios were collected and integrated to analyze the lived experiences of the interviewee, a process called code weaving by Saldaña and Omasta (2018). Existing literature and research material were reviewed to help identify themes that may have already been developed through the coding process, a concept known as concept-driven coding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Coding the participants' interviews assisted the performance of a more in-depth analysis of the themes that were revealed through testimonios, as shown in Figure 1 (Saldaña, 2016).
Figure 1

Data Analysis Process

Note. The data analysis process shows associations between the collection of testimonios (data), the chronological ordering of the data, coding the data, and identifying themes from the data. Adapted from Crafting Phenomenological Research by M. D. Vagle, 2016, Routledge.

Limitations and Delimitations

Saldaña and Omasta (2018) inferred that limitations described “what was not addressed in the study, cautions about its findings” generalizability to broader populations, confess any errors made during the researcher process, and so on’ (p. 168). Limitations associated with this study included the role of gender identification and the limited research on the leadership identity development of Chicanos. No judgments were made when conducting the interviews during the data collection process to avoid what could be interpreted as research bias. Data collection relied on the testimonios from members of TACHE who respond to the invitations for this study.
Finally, the direction of this study was based on the participant's vulnerability to open up and share their experiences.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles need to be established to ensure proper protocols are in place for research. Three basic ethical principles include (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. Researchers who launch qualitative studies must abide by these principles to ensure the protection of humans who participate in studies (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Before any data were gathered, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted to Abilene Christian University (ACU). This study proceeded only after having received approval.

Once approved by the IRB, participants reviewed and completed a consent form explaining the purpose of the study and their rights as a participant. Understanding the results from this study revealed some significant racially divisive practices within the participant's employment, therefore, confidentiality was maintained by keeping their identities secured. Furthermore, the procedures of the study were explained to the participants inclusive of any risks or benefits from this study. Then, the participants were offered an opportunity to ask any questions and ensured that they understand that their participation was strictly voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any point without any consequences.

The names of the participants were altered for confidentiality; however, their gender, age, and region of employment were not altered to compare and contrast their testimonios and determine if there were any correlations. To maintain the integrity of the study, it was crucial that the participants testimonios remained accurate and not altered through the coding process; therefore, professional and ethical boundaries were established to assure accurate coding (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).
Once the study was complete, the transcribed data were uploaded to ACU’s secured server for three years, as required by ACU policy. Given the nature of testimonios, permission was requested from the participants to either keep the raw data for future publications or to publish the raw data in the Appendix, or return it to them if they deny my request, or digitally shred the data using the software, CBL Data Shredder. Finally, adhering to the code of conduct established by the Belmont Report, digital interview files were stored on a password-locked computer for the required 3 years after publication per ACU’s IRB protocol.

**Summary**

As described above, the purpose of this study was to understand the leadership identity development of Chicanos who serve in Texas community colleges. While there have been studies describing the leadership crisis and leadership in the workplace, there were few studies that explored how existing leadership norms and theories need to be expanded to encompass the future population of leaders across race, sex, and age.

The testimonios of Chicanos have provided a foundation for future studies to begin developing 21st-century theoretical frameworks for leadership that leveraged their assets while adding value to the field of leadership. This chapter, provided a review of the research paradigm, research method, how the participants were selected for data collection, and how the data were analyzed. Furthermore, this chapter described the ethical principles and limitations of the study. In an attempt to understand the leadership identity development of the participants, the goal was to ensure confidentiality and trust while participants shared the intimate parts of their life experience. It was therefore of utmost importance to follow all guidelines mandated by ACU’s IRB.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

Structural Organization of the Chapter

This chapter analyzes the testimonios of three participants to understand their lived experiences while in a leadership role at an institution of higher learning. With regards to testimonios, Delgado Bernal et al. (2012) described how the role of the researcher was to collect the testimonios of the participants “in a critical reflection of their personal experiences within particular sociopolitical realities” (p. 364).

The research findings presented within this chapter describe the recorded, analyzed, and interpreted data regarding how three participants made sense of those experiences. The purpose of this testimonio study was to understand the factors, if any, that influence the leadership development of Chicano leaders who served in the Texas community college system. A single, broad research question guided this study: How do Chicano leaders understand their leadership identity development in Texas community colleges?

Thematic Analysis

The following section presents a thematic discourse analysis of findings from this study that provides opportunities directed toward understanding how Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges understood their leadership identity development within Texas community colleges. From the testimonios of three participants, three themes and six subthemes emerged to describe the social and political environment in which they worked daily, and how the challenges in the system developed their sense of self-awareness and pride. Finally, each theme describes how the participants had to inform and deconstruct the dominant White spaces that were detrimental to the development of students and future leaders. The themes appeared as a series of discoveries for each participant, resulting in a chronological ordering of experiences.
The thematic analysis conducted in this study consisted of reviewing the data set, back and forth, multiple times while identifying any “repeated patterns or meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 15) from the data collected. First, I uploaded the recordings of the participants’ testimonios to TranscribeMe.com and it took a week for them to send me the recordings on transcripts. Once received, I went through each testimonio, line-by-line, a total of three times to ensure that I did not miss any data that aligned with this study. As I went through the data line-by-line, I wrote words that had meaning, generating initial codes, and then began to cluster them into groups with overarching themes (Appendix F). Once this was complete, I then began to review the codes to ensure there was enough evidence to back them up and then moved into the “overarching group themes to fit in the overall story” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 22). Finally, once all themes were defined and identified, I was then able to begin writing up the answers to the research question.

**Figure 2**

*Phases of Thematic Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get to know the data</td>
<td>• Transcribe the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read line-by-line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate initial coding</td>
<td>• Identify words with meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cluster codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify themes</td>
<td>• Identify themes in the clusters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure enough data backs up themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review themes</td>
<td>• Checking themes aligning to coded extracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop thematic map of the analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining and name themes</td>
<td>• Refine each theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Define themes clearly and name them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodological Organization of the Findings

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the testimonio research tradition has provided hope, faith, and autonomy while challenging pervasive theories and policies that have led to systemic institutionalized practices of oppression (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). The goal of testimonio is to identify the oppression individuals experience, including racism, classism, and other types of institutional marginalization. A testimonio transcends oral history or autobiography through critical reflection of personal experience within certain political and cultural histories. Furthermore, by situating individuals within a shared experience, testimonio challenges objectivity supported by marginalization, oppression, or resistance. The testimonios of the participants in this study exposed the current racial climate within their respective community colleges and how racism is a regular occurrence in their everyday experiences.

This chapter is organized into seven main sections as the researcher, through the testimonios of the participants, attempted to understand their lived experiences in Texas community colleges and their impact on leadership identity development. Section 1 addressed the methodological organization of the findings and describes how the data were analyzed revealing the emergent themes. Through the interview process, Section 2 provides a deep reflection of the participants and the data collection, which surfaces valuable information regarding the maintenance of participant anonymity. Section 3 presents an introduction to the broader context that describes the environment in which the participants navigate through social, political, and economic situations regularly. Section 4 describes the role of an actor who collaborates with the participants. Section 5 provides a greater understanding of the individual context regarding each participant, their cultural and professional status, as well as their testimonios that give a structured narrative, about their experiences within a leadership position.
at a Texas community college. Section 6, thematic analysis of findings, briefly describe the three themes and six subthemes that emerged from the analyses of the data. Section 7 connects the emergent themes and subthemes to the thematic analysis of the findings and describes each theme and the corresponding subthemes. Finally, the conclusion provides a concise detailing of the results from this study and transitions into Chapter 5.

**Historical and Current Context**

Chicano scholar and advocate Rodolfo Acuña (1972) once wrote “history can either oppress or liberate a people” (p. 1). These words alone should challenge individuals to unpack how racism in Texas, has left a lasting legacy of its pervasiveness toward Chicanos while moving toward learning it from a point of liberation. Other scholars (Barrera, 1979; Menchaca, 2001; Museus et al., 2015) have noted that the legacy of racism toward Chicano’s dates are as far back as 1519 when the Spanish began the systematic genocide of Mexico’s indigenous people.

The conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards resulted in the development of a European-style caste system that produced four racial categories: Europeans (Spaniards), Mestizos, Indians, and Slaves who were usually of African origin (Burton, 2000). The caste system created a hierarchy that placed white Spaniards at the top allowing them to gain economic privilege while holding political and positional power. Eventually, in the early 19th century, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and abolished the caste system along with slavery. However, the impact of the caste system led to race becoming an influential factor in Mexico’s history. Early 20-century White historians, described mestizos as “uncultured Mexicans and gente baja (lower-class people) leading to the denigration of the mestizos and the perpetuation of the assumption that mestizos and Indians did not have anything in common” (Menchaca, 2001, p. 17). White
historians added to the notion of seeing Chicanos as the lowest of lows and this can be depicted during times of Manifest Destiny.

Two racial scripts impacted Mexicans and were justified through the ideology of Manifest Destiny: indigeneity and whiteness (Molina, 2014). The connection between Mexicans and their indigenous roots created a sense of racial inferiority on their land. For white settlers, Manifest Destiny justified the notion that Mexicans were unable to govern themselves, on their land, “eventually becoming a rallying cry for the United States to invade Mexico” (Molina, 2014, p. 25). On their land and in a new country, Mexicans began to experience the psychological impact of being viewed as inferior by some whites who viewed themselves as superior. This became even more evident after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

**The Signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe.** Despite these guarantees through the signing of the treaty, White Americans began to treat new Mexican Americans as second-class citizens even terrorizing them through acts of violence and various forms of oppression that limited their livelihood (Menchaca, 2001). Mexican Americans, specifically those in Texas, have struggled to define their place in a country that is defined by a black-white binary social construct (Rodriguez, 2009). Covarrubias (2011) suggested that “the Chicano educational pipeline demonstrates that people of Mexican origin continue to be failed by American educational institutions at all levels” (p. 92). Appendix G presents a timeline of events that have contributed to the anti-Mexican sentiment in the United States.
(see. Table 6)

*Chronological Order of Major Events Leading to the Oppression of the Mexican People*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1519</td>
<td>Spanish conquest</td>
<td>Spanish Conquistadors led by Hernan Cortes, killed off and enslaved the indigenous people of Mexico leading to the mass extermination of the Aztecs by 1521.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Manifest Destiny</td>
<td>White Americans believed that it was their destiny to occupy land in the west, implementing the ideology of Manifest Destiny (Rosales, 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Mexican American War</td>
<td>White Americans waged war on Mexico viewing themselves as superior and the indigenous people of Mexico as inferior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo</td>
<td>This treaty signaled the end of the Mexican American War and converted Mexican citizens to United States citizens and guaranteed property rights to those who lived in the region (Montoya, 2016).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Gadsden Purchase</td>
<td>The United States purchases land from Mexico that is now southern Arizona and southern New Mexico.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The United States’ policy of Manifest Destiny began with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and ended with the Spanish-American War in 1898.

**The Participants Within the Historical and Current Context.** The permeance of racism in Texas has created a strong anti-Mexican sentiment, leading many Chicanos today, to either conform to Whiteness by abandoning their Chicano identity or learning about their Chicano roots later in life. Like many of their ancestors, the sense of “not belonging” or being viewed as a second class is experienced as a Texas community college Chicano leader and will be discussed further in the findings. The following subsections contribute to these concepts of identity, exploring the individuals within the broader context and the role of the researcher. I also provide a portrait of my personal experiences because they contribute to the findings through descriptions of situations and how I understand my position within the broader context of this study.
The racial experiences of Chicanos have often been ignored or overlooked in the educational systems leaving many to learn when they become adults and in their postsecondary studies. Now as an adult, I wish I had learned about _mi historia_ at a much younger age rather than later in life. The use of U.S. history books written by Chicanos would help foster a more accurate portrayal of the Chicano experience, create a positive image of the Chicano community, and give voice to the many Chicano achievements.

The anti-Mexican sentiment has left a lasting legacy in our educational system and overall U.S. society and can still be seen today. In 2010, Tom Horne led a state-wide effort to dismantle educational programs that benefited Chicanos in Arizona. One of his primary targets was the Mexican American Studies Department who implemented a program that increased both, the success and completion rates for Tucson Unified School District Chicano students and college success. Tom Horne claimed that the program was “anti-American and anti-white” (Gillborn, 2013, p. 131). The most recent anti-Mexican sentiment was on full display for the whole country in 2016 as, at the time, candidate Donald J. Trump described Mexicans as drug dealers, criminals, and rapists during his campaign trail (CNN, 2015). The words that Trump used to describe Mexicans are deeply rooted in white supremacy and perpetuated the notion that Chicanos are second-class citizens.

**Current 21st-Century Challenges.** The novel Coronavirus disrupted the course of life globally and has impacted the United States in numerous ways. For a few months, the world was closed leaving many at home uncertain of what the future may look like. Appendix H provides a timeline of the novel COVID-19 providing a glimpse of how fast the virus spread in the United States and its impact.
Along with the global crisis with COVID-19, the world watched George Floyd, a Black Man, killed on TV by a white police officer and Brown immigrant kids ripped apart from their families and thousands of them literally in cages (Inequality, Opportunity, & Poverty, 2020; The Seattle Times, 2020).

The United States, as a whole, is slowly moving toward bringing racial equity to the forefront (Presidential Actions, 2021). While I am glad to see this, I also recognize that there is a strong movement that is pushing back, slowing down the progress for racial equity. The pushback has been displayed by President Donald J. Trump signing an executive order on September 4, 2020, stating that anti-racism work is “divisive, un-American, and anti-white” (see Appendix I). Because the President of The United States of America specifically signed an executive order that attempts to dismantle racial equity work just goes to show that some white people have usurped the power to determine when racism is real or not. Until white America can see, hear, and feel the pain from racism, we will continue to see these same actions and nothing will ever change for people of color (ACLU, 2020).

In the context of this study, each participant had experienced a form of institutional racism that required them to negotiate how they should conduct themselves at work daily. Further, each participant described how they conformed to the role of whiteness in their community and how it has impacted their leadership identity development in the workplace. Finally, as each participant unpacked their racialized experiences at their community college, they found that being a member of the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education TACHE provided a space for them to connect with fellow Chicano colleagues providing a sense of belonging and support.
Revisiting the Role of the Researcher

The general role of the qualitative researcher is to explore the data and record the themes that emerge from an “extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data are about and what it means” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 175). Concerning testimonios, Delgado Bernal et al. (2012) described how the role of the researcher was to collect the testimonios of the participants “in a critical reflection of their personal experiences within particular sociopolitical realities’ (p, 364). Open-ended questions were asked of each participant, helping to contribute to the recollection of events that often developed negative or unhealthy emotional responses. To make sure participants were comfortable, space was created that was warm, welcoming, and personal through the sharing of my life experience with the participants. This included sharing testimonios about my educational journey, immediate family members, the stories of ancestors, and the struggles encountered in academia and life in general. The participants and I shared laughs, memories, and even tears as we realized we shared a common struggle. Once the participants felt comfortable with sharing their testimonios, they were asked if they were ready to proceed with the interviews. As the interviews moved forward, the pain they expressed from racism and white supremacy could be heard and empathized.

Participants’ Background and Testimonios

This study explores the leadership identity development of Chicanos in a Texas community college (see Appendix L). The brief description of the background of each participant advances an understanding of personal context for each testimonio. Also, a presentation of each participant’s demographics provides a more complete understanding of gender and professional experience within the context of this study.
(see Table 7).

Participants’ Pseudonym, Self-Identified Race or Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>Chicano</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>Chicano</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>Chicano</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosie</td>
<td>Chicana</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A summary of each participants’ personal and professional profile.

My Portrait

As a Chicano and having worked in the community college setting, I noticed very few Chicano leaders within the institution. Furthermore, for the few that were in leadership roles, I would often hear about the many racialized experiences they would encounter as they worked toward moving up the leadership pipeline. Therefore, seeing very few Chicanos in leadership roles at the community college formed my topic of interest.

My role as the researcher positioned me within the broader context of this study to understand the nuances of how Chicanos must navigate the institutional biases and prejudices to thrive and succeed. These became shared experiences with the participants and fostered an environment for gathering intimate details of their lived experiences. The descriptions of the events which shaped the broader context provided a general background for the following sections that gave more specific details about each participant, as well as their testimonio.

For over 15 years, I worked to assist young people, college students, and adults develop racial consciousness by creating spaces for courageous conversations, and other opportunities to learn about the pervasive dynamics of racism while preparing them for action. Because of my journey, I have developed a strong belief that if racism is left unchecked, society will continue to see an increase of racially charged occurrences that impact success for students of color. My
lived experiences include being a high school dropout to now serving as an educator, mentor, advocate, and leader in the community. I believe that tomorrow’s leaders are today’s students, and there can be no more important task than teaching them to address issues of racism head-on. Combined, my education and lived experiences have prepared me to recognize and confront racism in our educational system and through institutional practices.

**Testimonio: Jonathan**

The following is my testimonio.

**Identity Formation**

I was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, and grew up in a predominately Chicano/Mexican, Mexican American community called Diamond Hill. These are some of my earliest memories of my community. For a long time, I was embarrassed about being from Diamond Hill because of the reputation it had. There was a time when my community, specifically the zip code I lived in, was considered one of the top 10 worst zip codes in the state of Texas. For some reason, the number of gangs, drugs, dropouts, drive-by shootings, and murders created a sense of pride for us in the streets, as our city became known as Murda Worth. I was in the sixth grade when I can remember walking home from school and seeing fights in the streets, gang members driving around playing (called bumping) their music really loud, and gang graffiti on walls, sidewalks, cars, homes, and other buildings. Rather than being scared, I often found myself trying to decode the letters spray-painted on the wall, eventually learning that the letters were VDH x13 or BDH x13. Seeing these letters tagged on the wall showed me that the gang in my barrio was Varrio/Barrio Diamond Hill x13. While I was not affiliated with the gangs at this point in my life, I knew what colors I could and could not wear in my neighborhood. Not really understanding why the walls were tagged with VDH, one thing was certain, anyone who
crossed it out, or attempted to deface it, would definitely be dealt with. Looking back, I feel uneasy thinking how learning to read the graffiti on the walls gave me insight into what was going on in the streets and who was beefing with each other.

While I considered myself a good student and received good grades in middle school things began to change when I entered high school. Bumping (influential music) to South Park Mexican and Brotha Lynch while running the streets with the homeboys was the beginning of my affiliation with VDH x13. Sagging khaki Dickies pants, all-black Dickies shirts, and black and white Chucks (shoes) or g-Nikes seemed to be the thing to wear at this time. In a sense, it felt like wearing these clothes was a rite of passage for a young Mexican in Diamond Hill transitioning from a kid to a G (gangster). With this also came the responsibility to protect my neighborhood and check (attempt to fight) anyone who disrespected it, whether it be crossing VDH out on the walls or affiliation from a rival gang while living in our neighborhood. The crazy thing is that I cannot recall any adult, in or out of school, trying to work with me or my homeboys and to steer us in a positive direction.

The weekends were always popping (filled with excitement) with something to do in the barrio. I was a 14-year-old kid bumping (playing loud music) Tupac, Triple Six Mafia, and corridos while drinking Bud Ice and smoking weed. This was the thing to do on the weekends because we were not old enough to go anywhere. Returning to school after the weekends was always interesting. This is how we would find out who was shot, who fought, who went to jail or juvey (juvenile detention), or who died. Our conversations about the weekend often happened in the back of the classroom, where we also planned what trouble we would either create or get into. If you missed out on hearing what happened over the weekend it was okay because anyone could hear about it at our local community center.
The Diamond Hill rec (recreation center) is where we all met after school. For some reason, everyone who had a car would cruise around the school once the day was over and it became the thing to do. Cruising around Diamond Hill High School became the thing to do, as we began to see kids from other neighborhoods and schools cruising around, too. Panson, Nares, Toke, and myself along with many other homeboys would stand in front of the Diamond Hill Recreation Center sign and just watch people cruise in their own cars or a parents’ or grandparents’ car. Realizing that people from other barrios were cruising in our neighborhood, I can remember all of us getting into the habit of hitting up those cars by throwing up VDH’s hand sign. We knew it was time to put in work when rival gangs would show up and spotted them by seeing a bandana hanging from their rear-view mirrors. Anyone who did not have a black and white or blue bandana were our enemies and whether you knew how to fight or not you were expected to throw it down (fight). The fights that were happening in the streets began to happen in the schools, as well. Scared to fight I knew that backing down was not an option for me and I had to prove that I was down for anything. I can remember, Tweet, one of my homeboys tell me, “Foo, you are short and stocky if you want respect in the streets then you need to make sure you always fight the biggest person even if you get your ass whooped.” Being prideful, I took this as a challenge and often found myself fighting the biggest person and getting my ass whooped plenty of times. While some may see this as a problem, I feel that the words Tweet shared with me has influenced a lot of my work as a professional. I see racism, institutional racism, and white supremacy as the biggest person in the fight and I am not afraid to confront or challenge it.

Things started to get deeper (worse) toward the end of my high school journey. Skipping school, always showing up late, fighting, going to class high, and not doing my work landed me in the principal’s office with suspension as the outcome. It became so common that the principal
would have me sit in his office during the school day, so I would not start any trouble or skip.

Little did I know, skipping and being held in the office put me behind in my work all while I was being marked absent. Things finally caught up to me when I showed up to my senior year of high school only to find out that I had failed and had to repeat the 11th grade. When I found out that I had failed, I asked school leaders what could I do to get caught up and graduate on time. The only option I was given was to attend a charter school on the other side of town and try to catch up there. By this time, my mom was tired of having to take off from work, because of the issues I was creating at school, so she had no problem taking me out of my zoned school and enrolling me into the charter school. Going into someone else’s neighborhood to attend school was the first thing that came to my mind every day as I was dropped off there. After two months of attending the charter school, I decided that I would rather start working and in January of 2001 and the age of seventeen, I decided to drop out and be done with this chapter in life.

No car, no money, no job, and no degree made finding work for me a bit more difficult. Even when I did find a place that was hiring, having to take drug tests and failing them made things even more frustrating. After a month of laying around the house, drinking beer in the front yard with my friends, and not in school, my dad gave me a deadline to be out of his house, even if I did not have a job or a place to go. Fortunately, my uncle gave me a place to stay. I stopped smoking weed and a month later began working at a warehouse. This point of my life was very difficult and I had no other option but to make it work and find my way. I finally had a job but still had no car. To make sure I didn’t lose my job, I would ask my coworkers if they can pick me up and drop me off and I would pay them. This worked for a few months until I was able to save enough money to purchase my first car. I finally had a stable job, a place to stay, and my own car but still had no formal education.
My mom immigrated to the United States from Guatemala in the late 70s in an attempt to pursue the “American Dream.” Living in a new country and not knowing many people here, she found herself making friends with some of her co-workers at the job she had. One of her co-workers asked her out and after some time, they both fell in love and were in a serious relationship. Eventually, my mom would become pregnant and a month before I was born, my biological dad passed away from complications he received after a major car accident. My mom was 20 years old, still new to the United States and now mourning the death of my biological father. A few years later, my mom met and married the man who raised me and became my dad.

In 2005, my biological dad’s mom, grandma Lisa, became very ill after suffering from a ruptured aneurism. One night I went to visit her and can remember walking into the hospital room and hearing a “beep” sound that was monitoring her heartbeats. I stood there for a few minutes and the only noise I heard was beep, beep, beep, beep. Slowly walking closer, I realized that my grandma was asleep and attempted to be cautious as I found myself standing next to her. I watched her sleep for a few minutes and noticed the tubes that were coming out of her nose and the needles that were in her arms and hands. I didn’t know what to say, think, or feel so I just stood there quietly hoping that she would get better. After 20 minutes of just quietly standing and watching her, the nurse walked in and my grandma awoke. Tired and with the little strength that she had left my grandma looked over to me smiled and said something that would forever change my life. Struggling to talk my grandma said, “Mijo, get your education.” Not understanding what she meant or was trying to say I held her hand and replied with “Okay, Grandma, I will.”

Although I did not understand what my grandma meant, I did feel that there was something for me to do and wanted to somehow make her proud before she passed away. With no direction, I found myself at the local community college seeking help to get my General
Education Development (GED). Luckily the community college had free GED classes and I signed up for them. During this time my grandma was getting worse and eventually was transferred to hospice care. Two weeks into the GED classes, I found myself slacking off and stopped going to them. Although I dropped out of the GED classes I felt different. I felt like I was letting my grandma down and that feeling only got stronger after each week. Fed up, I went to the community college and signed up to take the GED test and made sure to pay for it. I figured paying for it would make me accountable by forcing me not to waste my money.

It was late January 2005 when I showed up at the community college to take the GED test. I had already determined that I was going to fail the math section because math has always been my toughest subject. Despite knowing this, I went ahead and sat in a warm room with two pencils and a transcript to write in my answers. A few hours later, I finished the test, turned it in, and went straight to work. Several weeks passed and one afternoon I got home from work to find a letter in my mailbox with my name on it. I quickly opened it and the first word I saw was “Congratulations.” To my surprise, I passed all parts of the GED test, and for the first time in my life felt like I had accomplished something. I believe this was around March 2005. Excited to share the news, I went to the nursing home where my grandma was and showed her my GED certificate. At this point, she could no longer talk but I knew she was proud of the tears that were flowing from her brown eyes. I left that hospital very proud not knowing that would be the last time I would ever see my grandma alive again. My grandma Lisa died April 15, 2005, and I received my GED certificate 3 weeks before she was gone. Wanting to keep my grandma proud, I enrolled in the same community college and started my college journey the summer after my grandma passed away and have been in school ever since.
“Professional” Counternarrative

To be honest, being a professional was never a thought for me. By the time I got my GED and started college, I had already worked toward obtaining my Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) and was working as a truck driver for a local beer company. Going into work at 5:00 a.m. and getting off close to 6:00 p.m., I would often show up to my night classes dirty, sweaty, and exhausted. Going to school from 6:30 p.m. to almost 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, left me with no time to network, join any organizations, or even pursue an internship. Weekends were my time to study and do homework and even that was difficult as I didn’t know how to study. At one point, I worked three jobs and went to school full-time while trying to make sure I stayed on top of everything. After eight years of being a truck driver and going to school full-time, I eventually landed a job working with youth who were incarcerated in the juvenile justice system. Even though I had this job, I still did not feel professional nor cared to do so.

For me, the whole concept of what a “professional” was started when I transitioned from juvenile probation into higher education. I showed up to my new job wearing slacks, tennis shoes, and a polo shirt. After all, this is what I wore when I worked in juvenile probation. I can remember talking to another colleague about dressing up at work and he shared an experience with me. He told me that the campus president at the time walked up to him and got onto him for “not dressing professionally” and how it made him feel. Not wanting to experience this, that weekend I went to the mall to find and purchase “professional” clothes and I had no clue what to buy. I didn’t know how to tie a tie, I didn’t own dress shoes, and I didn’t own any suits. At this point in life, my wife and I just had our second child and most of our money went toward family needs. This left me with enough money to purchase a few things and I had no choice but to make it work.
In addition to dressing professionally, I found myself feeling dumb in many meetings because I did not know a lot of the words that my administrators were using to describe things. I would often pull my phone out and Google the words I would hear to know what they meant. Some administrators would get upset when someone had their phone out during meetings so there were times I wrote the words down to look up what they meant at a later time. I can remember a time during a team meeting, I was speaking to another colleague in Spanish and was told by a different colleague that my speaking in Spanish was rude and disrespectful. I was very confused because no one had ever told me something like this and my colleague explained to me that my speaking in Spanish made her feel like I was talking about her because she did not understand what I was saying.

**Chicano Identity Formation**

My earliest memory of the word Chicano or any Chicano influence was from my dad. My dad was not my biological dad as my real father passed away a month before I was born from complications due to a car accident. As a kid, I can remember hearing my dad describe himself as a Chicano, and in all honesty, I did not know what that exactly meant. I knew that my dad was a hard worker, that he did not make excuses to miss work, he was strong, he made sure that his family had everything we needed, and did not take any gruff from anyone. You know, not many people know this but when I was in the second grade, I watched paramedics cart my dad off from our home after having a drug overdose. He was locked in our bathroom, naked in the bathtub, with a needle in his arm when we found him, and luckily, we found him in time. Over the years, I watched my dad do drugs, get drunk, overdose, and a few times go in and out of drug rehab facilitations. Despite his internal battles, my dad loved us, provided for us, and made sure we
were always surrounded by our family. Other than this, I do not have any memories of Chicano identity in my youth.

It was not until I started working at the community college and joined TACHE when I began to learn about what being a Chicano meant. Connecting my earliest experience of Chicano, through my dad, and to what I know now, for me, being a Chicano means being in a constant struggle against self or larger forces that consciously or unconsciously harm our community. It means using what I have learned in the streets and applying it to everyday life and never backing down from the fight, even if it seems impossible to win. Do not assume when I say struggle, I mean it in a negative way. I mean it as a source of strength and pride. While my dad did not finish high school, the same Chicano spirit I saw in him I see in members of TACHE. I watched my dad turn his life around and overcome his struggles with drugs to live a drug-free life for 10 years before he passed away in 2012. No matter how hard things get, even if it is caused by ourselves, there is still the responsibility to get things done when they need to get done.

*Exposure to Chicano Leaders*

TACHE is a professional association committed to the improvement of educational and employment opportunities for Chicanos in higher education. TACHE, founded in 1974, has the purpose of providing state, regional, and local forums for the discussion of issues related to Chicanos and Latinos in higher education, and to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to create workable solutions for these issues. The goals for TACHE are educational advocacy, networking, recruitment and retention, and cultural promotion. For over 42 years, TACHE has advocated for the historically underrepresented in higher education by speaking out against public policies that threaten to increase inequities in higher education. TACHE currently has six
regions throughout the state of Texas with each having a representative who serves as a bridge between chapters and the state board. For over 45 years, TACHE has remained committed to the advocacy of educational problems, needs, and issues related to Chicanos in higher education.

In 2017, TACHE advanced their legislative agenda calling on elected officials in the State of Texas to fully fund the Texas Higher Education formula including Special Items as proposed by the THECB, increase the funding of the Texas Grant (for universities) and the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (for community colleges) on a need-based criterion, support the continuation of Tuition Set Asides, and support in-state tuition for Texas Dreamers at public institutions by opposing any legislation that would modify or eliminate House Bill 1403. It opposes all anti-immigration legislation that is hateful and discriminatory in nature, promotes legislation that secures a Texas border in a humane and dignified manner for all, opposes any attempts to repeal or weaken the Texas Top Ten% plan as currently implemented, invests additional resources to expand the capacity of teacher preparation programs to effectively serve diverse populations to avoid a teacher shortage and support college readiness. Each of these agenda items are crucial for the future of our students, our colleagues, our communities, and our state.

TACHE’s current leadership is made up of nine individuals whose roles range from Immediate Past-President, President, President-elect, Vice-President for Membership, Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President for Technology, and Operations Director. The role of the President is to lead the state board and provide support for each of its chapters at universities and colleges statewide. In addition, the president is to develop an agenda and follow through whether it be advocating against public policy, developing a scorecard to ensure institutions of higher education are hiring and retaining Latino professionals, and raising money for programming.
To fulfill the mission of TACHE, the board must work collectively to ensure that each of the agenda items is met during their elected terms. A struggle for TACHE is the constant change in leadership when it comes to serving as president. The role of the presidency is a one-year term and many times, the agenda items are not completed for this reason. To move forward, there must be changes in the constitution especially if TACHE wants to be a leader in higher education. However, current and past leadership do not see the value in changing the constitution nor changing practices to keep up with the generational shift of leaders. In summary, there is a constant battle between the old guard of leadership and new Chicano leadership who want to lead and encounter resistance when new ideas arise.

The imbalance of leadership and the resistance to change have kept TACHE at a standstill for many years. Emerging Chicano leaders are looking for leadership development opportunities and if TACHE does not change with the times, these emerging leaders will look elsewhere for opportunities. Every year TACHE has a statewide conference where Chicano professionals in higher education come to present their research and best practices. For the past three years, there has been a decline of institutions sponsoring the TACHE conference and a decline of professionals registering and attending its programs. Attending my first TACHE conference was inspiring as I was able to see individuals in the field of higher education with similar backgrounds as myself who were successful. When I began to learn more about the organization and its rich history, I was inspired to take on a leadership role for our local chapter to do my part in advancing the organization's agenda. In my first few weeks, I began to meet with our college administrators to discuss concerns from our chapter members throughout the district. At first, things seemed to go great and I received much support, however, when things started to get difficult, I called TACHE’s state President and requested her support. At this point,
I became frustrated due to the response I received, which was to have one of our past presidents take on this task rather than me as chapter president. The past president is part of the old guard and is probably the most resistant to change. To develop as a leader, the valuable experience of being successful and at times making mistakes can help shape not only myself but also other leaders who come after me. If TACHE members, past and present, want to continue the rich history, they must get out of the way and provide support for the emerging Chicano leaders in the State of Texas.

Within TACHE, there are both in-group and out-group relationships between past and current leadership and emerging leaders in the organization. The in-group are members who have been involved with TACHE for many years, however, currently do not serve in any leadership roles. These members are loyal to the past and current leadership and have been the voices for them to resist change. The emerging Chicano leaders have the ganas to hope for a better future, the will to do the work needed, and the fuerza to make a difference. Change can be tough but not changing can be tougher. TACHE must take a self-analysis from the top down and identify what areas need change to effectively make an impact on its members and Chicano communities in higher education.

While TACHE has a lot to change, there are many great things that TACHE has done and continues to do today. TACHE has given me a platform to learn my leadership style by allowing me to lead 60 professional members at my institution. While it has all been volunteer work, I truly believe in its mission, goals, and purpose. It is organizations like this with their rich history of advocating for change, that will help future Chicano leaders like me develop their leadership abilities while serving the community. I have been involved with TACHE for several years, and in these years, have served as treasurer, vice-president, and chapter president at the community
college level. In 2018, I received the Community College Distinguished Staff Award and it is because of the support, love, and encouragement of my colleagues that I was on the stage. I have much to learn about leadership, however having purpose, values, heart, self-discipline, and strong relationships guided me to lead with compassion and consistency.

During my term as president of our chapter, I learned to listen first, and acknowledge the viewpoints of all members and validate their perspectives. I have also learned to have empathy if a concern came up involving a member of the organization. Having empathy for others has allowed me to help members and friends overcome personal and professional problems through healing. This process has allowed me to discover not only who I am as a leader, but also as a father, husband, and son.

**Chicano Racial Experience**

One of my earliest encounters with racism in higher education was when a colleague approached me to not speak Spanish. I did not understand the impact of this until I began to learn about how Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanos experience racism. This encounter opened my eyes to how pervasive racism is in the community college system. My most recent encounter with racism and the power structures within the community college system took an emotional, mental, and physical toll on me.

It all started in 2017 when the college newspaper of the community college I worked at wrote and printed an article titled: Texas Community College says no to sanctuary campus for immigrants (Appendix J). Now, for some, this may have not been a big deal but two things made this racially charged and showed the power that was being flexed. First, the story came out on the front page of the paper, and under the headline was the picture of the college attorney. The picture showed the college attorney, a white woman, sitting on her desk with her arms crossed.
Second, this was released during a time when national, state and local politicians were debating against immigration and undocumented statuses in the country and were fueled by the recent election of a racist president. Days after the paper released this story, I received many calls, emails, and texts from colleagues who were TACHE members asking, what are we going to do about this? Being the TACHE chapter president at the time, I felt the responsibility to do something.

The first thing I did was reach out to the college’s Chief Diversity Office in hopes of leveraging his positional power by challenging the statement the college released about sanctuary campuses. Not knowing what to expect, I left the meeting feeling encouraged that the Chief Diversity Officer would support our efforts and challenge the stigma that this article created about undocumented students at the college. A few weeks passed and we had not heard any updates so I continued to reach out. A day later, I learned that the college conducted a climate survey to measure the district's diversity work and after consulting with our TACHE board, determined that the climate survey was our way in to deepen the discussions not only about the article but also the racial experiences Chicanos were experiencing. Leveraging my relationship with the Chief Diversity Officer, I sent an email asking for the completed report of the climate survey and on March 27, 2017, received notification of having been denied the report. The response received when asked why it was denied was because Texas Community College did not want to be viewed as a sanctuary campus. Frustrated, angered, and confused I next reached out to the state board president at the time to garner support through an official letter (see Appendix K).

Almost a whole month passed before we received a response from the Chief Diversity Officer or any college administrators. The silence from the Chief Diversity Officer, a white man, and a college leadership team that consisted of majority-white men and women began to speak
volumes to me. Realizing that nothing was moving forward, our board members decided to take on the work to make things happen. During the month of silence from the college’s leadership, we began to work toward providing workable solutions in hopes that the college would implement what we developed. On May 5, 2017, our team proposed the final project to our members at the college in hopes to garner support and approval for the next action step, to send it to the Chief Diversity Officer to advocate on our behalf. The project became known as the Dreamer Ally Network Initiative (DANI) and it was developed by the board members at the time. The purpose of DANI was to support undocumented, documented, and immigrant students in meeting their academic and career goals; and to advance the college’s equity agenda. In addition, the focus of the project plan was to encourage increased tools and resources for Texas Community College employees in support of a guided pathway for immigrant, undocumented and documented students.

Another month passed and frustration grew and then unexpectedly an email was received from an administrator who was advised to remind me that the college would not be recognized as a sanctuary campus and I must stop the work I was doing. This email caught me by surprise as everything we were doing was in direct alignment with the college’s mission, vision, policy, and goals. In addition, I began to question if the Chief Diversity Officer was helping us as promised. Despite receiving the email and the threat of being replaced, we were determined to keep pushing as it was and still is the right thing to do and sent a letter to the administration of the concerns and solutions (see Appendix L).

The hard work had already been done and we went on a campaign sharing this information to gain support from colleagues, students, and the community at large. We even presented the work to the college leadership and still, no one with decision-making power made
it happen. The research had already been done. The data were already collected. The solution was already complete and on paper. Contradicting the evidence, administrators weren’t willing to move this forward until a white campus president commented on presenting the work to campus members. The president walked up to me and said that our work was great but he could not do anything since he was following his lead. This pissed me off so much because it showed how white higher education leaders had the positional power to make things happened and yet refused to do so because of the political landscape at the time. Not only did they have the positional power, but it is also a shame that they were afraid to challenge the status quo rather than being committed to the mission, purpose, goals, and values of the college.

Hurt but not defeated we kept pushing. In June 2017, I went and spoke about the work we were doing at the Fort Worth Chorizo and Menudo breakfast that the organization LULAC hosts once a month. Local community, business, state, and educational leaders, mostly Chicanos, were present during this meeting and were very interested to hear about DANI. In addition, we presented the work at the college's annual Employee Appreciation Day, and many employees were excited to learn about the work and many agreed that it needed to be moved forward. Further, understanding the value of building solidarity, I scheduled a meeting with the president of the local chapter of the Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education. After all these meetings and presentations, we noticed that our black and brown colleagues began to speak up and advocate for our undocumented and documented student population. Although we were gaining traction, the college leadership was pushing back by refusing to let us conduct programming with educated students and community members about what undocumented and documented students experience in higher education. Room requests were being denied, resources were being denied, and the fear of “getting in trouble” and losing our jobs increased.
Still determined, we realized we had to take on a new strategy to get this much-needed resource established at the college.

Now over a year advocating for the support of undocumented and documented students and learning that college leadership had no intentions of moving DANI forward, we kept moving forward and developed JUNTOS. JUNTOS was the college’s first-ever learning community that centered around the Latino student experience and all that came with it. JUNTOS was a collaborative initiative between the Counseling & Advising office, Financial Aid office, Writing Center, and faculty members, which prepared emerging students who identify as Latino to navigate through their first year in college. We took an intentional approach by identifying staff who were members of TACHE to be a part of the development and larger network that would support students in the community. Just like the development of DANI, everyone who was involved did this on the side and met during their lunch hours because of the pressure to do their “regular job”. There was no budget, little support, little time, and yet in August 2018, the first JUNTOS cohort was established and consisted of 25 students who identified as Latino and Chicano.

JUNTOS eventually became a space where students who identified as Latin@, Chican@, and Hispanic could unpack their racial lived experiences with the intent to begin the racial healing process during our weekly meetings. During these meetings, undocumented students began to share their experience in the college and stated how the current political landscape was impacting their pursuit of education. Understanding what they were going through and seeing the pain in their eyes about the uncertainty of their futures, I asked them the question, “What are you going to do about it?” A natural leader, one of the students stood up and suggested the need to protest, the need to be heard, and the need to know they were being supported by the institution.
A week later, word got out that the students in JUNTOS were going to protest on campus and demand a statement from the college that supports undocumented and documented students. By this time, I was fed up with the college leadership and decided to stand and protest with them. The day of the protest arrived and there was a weird feeling across the campus leading up to it. With signs in their hands and students chanting on bull horns, we began to march. As soon as we walk into the open space, we saw how the college leadership made sure that there was a strong police presence as we counted as least 40 police officers were there. Seeing this many police officers increased the fear in all of us. Not once did anyone mention being violent nor causing trouble but as always, police officers were dispatched to instill fear and prevent us from marching. The college’s communications team was also present to make sure the narrative was controlled. About 30 minutes into the protest, the students demanded to meet with the campus president who refused to meet at the location at which they were protesting. The president said if they want to meet with him then we will have to meet in private because he was not going over there. This was another act of intimidation by college leaders and this time we were not going to have it. It was an act of intimidation because the campus president requested that the campus police officer also be present for the meeting which made no sense at all.

Inspired by the students in JUNTOS demanding to be heard, I decided to use my positional power as TACHE president to elevate the student voice by speaking at the college’s board of trustees meeting. My colleagues discouraged this action because they feared that college leadership would retaliate. Nervous and scared, I did the right thing and in September 2018 spoke out at the board meeting sharing everything that we had experienced over the year.

Fear and intimidation were used during this time to maintain the status quo. Over a year of putting in the work, being dismissed by college leadership, and being lied to by the Chief
Diversity Officer led to this study. These experiences also showed that current leadership, specifically some white higher education leaders, are not prepared nor have the will and skill to begin dismantling policies, practices, procedures, programs, and power structures to meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

*Development of Chicano Leadership Identity*

Upon becoming the chapter President, I was scared and nervous. However, I had to take responsibility for the role that was entrusted and move forward with the mission of TACHE and the college. To remain committed to the growth of all people by building community and serving a purpose that is greater than me.

There was an experience at the community college that solidified my leadership identity. As part of an interview committee, we had the task to interview and select a candidate for a high-level administrator position. The members of the interview committee consisted of a Black woman, a White woman, a White man, and myself. The White woman was an influential faculty member on the campus and the White man was an executive for the college and each held positional power within the district. The Black woman was an administrative assistant and I was a Coordinator and neither of us held any power. During the interview, one of the candidates, a White woman, asked the interview committee if we could share what the campus culture was like. Without hesitation, the influential White woman who is a faculty member and committee leader replied with “Well, we are known as the black ghetto campus however, we have a high population of Caucasian students here and our students do very well here” (personal communication, 2017). As one could imagine, there was shock at the boldness to make this comment with little to no regard for the impact. What shocked me even more was that the White
male executive was not even disturbed by her words while the Black woman and myself were looking at each other with our jaws dropped.

This experience and many more like it have led me to own my leadership identity and work toward disrupting these norms that are pervasive in the community college. If the white woman was bold enough to make that statement then it is unimaginable what may be said about Black or Brown students in her class and the many diverse students who attend the college.

Testimonios

Portrait I: Bob

Bob has served in multiple roles at a Texas community college for over ten years. Bob’s parents were born in Mexico and recently became naturalized citizens during President Barack Obama’s term. Growing up in a neighborhood that was predominantly Mexican and Mexican American, Bob recalled childhood memories related to his cultural heritage that extended beyond home and neighbors. He understood how upbringing, the neighborhood, and cultural influences contribute to leadership identity development. He felt out of place beginning college and explained that it wasn’t until he got to college where he started his undergrad at Texas Christian University, and then it was almost flipped from being around the majority of Latinos, to everybody else was just White. His first racialized experience of being in a predominately White environment created a sense of racial ambiguity, which followed into the professional experience.

Testonomio 1: Bob

The following is from Bob’s testimonio:

Identity Formation. As a child, I can recall visiting my family who still lived in Mexico, however, through the years many of these family members passed away, therefore, my
parents did not see any reason to continue visiting and stated, “There’s not a big reason to go back and visit abuelita or anything.” My connection to family members from Mexico has changed as more of them moved here to the United States which makes me feel disconnected to my Mexican roots. While I do feel disconnected, there are some values that still hold onto from the experiences I had as a kid. My grandfather and other elders of my family showed me the value in community and of leadership.

My sense of community is rooted in watching my family members taking care of each other when needs arise and is significant to who I am both personally and professionally. For me, the sense of community consists of other Chicano members passing down their lived experiences to the younger generations in the form of dichos (sayings). Watching elders in my community take care of the needs of the whole community rather than just individuals has developed my sense of pride and responsibility to serve. While most of the elders in my community did not receive a formal education, I am proud in how they taught me how to navigate spaces when troubles would come up. The Chicano values I learned from my elders makes me feel the need to protect and serve my community. No matter how great or small the need, coming together for a common cause is the collaborative leadership I thrive to exemplify. The pride in knowing that there will be a time of struggle combined with understanding the importance of comunidad guided me to join the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education at the community college.

The Professional Counternarrative. Working in higher education, I quickly realized that I was entering another space that made me feel out of place which reminded me of my early college days. The community college I serve at makes me question my self-worth and capability of being professional due to the role and presence of whiteness. I
feel stuck between two worlds of trying to be “professional” and holding onto my Chicano identity and it creates a sense that I need to prove myself in the workplace. The sense to prove myself is created by the lack of Chicano representation in leadership roles as there is an expectation to “act a certain way.” The presence and role of Whiteness creates an internal struggle for me because first if I speak up about inequities, I am then labeled an “activist” which has a negative connotation in higher ed. Second, I struggle with comparing myself to individuals with advanced degrees and titles that sound more prestigious. I don’t struggle with my Chicano identity when I am around other TACHE members because I feel like I can be authentic.

**Chicano Identity Formation.** For me, to be a Chicano means that I need to expect to struggle at the community college and or in our society. The racial microaggressions, the lack of respect for Chicanos, and the deficit mindset toward Chicanos inspires me to serve and protect TACHE members. TACHE provides me the sense of belonging that I need and support from seasoned Chicano leaders who help guide me in becoming an influential community college leader. The sense of responsibility to protect and serve the Chicano higher education professional leads me to take on leadership roles within the organization. Connecting with other Chicano leaders who are also members of TACHE gives me the validation that I do belong here and I am capable of being a leader. Now, after being in the higher education game for some time, I do feel the need to pass down *dichos* to young Chicano professionals because I know representation matters in the higher education leadership pipeline.

**Exposure to Chicano Leaders.** I learned about other Chicano leaders who came before me as an adult which inspires me to see myself as a leader. Seeing other Chicano leaders
who did not wait for a title to take on challenges sparked the internal activism in me to begin challenging the status quo. Chicano mentors have provided me the wisdom needed to navigate this white system and learning about my Chicano history challenges me to be the counternarrative in the community college system. Developing my racial consciousness helps me understand that leadership is not a title that one holds but what one does for the betterment of my community.

Joining TACHE was symbolic for me as I saw it kind of like a “rite of passage” to become a Chicano leader in higher education. I do see myself as a leader but who I lead makes my leadership experience different. Thinking back on my experiences, I can think of a time when I was attending a leadership panel that was geared for up and coming higher educational professionals. I quickly noticed that there were not any panelist participants who looked like me making me feel like in order to be a leader in higher education, I had to be White. This really made me feel inferior, and from that day I felt like it was my duty to raise up other Chicano leaders because this experience opened my eyes to the pervasiveness of Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism in higher education.

**Chicano Racial Experiencing.** When I began to see myself as a leader, I can remember struggling through imposter syndrome. I would often find myself having to code-switch in a White system and I now realize this prevents me from being fully authentic in all these spaces. For me, TACHE creates the Brown space where I can develop the confidence in my leadership capacity, because we all have a common struggle which is, the presence and role of Whiteness. There is the unspoken truth that Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism are present at the community college and I need to
expect it along with the struggle. Learning this, I am committed to the notion of, that I will no longer compromise my Chicano identity no matter the space and will continue working toward dismantling the system that perpetuates the status quo.

**Development of Chicano Leadership Identity.** I understand that in White spaces everybody can do this code-switching stuff but when I go to meetings with higher-ups we would get into these conversations and we would talk about things that affect underrepresented students, and some people would be like, “What? No, that doesn’t really happen.” I was like, “Oh, so we’re really disconnected on what life experiences are.” These experiences in a White community college system led me to claim the identity of a leader and use my positional power to be an advocate for dismantling Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism all to which, defines what it means to be a Chicano leader for me.

**Portrait II: Ritchie**

Ritchie is a fourth-generation Chicano. His great-great grandparents immigrated to the United States from Mexico and were involved with the development of the city where he currently resides. Ritchie describes himself as a husband, father, servant, and Chicano. Growing up in the city where he currently works, and truly felt that his purpose was to serve in the community college. Ritchie began the interview by sharing the importance of his name and the story behind it. As a kid, Ritchie went by the nickname, Miklo, but never felt proud of it because White peers would make fun of its spelling and pronunciation. Ritchie’s childhood experience created the feeling of living in two different worlds: a White-world and a Chicano-world.

**Testimonio 2: Ritchie**

The following is from Ritchie’s testimonio:
Identity Formation. I always felt like I was growing up in two different worlds. This feeling has shaped the way I view the world and how I show up in the spaces. The neighborhood I grew up in was predominately Chicano but the school I attended was predominately White. In my neighborhood I always felt like I belonged but when I was at school I knew I was different. I had several family members that lived along the Mexico and Texas border towns and I want to say that is how my Chicano identity was formed. As a kid, I can remember being with my family, community and hearing the church bells ringing which taught me the value of comunidad and service. I feel from this I learned that Chicano leadership was not grounded by a title but what one did for his or her community and how we support each other in times of need.

I remember watching my grandmother led fundraisers to raise money for the Guadalupanos at their church. I saw how Chicano leadership went beyond a suit and tie as my grandfather and other Chicano men lead the church’s Catholic Men’s Club. There was never a doubt in my mind around what Chicano leadership looked like because I saw it in my tias (aunts), tios (uncles), abuelos (grandparents), and padres (parents) along with other leaders who served at the church. For me, seeing these leaders taught me that Chicano leadership meant being authentic in who you are and that everyone brought something of value to the table.

Professional Counternarrative. Even though I believe I am rooted in my Chicano identity, I do struggle when I enter White spaces. For example, at the community college I work at we are currently going through a systemic change from how community colleges have always operated to a 21st-century approach. Revisioning the community college system has been a struggle for some of my colleagues. It has been a large task to
change an entire system, however, I feel like I have leaned on my lived experiences and the values I was taught by the Chicano leaders I saw growing up. Because of them I learned and adopted the attitude of “Well, make it work.” Looking back, I feel that I have always had this attitude even from a young age. It’s funny because, I can remember me, my sister, my parents, and grandparents living in a small *casita* (small house) that only had two rooms and one bathroom. Imagine that, six people living together in a small *casita*. We did not have any other choices so we had to and we did make it work. I have been working at my community college for 13 years now and feel that I have seen my fair share of Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism. These experiences made me feel out of place to which led me to seek out and join TACHE. In my experiences with these also drove me to take on leadership roles in TACHE. My first time attending a TACHE meeting was a game-changer for me. The TACHE meeting and its members made me feel like I was home and that I did belong. I think originally how I got connected to TACHE is because it was just somebody saying, “Hey man, there’s this thing. Come on. They’re serving *comida* (food). There are *mariachis* (musicians). Come on, let’s go.” And I was like, “All right. Let’s go check it out.” But you know, it’s like anything, right? Once I was there, it truly felt like home. So, seeing a room full of Chicano leaders at my community college helped me further develop my leadership skills but more importantly, they helped strengthen my Chicano values and identity as a whole.

**Chicano Identity Formation.** For me, being a Chicano means to action when a problem comes up. I can remember that when I finished my doctoral degree, my dissertation chair encouraged me to present my study at some national conferences. While I do understand the value in presenting my study to national organizations, I felt that I had the
responsibility to pay homage to my gente (people) first. This meant choosing to present my study at the annual TACHE conference. My dissertation chair was confused at the fact that I planned to present to TACHE first and it seems like she took it as a step-down by asking me if I was sure I wanted to present there rather than a national organization. I saw the completion of my doctoral degree and study as a contribution to academia and learning and wanted to share my experience in a brown space. I really grew a strong appreciation for TACHE because for me it was about “service first and then about our collective growth as professionals in higher education.”

**Exposure to Chicano Leaders.** I have had opportunities to attend national conferences, and when I did quickly learn how White they were and how academia perceived studies like mine as inferior. I realized that I needed to be a strong advocate for Chicano students and Chicano professionals in those spaces. The lack of comunidad (community) in these White spaces helps me see the need to do my part in developing Chicano leaders. Rather than contributing to the notion of looking down on Chicanos, I have a sense of responsibility to “lift each other up and acknowledge each other’s great work and achievements,” which is how I contribute to developing others.

**Chicano Racial Experience.** I felt like I was becoming a change agent at my community college and am aware of the repercussions I could receive by challenging the notions of Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism and the label it puts on me. For me, repercussions are just a part of the Chicano story, as I look back at the 40 years of Chicano history and learn about the leaders who came before me. I now see that we share the common struggle, to fight systemic oppression, that we as Chicano leaders experience then and now. TACHE created that space I needed to learn how to navigate institutional
bureaucracy, institutional politics, the battles for resources and representation, and the battle for racial equity and inclusion.

**Development of Chicano Leadership Identity.** This space was especially helpful when I brought up the case to provide equitable support and resources for Undocumented and Daca-mented students at the community college. It was a dawning moment for me as I felt the pressure from the role and presence of Whiteness pushing against my advocacy for these underserved group of students. Despite the pressure, I was able to utilize my skillset to encourage other Chicano leaders to begin speaking up and put pressure on administrators to provide the support undocumented and documented students rightfully deserve.

**Portrait III: Rosie**

Rosie is a mother and wife who immigrated to the United States from Mexico at a young age. Rosie is also a former student at the community college where she works and has lived in the same city for most of her life. She has been a very active church member and considers it to be an important part of her identity. Rosie explained how church was a combination of community and family. Rosie believed that her contributions to church have had a significant influence over her leadership identity development. In addition to the church, Rosie also understood that colleagues were contributors to her identity, because of close relationships with them.

**Testimonio 3: Rosie**

The following is from Rosie’s testimonio:

**Identity Formation.** I believe that the development of my identity has been mainly influenced by my church. The church that I grew up in was predominately White and as
an immigrant from Mexico, this is where I learned what it meant to be an American. For me, this meant learning how to act and carry myself based on American culture. I can remember my church friends teaching and telling me the proper way to look and I never felt the need to question it because for me this was socially acceptable. It wasn’t until I started attending elementary school when I began to feel different around my church friends. I was placed in classes with majority of kids who were Spanish speakers and many of them looked like me. Being in this class with majority of students who looked like me and spending most of my time with people who did not look like me made me begin to question my identity and sense of belonging. I struggled because it was not only my Chicano identity but also my immigrations status in the United States that made me different. Although I am now a United States citizen my immigration status has always made me feel lost and I often felt like I was a person looking for a place to call home.

**Professional Counternarrative.** Reflecting on my childhood, I can remember when my friends would make fun of me for how I talked saying that the way I talked sounded White. I really didn’t understand what this meant at the time and did not see it as an issue until later on in my life. I now see how it has made me feel ashamed of my Spanish-American accent, which led me to lose my ability to speak Spanish fluently. I am currently struggling to build my confidence back up in Spanish even as an adult. I think the idea of conforming to American culture stripped my ability to communicate with other Spanish speakers until my senior year in high school. This is when I started to attend a predominately Spanish church and speaking more Spanish made me feel more confident in myself. In addition to losing my ability to speak Spanish, I found myself having to hold in the experiences that I was facing because my White friends did not
understand what I was going through as a Chicana in a White world. This made me feel alone and I did not have anyone to help me understand this world.

**Chicano Identity Formation.** Now as a professional in higher education and when I am in meetings, I make a point to not allow myself to feel like I did as a kid, like I don’t belong. I do this by making it a point to contribute or say something during meetings or if I am on a committee. In these meetings, I noticed that there are people who identify racially different than me however, my biggest fear is speaking up when I am aware of the different positions some of the people are in and that is a time when I find myself holding back. Although these meetings may be diverse, I do find myself questioning if I should speak up or not when those in positional power are in the room and decisions are made. I think it’s how the meetings are structured or organized that makes me feel a bit intimidated. When I was in college, I was part of a bilingual student organization and remember being around other students who looked like me. This experience helped me see what being a professional looked like and now in my career, I feel like it has helped me find my place or like I belonged when I find myself struggling or questioning my abilities.

**Exposure to Chicano Leaders.** I realize that I have so much to learn what being a professional is and what it looks like. I am grateful that I work with colleagues who do identity as Chicano and would often get advice from them to help me grow as a professional. Some of my colleagues help me in a variety of ways such as helping me through a problem or some who push me to learn more about my identity and roots. Their support motivates and encourages me to learn more about what it means to be a Chicano,
which is helpful, because I feel like I am inundated with what it means to be American as well.

**Chicano Racial Experience.** I joined TACHE when I started working in higher education because I felt like I needed to have that sense of community with others who not only looked like me but also had similar experiences. Being a part of TACHE has connected me with other Chicano leaders in higher education and they have been supporting and encouraging. I also became involved with TACHE because of their mission and overall cultural pride. As a Chicana, I know that I am a minority in higher education and TACHE gives me the chance to learn and grow with other members so I can become a better leader. Being in a supervisory role, I struggled and still do, to find what my leadership style is because supervising people is hard. What I learn I try to pass down to other professionals and help them identify and develop their leadership skills.

**Development of Chicano Leadership Identity.** In my role, I really enjoy helping my employees grow as professionals but a lot of the managerial duties like signing timecards, delegating tasks, and dealing with behavioral issues bogs down the ability to really lead and to inspire and transform their lives. I do feel like leadership in theory is great but it is really hard to put it into action. I have a hard time telling people no and as a young supervisor this is such an issue for me. My mom is a housekeeper for a White family and has always taught me to be humble and show humility and I feel like this makes it harder for me to lead my team. I am afraid to hurt anyone’s feelings or more concerned about keeping the relationships intact or at peace, but it is killing me inside. I feel like my boss has a certain expectation for me to be strong or like him which makes my leadership role more challenging. Every time I encounter any form of resistance, I always tell myself to
keep pushing, stay strong, and not to give up because if I am doing my job to serve students then I am doing the right thing.

**Emergent Themes and Subthemes**

The data analysis derived from the three participants testimonios, revealed two themes and six different subthemes. Concepts that emerged as themes were racial microaggression and racial micro-expectation. An in-depth analysis of the themes was further explored revealing subthemes and offered insight into how the roles White supremacy and institutional racism impact the leadership identity development of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges. The themes and subthemes that were generated are listed in Figure 3.
**Key Themes and Subcategories**

**Figure 3**

*Thematic Analysis*

*Note.* This figure depicts an ordering of how participants understand their leadership identity development and interpret their experience as leaders within a Texas community college.

**Theme 1: Racial Microaggressions.** Bob regularly encountered racial microaggressions of being viewed only as a Latino in broad terms without considering the various intersections that come with his identity, such as his ancestry (see table 8). When asked the following question, “What does it mean to be Chicano, and how did you develop this understanding?” he responded with the following: I’m talking about Anglo people. I think they just wouldn’t understand what the… because really, to certain Anglo people, “You’re just Mexican, really. I think every brown face is just Mexican” (see table 8).

Ritchie’s testimonio revealed a similar experience (see table 8). He stated “But I think in higher ed, I feel like from my experience that there’s still that challenge of trying to know who
you are consistently and be authentically you in that space.” He was referring to the different spaces he navigated within the community college and attempted to avoid being seen as the token Chicano. Furthermore, Ritchie came to tears when he shared the story of his name and how he felt like he was dishonoring his family at the workplace by having his colleagues call him Miklo rather than Ritchie. TACHE provided Ritchie the space he needed because I think sometimes Chicano administrations can be lonely in some ways.

Rosie’s testimonio depicts her experiences in meetings with individuals who hold positions of power and how they make her feel uncomfortable (see table 8), because it is “scary to kind of speak up.” The structures of the meetings she is in and the people who hold positional power prevent her from speaking up because they hold the power to either help or destroy her professional aspirations.

Table 8

**Theme 1: Racial Microaggressions – Illustrative Quotes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Illustrative quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>“During the interview, one of the candidates, a white woman, asked the interview committee ‘can you share what the campus culture is like here’? Without hesitation, the influential white woman who is a faculty member and committee lead replied with ‘Well, we are known as the black ghetto campus however, we have a high population of Caucasian students here and our students do very well here.’”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>“There’s no representation up there. Who approved this? Who saw this and said, ‘Yes, this is a good panel without--’” and again, in that sense, that person was probably a white person that’s leading.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>“I don’t think our institution is quite ready to have certain conversations about racism. I don’t think we’ve established an Equity and Inclusion office.”</td>
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Rosie  “Well I definitely think, growing up, I always learned humility and being-- my mom was so like this because she’s the housekeeper and so was always doing what the boss wanted her to do and never saying no. And to this day, the woman does not say no to her boss. And so she works really hard, too hard for her age. And so I feel like that’s something that she passed onto us, my sisters and I, and so I have a hard time saying no to people, I have a hard time-- that was such an issue as a young supervisor is telling people no and trying to be, I guess, too humble, I didn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings, or I was more about keeping that relationship intact or at peace, but it was me inside.”

**Subtheme 1a: Resiliency**

Jonathan  “To be honest, being a professional was never a thought for me. By the time I got my GED and started college, I had already worked toward obtaining my Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) and was working as a truck driver for a local beer company. Going into work at 5:00 am and getting off close to 6:00 p.m., I would often show up to my night classes dirty, sweaty and exhausted. Going to school from 6:30 p.m. to almost 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, left me with no time to network, join any organizations, or even pursue an internship. Weekends were my time to study and do homework and that was even difficult as I didn’t even know how to study”.

Bob  “The presence and role of Whiteness creates an internal struggle for me because first, if I speak up about inequities, I then am labeled an ‘activist’ which has a negative connotation in higher ed.”

Ritchie  “I feel like I have leaned on my lived experiences and the values I was taught by the Chicano leaders I saw growing up. Because of them I learned and adopted the attitude of ‘well, make it work.’ Looking back, I feel that I have always had this attitude even from a young age.”

Rosie  “Well, a lot of times, you’re in meetings with a higher-up. -- from what I’ve seen, it’s a mix of different races in meetings and things like that, but just the status, I guess, of those positions, sometimes it’s scary to kind of speak up, and so that’s when I would maybe hold back or tell myself, ‘Okay, you have to contribute something. Don’t leave a space without contributing something.”

**Subtheme 1b: Chicano identity**

Jonathan  “It wasn’t until I started working at the community college and joined TACHE when I began to learn about what being a Chicano meant. Connecting my earliest experience of Chicano, through my dad, and to what I know now, for me, being a Chicano means being in constant struggle against self or larger forces that consciously or unconsciously harm our community. It means using what I have learned in the streets and applying it to everyday life and never backing down from the fight, even if it seems impossible to win.”
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<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>“If you asked me when I was in elementary school, ‘What are you?’ I would’ve said Mexican. And then later it shifted to, ‘Well, I’m American,’ right? So, I’m both, right? And I think that’s where that Chicano thing comes in like, ‘Okay. Well, maybe that’s what it is.’ But yes, I identify as American with Mexican descent”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>“For me, being a Chicano means to action when a problem comes up. I can remember that when I finished my doctoral degree, my dissertation chair encouraged me to present my study at some national conferences. While I do understand the value in presenting my study to national organizations, I felt that I had the responsibility to pay homage to my gente [people] first. This meant choosing to present my study at the annual TACHE conference. My dissertation chair was confused at the fact that I planned to present to TACHE first and it seems like she took it as a step-down by asking me if ‘I was sure I wanted to present there rather than a National organization.’ I saw the completion of my doctoral degree and study as a contribution to academia and learning and wanted to share my experience in a brown space.”</td>
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<td>Rosie</td>
<td>“In these meetings, I noticed that there are people who identify racially different than me however, my biggest fear is speaking up when I am aware of the different positions some of the people are in and that is a time when I find myself holding back. Although these meetings maybe diverse, I do find myself questioning if I should speak up or not when those in positional power are in the room and decisions are made. I think it’s how the meetings are structured or organized that makes me feel a bit intimidated.”</td>
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**Theme 2: Racial Micro-Expectation.** All three participants shared a common experience in their testimonios of the attempt to fit in the mold of White professionalism (see table 9). The expectation of what White professionalism meant or looked like led each Chicano leader to negotiate their Chicano identity, encounter anti-Mexican and Chicano sentiment, and struggle with the resistance to conform to the dominant view of professionalism.

Bob explained the expectation of not challenging the system of White professionalism and had to know his place in order to navigate the institutional hierarchical structures:

When I was support staff and I would go to meetings, when I was first invited to them, I typically wouldn’t say anything, because, again, there’s this hierarchy that you learn
quick. There’s a hierarchy. There’s politics involved. And you don’t challenge the president. You don’t challenge the dean. You don’t challenge the director. And that’s at least what you think, right? That’s at least what you think.

The expectation to remain silent and listen in meetings perpetuated the status quo and prevented community colleges from being innovative with regard to Chicano leaders. With this expectation, many Chicanos have been prevented from moving up the leadership pipeline because they spoke up.

Ritchie understood how to negotiate his Chicano identity and not speak up by stating that: “When we don’t have certain representation in faculty leadership and faculty roles, for example, right? We’re unable sometimes, or much more challenged sometimes, to address certain types of resistance.” Ritchie also mentioned that for him being a Chicano is not only knowing who you are but also putting some action with it and at times he would feel inferior preventing him to speak up.

Rosie experienced the expectation to not speak up, because “for me anyway, a better job of showing up for each other, advocating for each other.” Rosie felt that she could do a better job advocating for the Chicano community in higher education, as she sees the injustices encountered by them, and the lack of voices advocating for the inequities encountered by students of color. In addition to this, Rosie explained that she struggles to lead White people and how it made her feel. “I felt like I wasn’t doing a good job or I wasn’t doing enough.”
Table 9

Theme 2: Racial Micro-Expectation – Illustrative Quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>“One of my earliest encounters with racism in higher education was when a colleague approached me to not speak Spanish. I did not understand the impact of this until I began to learn about how Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanos experience racism. This encounter opened to my eyes to how pervasive racism is in the community college system. My most recent encounter with racism and the power structures within the community college system took an emotional, mental, and physical toll on me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>“I feel stuck between two worlds of trying to be ‘professional’ and holding onto my Chicano identity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>“But it also had-- and I remember being hired on, and I remember somebody, by my white administrator, who I very much admired, a [great?] mentor of mine. But I remember I was in a meeting and somebody was talking to her. And somebody said, ‘Oh, yeah, you’re going to need one of those.’ And it gave me the sense that, and what I really-- it gave me a sense, one, of tokenism in some ways, right? Because that’s what they meant. ‘You’re going to need one of those.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosie</td>
<td>“Only because I feel like when you’re let’s say in a meeting and you’re discussing gaps or inequities and things like that, I feel like, a lot of times, people, they want to know what the data or the facts, the numbers, and things like that, that language, in order to validate any kind of inequities that you may see.”</td>
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Subtheme 2a: Negotiate Chicano identity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Illustrative quote</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>“Another month passed and frustration grew and then unexpectedly I received an e-mail from an administrator that stated ‘Jonathan, I was advised to remind you that the college will not be recognized as a sanctuary campus and you must stop the work you are doing’. This e-mail caught me by surprise as I believe everything we were doing was in direct alignment with the college’s mission, vision, policy, and goals. In addition, I began to question if the Chief Diversity Officer was actually helping us as he mentioned he would. Despite receiving the e-mail and the threat to lose my job, we were determined to keep pushing as it was and still is the right thing to do and sent a letter to administration of the concerns and solutions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>“When I began to see myself as a leader I can remember struggling through imposter syndrome. I would often find myself having to code switch in a White system and I now realize this prevents me from being fully authentic in all these spaces.”</td>
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<td>Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>“As I was developing my professional identity, and understanding what that means to me, to know that I was building off something. Because I remember the first internship I had as a young man, my mom worked for the federal government, and she said like. ‘Everybody is watching you, [foreign]. Everybody’s watching you. And you can destroy a path, or you can build one here. You’re the first person, you’re 15 years old, the first person they’re letting come in here and do this type of internship. They don’t exist.’ And so, I remember thinking, ‘Okay, everybody is watching me.’”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosie</td>
<td>“Being in this class with majority of students who looked like me and spending most of my time with people who did not look like me made me begin to question my identity and sense of belonging. I struggled because it was not only my Chicano identity but also my immigration status in the United States that made me different. Although I am now a United States citizen my immigration status has always made me feel lost and I often felt like I was a person looking for a place to call home.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtheme 2b: Anti-Mexican/Chicano sentiment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>“The day of the protest arrived and there was a weird feeling across the campus leading up to it. With signs in their hands and students chanting on bull horns, we began to march. As soon as we walk into the open space we saw how the college leadership made sure that there was a strong police presence as we counted as least 40 police officers were there. Seeing this many police officers increased the fear in all of us. Not once did anyone mention about being violent nor causing trouble but as always, police officers were dispatched to instill fear and prevent us from marching.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>“Working in higher education, I quickly realized that I was entering another space that made me feel out of place which reminded me of my early college days. The community college I serve at makes me question my self-worth and capability of being professional due to the role and presence of whiteness. I feel stuck between two worlds of trying to be ‘professional’ and holding onto my Chicano identity and it creates a sense that I need to prove myself in the workplace.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>“I felt like I was becoming a change agent at my community college and am aware of the repercussions I could receive by challenging the notions of Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism and the label it puts on me. For me, repercussions are just a part of the Chicano story, as I look back at the 40 years of Chicano history and learn about the leaders who came before me. I now see that we share the common struggle, to fight systemic oppression, that we as Chicano leaders experience then and now.”</td>
</tr>
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Participant | Illustrative quote
--- | ---
Rosie | “I think, for me-- and I come back to the language piece of it, sometimes I feel like because I’m a second-language learner, sometimes I feel like the way I present information or the way I articulate or lack thereof has been a challenge. And I attribute it because I am a second-language learner, and I don’t know if my mind-- I don’t think my mind thinks in Spanish, but sometimes it’s hard for me to articulate certain things. I think, for me-- and I come back to the language piece of it, sometimes I feel like because I’m a second-language learner, sometimes I feel like the way I present information or the way I articulate or lack thereof has been a challenge. And I attribute it because I am a second-language learner, and I don’t know if my mind-- I don’t think my mind thinks in Spanish, but sometimes it’s hard for me to articulate certain things.”

**Theme 3: Resistance.** Navigating the community college system can be an exhausting task, especially for Chicanos (see table 10). The constant battle to be authentic in White spaces, while strategizing how to speak up, can lead to emotional fatigue. Solorzano and Pérez Huber (2020) stated that “history teaches us that resistance is born from struggle” (p. 98). As mentioned earlier, to identify as a Chicano meant to understand that there will be a struggle in fighting racism. The identification of Chicano alone was a form of resistance in itself. The testimonios of the three participants revealed how TACHE created a Brown space for them to experience, racial micro-affirmations, which helped develop their leadership identity, as a response to the microaggressions they regularly encountered.

For Bob, the community college climate created a sense of inferiority for individuals who may not hold a title or doctorate degree. Bob mentioned this in an experience he had when he did not hold a title or had his doctorate degree: “the intimidation that this high-ranking individual is in this room. And then the way people just even address you sometimes.” Bob further stated that the intimidation he experienced in meetings with predominately White administrators was not present when he was in a TACHE meeting:
Bring your culture with you. Don’t leave that behind.’ And we bring our culture with us. That’s how we got TACHE instituted at TCC, right? So yes. We act professional over here. But at the same time, we still have our culture here. We haven’t checked it at the door and to say, “Oh, you can’t speak Spanish here or you get slapped on the hand,” right? That doesn’t happen anymore.

The racial micro-affirmation Bob experienced empowered him to recognize a strategy when encountering microaggressions:

I think everybody needs to have a seat at the table. And in addition to having a seat at the table, they need to feel empowered, right, because what’s the point of having a seat at the table if they’re intimidated and they never speak up, right?

A micro-affirmation that Ritchie experienced was seeing his elders display their leadership by meeting the need of his community:

You saw leadership in your own ways. And it may not have been suit and tie leadership, but it was leadership within your household, within your community, when in those community spaces you saw it.

This experience showed Ritchie that leadership was not about what title one holds but what they do for others. To serve others despite position was a value that Ritchie developed at a young age and has still carried with him, today.

Rosie intentionally sought out an organization that could provide her the validation she was looking for as a Chicana leader. This is evident in her statement when asked why she joined TACHE compared to another organization:
Well, obviously the cultural part. I think it’s different when you go into a meeting with those that look like you and who understand a little bit of your context and where you’re coming from as opposed to maybe going somewhere where you’re the minority. Being in a space with other Chicano leaders increased her confidence especially knowing that they were facing similar racial experiences as her.

Bob provides another example of resistance. Bob attended a leadership conference and in one of his sessions realized that the panel of leaders were all White. This did not sit well for Bob as he stated: “and I’m looking out there and I’m like—and everybody was White up there, right? Everybody, every panelist was up there was White. And I’m looking around the room and I’m like, We’re a pretty diverse campus.” Bob questioning the leaderships decision to approve an all-White panel was his form of resistance which then led him to action as his other form of resistance stated:

It’s a leadership meeting, and I’m like, “There’s no representation up there. Who approved this? Who saw this and said, Yes, this is a good panel without--’ and again, in that sense, that person was probably a White person that’s leading and hasn’t experienced—doesn’t have my own experiences that knows, If I’m going to put a panel together for a bunch of groups, I’m looking for diversity. I’m looking to mirror the community that’s going to come to this event. Right? So, I think coming into rooms, so as a leader now facing adversity or how does race affect me? So, race affected me as a leader in that instance because I’m a leader or I thought of myself as a leader.”

Ritchie’s form of resistance was challenging the status quo by working toward including multiple perspectives in meetings where decisions were being made. His form of resistance was best exemplified in his testimonio:
We used to have a saying about a student ready college. And some people say that students need to be industry ready. Well, the industry also needs to be ready for us. In my mindset, the economy works for us. We don’t work for it. And they need be ready for us. And so I think that’s why more and more we need folks to be able to bring their true selves to the table. Because then that helps shape policy. That helps shape what a program looks like. And that’s a different standpoint.

For Rosie, the struggles she encountered highlight the battle of not compromising her values and ethics as a Chicano leader. She explained that her resistance to not conform to the norms of Whiteness was described in the following:

Well, for me, it’s just continuing to do the right things. Do what’s right and just don’t give up. I mean, that’s how I got through some of the really toughest years in supervising, seeking out the advice, support, the help from my mentors, people who are Chicanos and I did.

Rosie’s resistance was not letting the racial microaggressions she experienced defeat her and sought the support and advice of other Chicano leaders. In addition, Rosie actively learned how to reclaim her Mexican heritage through language, which was another form of resistance that she displayed.

**Table 10**

*Theme 3: Resistance – Illustrative Quotes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Illustrative quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>“I was fed up with the college leadership and decided I was going to stand and protest with them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>“So, the message, to me, it gives off was, one, that they’re not aware, right? Woke used to be a big word a few years ago. I don’t know if woke is still big. But obviously, these people were not awake. It shows that they’re disconnected.”</td>
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</table>
Ritchie “You know what? I’m going to take this opportunity to, now that I got you all looking at me and listening to me. Don’t call me Miklo anymore. That’s not my name. My name’s Ritchie. It was my grandfather’s name. It was my uncle’s name.”

Rosie “No, I won’t tear up. Like I mentioned earlier, I feel like, for me anyway, my culture or my identity has been such a lifelong process, and I’m never going to be done [inaudible] me arriving. I see some of the work you’re doing and other folks that are doing with their own identity and things like that and it makes me feel like we need to do more, I need to - I don’t know - be more active? But then I just remind myself like. ‘We’re all in this journey. Everyone is in different places when it comes to their identity and who they are and how they express it and how they act on it in their own world, in their own lives.’ So, I think I’m still growing, so going a little bit [inaudible] culture.”

Subtheme 3a: Organize

Jonathan “Hurt but not defeated we kept pushing. In June 2017, I went and spoke about the work we were doing at the Fort Worth Chorizo and Menudo breakfast that the organization LULAC hosts once a month. Local community, business, state and educational leaders, mostly Chicanos, were present during this meeting and were very interested to hear about DANI. In addition, we presented the work at the colleges annual Employee Appreciation Day and many employees were excited to learn about the work and many agreed that it needed to be moved forward. Further, understanding the value of building solidarity, I scheduled a meeting with the president of the local chapter of the Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education (TABPHE).”

Bob “Thinking back on my experiences, I can think of a time when I was attending a leadership panel that was geared for up and coming higher educational professionals. I quickly noticed that there were not any panelist participants who looked like me making me feel like in order to be a leader in higher education, I had to be White. This really made me feel inferior, and from that day I felt like it was my duty to raise up other Chicano leaders because this experience opened my eyes to the pervasiveness of Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism in higher education.”

Ritchie “But I think in higher ed, I feel like from my experience that there’s still that challenge of trying to know you’re consistently, authentically you in that space. And I think that’s why-- and that’s what I think TACHE has meant for me. It’s just a meaningful space where I can be very genuine and authentic in myself. And it helps build community. I think it helps even strengthen-- because we’re not monolithic by any means. But just understanding more and talking about growing from the barrio.”
Participant | Illustrative quote
---|---
Rosie | “As a Chicana, I know that I am a minority in higher education and TACHE gives me the chance to learn and grow with other members so I can become a better leader. Being in a supervisory role, I struggled and still do, to find what my leadership style is because supervising people is hard. What I learn I try to pass down to other professionals and help them identify and develop their leadership skills.”

Subtheme 3b: Protect other Chicanos

Jonathan | “Inspired by the students in JUNTOS demanding to be heard, I decided to use my positional power as TACHE president and elevate their voice by speaking at the college’s board of trustees meeting. I was encouraged by many of my colleagues not to do this because they feared that college leadership would retaliate against me somehow. Nervous and scared to lose my job, I was driven by doing the right thing and in September 2018 I went and spoke out at the board meeting sharing everything that we had experienced over the year.”

Bob | “For me, to be a Chicano means that I need to expect to struggle at the community college and or in our society. The racial microaggressions, the lack of respect for Chicanos, and the deficit mindset toward Chicanos inspires me to serve and protect TACHE members. TACHE provides me the sense of belonging that I need and support from seasoned Chicano leaders who help guide me in becoming an influential community college leader. The sense of responsibility to protect and serve the Chicano higher education professional leads me to take on leadership roles within the organization. Connecting with other Chicano leaders who also members of TACHE gives me the validation that I do belong here and I am capable of being a leader.”

Ritchie | “I have had opportunities to attend national conferences, and when I did quickly learn how White they were and how academia perceived studies like mine as inferior. I realized that I needed to be a strong advocate for Chicano students and Chicano professionals in those spaces. The lack of comunidad [community] in these White spaces helps me see the need to do my part in developing Chicano leaders. Rather than contributing to the notion of looking down on Chicanos, I have a sense of responsibility to ‘lift each other up and acknowledge each other’s great work and achievements,’ which is how I contribute to developing others.”

Rosie | “Some of my colleagues help me in a variety of ways such as helping me through a problem to some who push me to learn more about my identity and roots. Their support motivates and encourages me to learn more about what it means to be a Chicano, which is helpful, because I feel like I am inundated with what it means to be American as well.”
Conclusion

The broader context of this study has shown that because of the permeance of racism in Texas, Chicanos abandon their cultural identity to conform to Whiteness. Mexican Americans, specifically those in Texas, continue to struggle to define their place within leadership roles due to a Black-White binary social construct that is pervasive throughout all levels of American educational institutions. Their Chicano identity is often viewed as a second-class trait, or of lesser significance than White culture.

The testimonios of three participants allowed for the critical reflection of their personal experiences within a specific sociopolitical environment. The testimonio research design has the advantage of being attentive to the voice of those who have traditionally been oppressed and marginalized. Along with my personal experiences, their critical reflections during the interviews provided a safe space for them to share stories and feel the emotions through shared experiences.

As described in this chapter, three key themes and six subthemes emerged from the thematic analysis of the testimonios. The three themes were: (1) racial microaggression, (2) racial micro-expectation, and (3) resistance. Six subthemes emerged after the second round of analyses of the testimonios: (1a) resiliency, (1b) Chicano identity, (2a) negotiate Chicano identity, (2b) anti-Mexican/Chicano sentiment, (3a) organize, and (3b) protect other Chicanos. The subsequent analysis of these themes is discussed at length in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 also describes the conclusions and implications of this study that have a direct impact on leadership theory and practice.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter provides concluding interpretations and recommendations for this study as it relates to understanding the factors, if any, that influence the leadership development of Chicano leaders who served in the Texas community college system. A brief introduction followed by a discussion of this study’s purpose is included in the first section of this chapter. Next, I provide readers my interpretation of the key findings and discuss how it aligns to the theoretical framework and relevant scholarly literature provided in Chapter 2. Further, I discuss the implications of the study and recommendations for future research and practice as it relates to Chicano leadership. Finally, to conclude this chapter, I provide a discussion of this study’s limitations and a reflection that summarizes this research study.

The findings from this study may equip current higher education leaders and policy makers to begin developing a higher education leadership pipeline that is inclusive for the development of Chicano leadership. Also, through the testimonios of current Chicano community college leaders, this study contributes to the growing literature that exposes the pervasiveness of Whiteness, White supremacy, and institutional racism within the Texas higher education system. Finally, the testimonios of Chicano leaders at Texas community colleges may provide insight to emerging Chicano leaders, as to what to expect as they navigate the community college system.

Revisiting the Study

Background

A meticulous coding and analysis process was conducted to understand the phenomenon of Chicano leadership. Using cultural intuition during the analytic process helped me understand the data and code weaving that brought meaning to the lived experiences of the participants.
Descriptive codes and the chronological order of the data revealed three prominent themes: (1) racial microaggression, (2) racial micro-expectation, and (3) resistance.

**Emergent Themes and Subthemes**

The data analysis derived from the three participants testimonios revealed three themes and six different subthemes. Concepts that emerged as themes were (a) racial microaggression, (2) racial micro-expectation, and (3) resistance. The subthemes were (1a) resiliency, (1b) Chicano identity, (2a) negotiate Chicano identity, (2b) anti-Mexican/Chicano, (3a) organize, and (3b) protect other Chicanos. An in-depth analysis of the themes was further explored revealing subthemes and offered insight into how the role of Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism impact the leadership identity development of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges. The themes and subthemes that were generated are listed in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

**Key Themes and Subthemes**

(1) Racial microaggression
- (1a) Resiliency
- (1b) Chicano identity

(2) Racial micro-expectation
- (2a) Negotiate Chicano identity
- (2b) Anti-Mexican/Chicano

(3) Resistance
- (3a) Organize
- (3b) Protect other Chicanos

**Revisiting the Problem of Practice**

As the Texas community college landscape continues to change, in regards to racial demographics, it is imperative that current leaders begin to reimagine the higher education leadership pipeline to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Demands from policy makers, and
the historic and current trend of low student completion rates, will require a leadership approach that is rooted in social justice and equity.

Chicanos make up the largest ethnic group in the United States and Texas and there is no denying that the future workforce will be Brown (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2013). With this being said and factors such as the higher ed leadership pipeline being deeply rooted in Whiteness and white supremacy, 52% of college presidents (White men) will be retiring in the next 5 years shows that there is a college leadership gap and college racial leadership crisis (AACC Competencies for Community College Leadership, 2013; Bailey et al., 2015; McNair et al., 2016; THECH Almanac, 2015). In response to this, leaders of today must begin to remove the systemic barriers that have perpetuated racism by utilizing a Chicano leadership model for strong innovative leadership that confronts and meets these challenges of the 21st century.

**Revisiting the Methodological Approach**

Saldaña and Omasta (2018) stated that “qualitative research is chosen when insight into people’s personal and social lives is necessary to answer the research questions of interest” (p. 146). The data were organized chronologically to ensure the participants' testimonios were completely captured while using the whole-parts-whole-process strategy (Vagle, 2016). Therefore, the data were structured in the participants’ own words that depict their personal, professional, and leadership experiences in the community college setting.

Therefore, the strategy to use testimonios for this study reveals the experiences of Chicano leaders through stages of leadership identity development and exposes the racial inequities in higher education. Using testimonios guided this study within the leadership identity development model theoretical framework and legitimized the experiences of the Chicano participants in each stage of development. Testimonios allowed me to step into the subjects’
Findings and Conclusions

In the following section, I present a summary of the findings and conclusions derived from the data analysis process. The findings from this study present new opportunities to begin understanding how Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges understand their leadership identity development. After analyzing the data, three themes were identified, listed below, which led to the following conclusions that will be discussed later: (a) struggle to find their place as a leader, (b) a struggle to lead with their Chicano identity and expectation to “be White” and (c) the need to organize and protect other Chicanos. The three prominent themes and six subthemes are depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5

*Participants’ Understanding of Leadership Identity Development*

How do Chicano leaders understand their leadership identity development in Texas community colleges?

(1) Racial micro-aggression
- (1a) Resilency
- (1b) Chicano identity

(2) Racial micro-expectation
- (2a) Negotiatie Chicano identity
- (2b) Anti-Mexican/Chicano

(3) Resistance
- (3a) Organize
- (3b) Protect other Chicanos
Conclusion 1: The Chicano Struggle to Find Their Place as a Leader

Racial microaggression was the first theme that emerged, revealing the pervasiveness of white supremacy in community colleges and its two subthemes: (1a) resiliency and (1b) Chicano identity. Researchers have noted that racism is “prevalent in all aspects of society, with schools not being an exception” (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004, p. 26). Generations of Chicanos are aware and have a deep understanding of how racism shows up in educational institutions because many have experienced it themselves (Alemán et al., 2015). Combining their lived experiences and research around racism, Chicano leaders have the lens to know when and how racial microaggressions show up and how it impacts those who experience it. The collective consciousness from the participants in this study uncovers their “collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression, or resistance” (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 363) in their respective community college system. Literature suggests that the “level of perceived acceptance from the majority group can affect their degree of comfort in the work setting” (De Luca & Escoto, 2012, p. 30).

Resiliency for Battling Whiteness on a Daily Basis. The participants described how before joining TACHE they would often find themselves trying to find their place as a leader, identifying as a Chicano, and having to regularly overcome these challenges. Exhausting that stemmed from regularly battling racial microaggressions and searching for belonging was the beginning point toward identifying as a Chicano leader for each of the participants. Scholars have described the exhaustion as racial battle fatigue. The constant violence that Chicanos encounter in the higher education system impacts their overall mental, emotional, and social well-being and often is built up over time, creating racial battle fatigue (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017). Finding a space to organize and build solidarity with other leaders is how
Chicano leaders respond to Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism within institutions (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). Creating spaces for transformation that challenges the status quo leads to Chicanos taking collective action toward dismantling the racial inequities people of color encounter (Alemán et al., 2015). Regularly experiencing racial microaggressions and overcoming the racial battle fatigue that comes with it shows the resiliency that Chicano leaders have developed from it. The resiliency Chicano leaders display shows that they have four common characteristics that make an impact: (a) social competence, (b) problem-solving skills, (c) autonomy, and (d) sense of purpose (Meyer et al., 2008).

**More Chicano Leaders in the Community College Setting to Help Guide and Affirm Them in Leadership Development.** The testimonios uncovered the pain from experiencing racial microaggressions daily which drove the participants to question their ability to perform as a leader, their Chicano identity, and the need to prove they belong. The participants were aware of struggles but never realized how they would impact them until they experienced them. The feeling of being seen as a second-class citizen by White America was not only experienced in the larger society, it was also a common experience among the participants in this study. Sharing their social histories, each participant identified feeling out of place in white spaces. The same feeling showed up regularly at the community colleges they served. Each participants’ racial and ethnic identity influenced the development of resiliency as they were aware and prepared to keep fighting for themselves, their students, their community, and their Chicano colleagues. The testimonios from the three participants demonstrate the resiliency that Chicano leaders develop from navigating white spaces and naturally overcoming them beginning at a young age. I argue that, because of the experiences stated above, resiliency is a skill set that Chicano leaders develop at a very young age eventually becoming a part of their identity.
Conclusion 2: Chicano Leadership Identity and Expectations

The role and presence of Whiteness, having to negotiate their Chicano identity, and the resistance to conform to what professionalism looked like is a racial micro-expectation, and the second theme each of them experienced. The subthemes that validate racial micro-expectations are: (2a) negotiate Chicano identity, (2b) anti-Mexican/Chicano. For generations, Chicanos have been legally required to be classified as White, yet socially treated as non-White in the United States (Rumbaut, 2009). The expectation to be White is deeply rooted in the Chicano community as there are issues in how they view and define themselves in a white dominant society (Salgado, 2020). Scholars have argued that “white power and privilege remain significant concerns within educational, governmental, political, economic, and social structures” (Carr, 2016, p. 52). Racialized minorities have often fought against the concept of acting White in numerous arenas “defining and redefining themselves to the core characteristics of whiteness” (Torres & Pace, 2005, p. 130). The participants described how the concept of professionalism was to the characteristics of Whiteness, creating the sense that they had to negotiate their Chicano identity to be professional.

Each Participant Articulated That There Was an Unspoken Rule About What It Meant to be Professional and What It Looked Like. For the participants, to look, act, and speak professionally meant to be White or close to it. Each participant described how they were not taught how to be professional leading them to follow the White model of what it looked like. This expectation revealed that the participants could not be their full authentic selves as Chicano leaders. The participants described how their names, language, and lived experiences were seen as insufficient by the status quo and they often found themselves code-switching in White spaces. The act of code-switching eventually created an internal battle amongst the participants.
Each participant described how their White colleagues did not see their Chicano identity leading to experiences of color-blind racism.

**Despite the Challenges of Racial Micro-Expectations, the Participants Began to Form a Sense of Resistance.** The resistance showed up in the form of reclaiming their names, the pronunciation of their names, speaking Spanish in White spaces, and learning more about their Chicano identity. The resistance to conform to Whiteness sparked a flame in the participants as each of them described how they began to change the way they showed up to work, as their authentic selves. In regards to how racism is experienced, the racial experiences of Chicanos have often been ignored, leading to their experiences being seen as invalid or not sufficient within the Black and White racial binary. Ignoring these experiences has led to a strong anti-Mexican and Chicano sentiment that many of us encounter. The anti-Mexican and Chicano sentiment shows up in how immigrants are portrayed in the United States: (a) hardworking and family centered, and (b) criminals, lazy, and taking advantage of the system (Oliva et al., 2013). Moshman (2007) described the actions of undermining the experiences of a victim group including, biological, social, and cultural, as a form of genocide. Mexicans and Chicanos continue to experience this racial genocide as they are forced to identify as Latino and/or White when asked for their racial identification. The force of choosing between being classified as White and then Latino is the beginning path toward the racial genocide process which is: dichotomization, dehumanization, destruction, and denial (Moshman, 2007). As I mentioned in chapter two, the search for true self-identity has become a difficult process for Mexicans and Chicanos, especially as they are the largest group in the Latino identity rubric (e.g., Salvadorans, Dominicans, Colombians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, etc.; Gonzales, 2019; Montoya, 2016; Rosales, 1997).
Conclusion 3: Chicano Activism Through Organizing and Protecting Other Chicanos

The third theme, resistance, signified that the participants questioned who they were as a professional not fitting to its traditional mold, Whiteness, resurfacing experiences where they were made to feel like they did not belong. Each participant described how when they realized this, they knew there would be a constant struggle. They knew they needed to find support from others who looked like them. Guardia and Salinas (2018) argued that leadership opportunities often come from a white perspective and often exclude and ignore non-White groups, negatively impacting their leadership development. To challenge Whiteness, leaders are aware that the change they are looking for must align to the interest of the White dominant society leading to social or educational transformation (Alemán & Alemán, 2010). Challenging the notions of Whiteness and white supremacy is a large task, especially as it is manifested and maintained in the forms of policies, practices, procedures, programs, and people that continue to benefit White people (Goldstein Hode & Meisenbach, 2016). This is why the Chicano leaders in this study felt the need to organize and protect other Chicanos at their respective community colleges.

Because of the Manifestation of Whiteness and How It Is Maintained, the Participants Described How They Felt the Need to Organize and TACHE Was the Space to Do So. TACHE provided the Brown space they needed for validation, support, and the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. The Brown space was created during TACHE meetings where they got to listen and learn about other Chicano experiences with the struggle creating a sense of solidarity. The Brown space also allowed the participants to tap into their lived experiences and develop their Chicano leadership identity by taking on projects that TACHE was working on. In addition, influences from the racial micro-affirmations motivated the participants to begin speaking up against racial inequities and create positive changes for
historically marginalized groups. The validation from other Chicano leaders created the sense that their lived experiences were assets rather than how Whiteness perceived them as a deficit. Drawing on their experiential knowledge and tapping into them changed their perception about leadership as they began to see themselves as leaders in higher education.

**Participants Realized That When One Speaks Out on Racial Inequities, They Quickly Became Targets for the Status Quo.** Fighting for Chicano representation meant calling out Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism in higher education and does not sit well with current White leaders. The participants described how White leaders use their positional power to oppress Chicanos when speaking out. The oppression came in the form of denying opportunities for growth, promotion, and derogatory attitudes toward Chicanos which was a widely accepted practice in higher education.

Knowing that oppressive acts were a norm in higher education, the participants felt the need to protect other Chicanos from the experience. Protection came in the form of mentoring, calling out racial inequities in the numbers rather than from a single voice, and providing a counternarrative when someone speaks about their reputations. Realizing that there is strength in numbers, the participants made it a priority to educate and prepare other Chicanos about the racial inequities they will be experiencing and reminding them that they had their backs. TACHE provided the space and numbers, to challenge the status quo, creating self and communal agency for Chicanos in Texas community colleges.

The ongoing struggle for representation, the constant battle against Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism, and the culture of resistance created a sense of pride for the participants. Each participant described how navigating the community college was tough early in their careers. Each participant explained how being a member of TACHE helped them learn
about their Chicano identity and what that meant while leading to self-dignity and pride for their Chicano roots. The participants also described how learning Chicano history rooted them in who they are as leaders and their responsibility to the Raza, which means the people. The Chicano leaders who participated in this study developed a mindset of fighting for Raza which moves them to organize, resist, and push back against Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism.

**Implications for Research and Theory**

This study provides a glimpse of the realities that Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges encounter (see table 11). The guiding frameworks for this study were LatCrit (Espinoza, 1990; Garcia, 1995; Hernández-Truyol, 1997; Johnson, 1997; Martinez, 1994; Montoya, 1994; Pérez Huber, 2010; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Valdes, 1996) and the LDIM (Komives et al., 2009).

LatCrit is defined as “a scholarly movement responding to the long historical presence and enduring invisibility of Latinas/os in the lands now known as the United States” (Valdes, 2005, p. 148). LatCrit was used to analyze the data that were derived from this study. As explained in previous chapters, LatCrit is useful as it provides a framework that legitimizes the historical and cultural perspectives from members of the Chicano community and challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism-related to Chicanos. As highlighted in Chapter 3, LatCrit gives voice for Chicanos and how they experience racism related to language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, sexuality, race, sex, class, culture, language, accent, ethnicity, and immigration status. Solorzano and Pérez Huber (2020) stated that LatCrit “enables researchers to better articulate the specific experiences of Latina/os through a more focused examination of the unique forms of oppression this group encounters” (p. 61). Therefore, LatCrit
is an important theoretical perceptive when understanding the leadership identity development of Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges. Komives et al.’s (2009) LDIM also served as a guiding framework for this study. The LDIM is a stage-based model of identity development that provides leaders a framework to understand specific processes in which leaders are developed.

The six stages of Komives et al.’s (2009) LDIM include: (a) awareness, (b) exploration/engagement, (c) leader identified, (d) leadership differentiated, (e) generativity, and (f) integration/synthesis. I identified experiences that contributed to the participants’ leadership identity development resulting in three prominent themes and present similarities to Komives et al.’s LDIM: (1) racial microaggression, (2) racial micro-expectation, and (3) resistance. The following section situates this study’s findings within the existing literature and research.

Results from this study shed some light on the Leadership Identity Development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges. From their lived experiences, the participants described how the awareness of Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism helped them identify and understand how it operates at their community college leading them to explore opportunities to develop their Chicano leadership. Participants described how group influences from TACHE members helped them find meaning and validation eventually changing how they view themselves. The experiences from racial microaggression and racial micro-expectations led them through a process where they began to seek leaders who looked like them as a form of resistance. Showing up and leading as their authentic selves while tapping into their lived experiences broaden their views of leadership. The participants recognizing and owning their Chicano leadership style created a sense of power within them and that power was used to stand up and speak out against the inequities that were harming their Chicano community.
### Table 11

**Major Antecedents Factors Found in the Leadership Identity Development of Chicanos**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Scope of study</th>
<th>Major antecedent factors found</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This study</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>(1) struggle to find their place as a leader; (2) a struggle to lead with their Chicano identity and expectation to ‘be white; and (3) Participants Realized That When One Speaks Out on Racial Inequities, They Quickly Became Targets for the Status Quo</td>
<td>2-year community college institutions in Texas</td>
<td>Four Chicano Texas community college leaders</td>
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<td>Bernal, 2001;</td>
<td>LatCrit is a</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>School resistance of Chicana and Chicano students</td>
<td>(1) The centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; (5) the interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>Chicana and Chicano Students in an Urban Context</td>
<td>Two events in Chicana/Chicano student history —the 1968 East Los Angeles school walkouts and the 1993 UCLA student strike for Chicana and Chicano studies.</td>
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<td>Solorano &amp;</td>
<td>theory that</td>
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<td>Delgado</td>
<td>elucidates</td>
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<td>Bernal, 2001</td>
<td>Latinas/Latinos’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Scope of study</td>
<td>Major antecedent factors found</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue &amp; Sue, 2015</td>
<td>Five levels of development oppressed people experienced as they develop their racial consciousness within the dominant social system they navigate</td>
<td>Grounded</td>
<td>Sociopolitical influences and the effects of racism and oppression contributed to the shaping of racial identity for many individuals</td>
<td>(1) conformity, (2) dissonance, (3) resistance and immersion, (4) introspection, and (5) integrative awareness.</td>
<td>Racial/cultural identity development in multicultural counseling and therapy</td>
<td>Case Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komives et al., 2009</td>
<td>Leadership Identity Development Model</td>
<td>Grounded</td>
<td>The social identity of being collaborative, relational leaders interdependently engaging in leadership as a group process</td>
<td>5 stages to leadership identity development, which included: (1) awareness; (2) exploration/engagement; (3) leader identified; (4) leadership differentiated; (5) generativity and (6) integration/synthesis.</td>
<td>Examining the life experience of college students.</td>
<td>College students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As presented in Table 11, this study’s findings offer a Chicano paradigm for what 21st-century leadership looks like and why it is needed in a changing world. This study supports existing literature in regards to racism and, it provides new insights and strategies into what Chicano leadership looks like and how Whiteness and white supremacy uphold the status quo preventing innovation for the 21st century. Doing the same thing and expecting different results can no longer be the standard and it is time to look at innovative leadership strategies such as Chicano leadership explained below.

**Awareness**

The three Chicano participants in this study identified the stage where they became aware that they were leaders as indicated in stage one of the LIDM. Watching their family and/or community members lead in various community settings was a pivotal point in their leadership development starting at a young age. Recognizing that the Chicano leaders in their respective communities did not hold titles but simply saw a problem and watched them meet the problem created an awareness that they too can lead without a title.

**Exploration/Engagement**

The need to learn how to navigate the community college system and to create a sense of belonging was revealed in the testimonios of these Chicano leaders. Komives et al. (2009) described this stage as “a period of immersion in group experiences usually to make friends” (p. 14). The racial experiences each participant describes in their testimonios indicated that TACHE provided a support system that made them feel like they were at home and belonged.

**Leader Identified**

Each participant indicated that they felt they had a responsibility to protect and elevate other Chicano leaders who are in the community college system. Komives et al. (2009) argued
that stage three is where leaders view leadership as actions of a positional leader while
developing an awareness of the “hierarchal nature of relationships in groups” (p. 14). Each
participant did not identify with a particular position or title in their organization but realized
how learning from other Chicano leaders who identified as Chicano helped them develop their
leadership skills and confidence in those skills.

**Leadership Differentiated**

Watching their family and community lead in times of need and having a sense of
responsibility to protect and develop other Chicano leaders revealed that these participants did
not see leadership through the traditional lens of leading large groups or having a title. This stage
indicates that one does not see leadership as merely positional and non-positional but as a shared
group process (Komives et al., 2009). Each participant committed to doing leadership together
when tackling racial inequities in higher education and understanding that it impacts all
individuals who identify as Chicano.

**Generativity**

The commitment to develop other leaders and the passion to dismantle the racial system
in the community college is evident in the testimonios of the three participants. The themes
revealed in this study show how race, racism, Whiteness, and white supremacy create the sense
of purpose and the importance of their Chicano identity. Each participant described how they
realized they were compromising their Chicano identity in white spaces and have now
determined that they will no longer compromise it. Each participant described how the
anticipation to struggle amongst other Chicano leaders showed them that they needed to be true
to themselves in every space in which they showed up.
Integration/Synthesis

The development in this stage is where leaders acknowledge their personal capacity for leadership in diverse contexts (Komives et al., 2009). Each participant described how they use their lived experiences in their leadership driving them to pursue leadership opportunities within their respective organization. Owning the title of a Chicano leader encourages the participants to make this world a better place not just for other Chicanos but for everyone. The three participants acknowledge that they still have much to learn in regard to leadership. They continue to reflect, learn, and grow with other Chicanos and hope to leave a lasting legacy while changing the narrative of how Chicanos are perceived in higher education.

Implications for Practice

Results from this study indicate that there is a real problem with race, institutional racism, Whiteness, and white supremacy in Texas community colleges. The implications for practice indicate that a systemic overhaul is required for community colleges or, they will continue to fail today’s and tomorrow’s leaders and students. If community colleges truly believe that education is key to dismantle inequities, then they must begin to reconsider how the norms of Whiteness and white supremacy have driven and still drive how they operate through policies and practices. Community colleges can no longer commit to the concepts of diversity or equity in mission statements and recruiting material while failing to do the difficult work of pursuing systemic transformation through a racial equity lens (Museus et al., 2015). Community colleges were designed to serve communities by providing access and opportunities however, their reputations and data toward Black and Brown students and leaders indicate a different story.

The practices mentioned in this study are just some of the racial accounts experienced by Chicanos in Texas community colleges. Dismantling systemic/institutional racism is required as
community colleges cannot afford to continue to do the same thing and expect different results. Current leaders have a choice to make; either uphold or dismantle white supremacy in higher education.

Chicano leaders have the will, skill, and knowledge to be change agents that disrupt racism and white supremacy in higher education. Current leaders’ failure to acknowledge the historical roots and evolution of racism in higher education contribute to the false notions that racial progress is present and the dominant color-blind ideologies attempt to mask the permeance of racism in higher education. Some practices include but are not limited to are; standardized testing (TSI), policy, funding, faculty pipeline, hostility in the classroom, and much more (Museus et al., 2015). I strongly encourage community colleges to begin implementing an institutional framework for racial justice that creates a racial equity culture that goes beyond the Black-White binary. This must go beyond broad statements by calling it what it is; systemic/institutional racism. The chronic underrepresentation of Chicanos in positions of power displays how pervasive Whiteness and white supremacy are within community colleges. If community college leaders want to show otherwise then they must commit to disrupting racism in the academic and leadership pipeline, disrupt racial resistance from faculty, staff, and individuals who hold positions of power, disrupt the racial taxation from excess expectations, and racial marginalization and isolation that impact Chicanos in Texas community colleges. Simply put, it will require more than hiring a Chief Diversity Officer but an evaluation of the racial impact at every level of a community college institution.

Future Research

Insight gathered from this study invites future researchers to explore the leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas universities and how race, racism, Whiteness, and
white supremacy impact their development. There is an urgency to explore the phenomenon not just for higher education but every industry in the United States. Possibilities include:

- The leadership identity development of both Chicanas and Chicanos in corporate America.
- The leadership identity development of both Chicanas and Chicanos among individuals from different generations.
- The leadership identity development of Chicanas in community colleges.
- How Chicana/os in both public and private organizations lead through racism, Whiteness, and white supremacy.

Chicanos have been invisible in the equity movement. The largest ethnic group in this country continues to be overlooked and underappreciated. Digging deeper, Mexican, Chicanos, and Mexican Americans are the largest group under the “Latino” umbrella and have, and still do, experience racism in multiple forms that go beyond skin color. These experiences include language, ancestry, immigration status, Juan Crow, surnames, gender, class, and so on. Four borders impact our people; the political border, the racial border, the economic border, and the psychological border. Future researchers must begin to study the racial experiences of Chicanos in every aspect of our society and develop strategies that dismantle institutions that perpetuate racial practices. Es el momento: We will be heard, we will be seen, and we will be known.

Summary

This study aims to reveal the racial inequities that Chicanos in higher education experience regularly and how it impacts their leadership identity development. Further, this study adds to the leadership identity development literature by laying a foundation on what Chicano leadership looks like. The study’s purpose draws attention to the presence and role of Whiteness,
white supremacy, and institutional racism and how it creates the systems of oppression in higher education. The experiences of the Chicano leaders in this study highlight the need to confront the pervasiveness that these practices create challenging current college leaders to move beyond random acts of equity such as diversity workshops and racial affinity groups.

The research question and interview protocol were intentionally designed to learn how Chicanos understood their leadership identity development and how the experiences from Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism had on their leadership approach. The analysis from the research question discovered that Chicano leaders in Texas community college systems were aware of how Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism operates and found ways to create opportunities to develop their leadership for themselves and other Chicanos. Further, the analysis revealed that Chicano leadership is rooted in their collective historia, comunidad, love for self and all people, organizing and activism, resistance, pride and dichos. This is supported through the findings of this study, (1) racial microaggression, (2) racial micro-expectation, and (3) resistance, were identified as benchmark experiences as to how Chicano leaders in Texas community colleges understood and found meaning in their leadership identity development.

This study also provided future scholars an introduction of gaps within current literature around the identities of Chicanos in higher education. I call on future scholars to move away from a deficit framing toward Chicanos and challenge them to use their work to challenge Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism toward Chicanos just like our ancestors did during the Chicano Movement. Current literature does not highlight the pervasiveness of Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism in Texas community colleges and how current leadership is failing our people today and our future. I hope that this study lays the
foundation to bring in a grassroots movement in higher education that begins to dismantle the systems of oppression that have been maintained by those in positional power for generations. Additionally, this study reveals that Chicano Power is real and how it is a threat to the status quo. I want to be clear. I do not mean the threat from a White perspective, but from a Chicano perspective that challenges current leaders and their racial practices. Current Texas leadership within all institutions has failed and continues to fail the people. Even this was written, Texas was going through a deep freeze where more than four million people have been out of power and water for almost a week further revealing the racial inequities in how certain communities get the support and those who do not.

There is true value in calling on Chicano leaders in higher education to reflect on their Chicano identity and how Whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism have oppressed their leadership style leading them to deny their authentic selves. It is critical that Chicano leaders begin to see their leadership style as an asset rather than a deficit and how being a Chicano leader can dismantle the status quo. The skills gained from navigating the barrios, taquerias, pulgas, classrooms, and boardrooms are skills required for 21st-century leadership. Further exploring this can create a movement for the many Chicano leaders in higher education to develop their Chicano identity with pride like the participants in this study. Further, this study shows the intentional practices that institutions have launched to oppress the Chicano community from higher education to law enforcement. For leaders who continue to uphold these practices, be aware that we are coming and we are going to confront these practices head-on, unapologetically. Confronting and dismantling these practices is on you and surface-level equity practices will not suffice.
Finally, the Chicano leaders in this study hope that their testimonios will leave a lasting legacy for future generations of Chicano leaders. Leading the way, these same Chicano leaders continue to look forward and do their part in creating systemic change while remaining authentic to their Chicano identity. These leaders inspired me to continue my personal Chicano identity development and truly work toward an inclusive and just society.

¡En La UnionEsta La Fuerza!
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Appendix A: Recruitment Email (to TACHE Members)

Hello [members of the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education],

I am reaching out to ask for your assistance in identifying potential participants for my doctoral research study. I am looking for current or past members who serve(d) at a community college in Texas. My research topic is around the study of the leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges. Specifically, I would like to explore how each member understands their leadership identity development and the impact it has on their practice as Chicanos. If you have potential candidates in mind, could you please let me know who they are so that I may reach out to them? If they seem appropriate for the study and you agree to connect us, I will provide you with a recruitment e-mail so that we may get introduced. I thank you for your assistance and am happy to answer any questions you may have about this e-mail.

Please respond to and send any referrals you have to my student e-mail address:

xxxxxxxxxx@acu.edu

Sincerely,

Jonathan Anthony Pérez
EdD Candidate, Abilene Christian University
Appendix B: Recruitment Phone Script

Student: Hello [potential participant name]. I am reaching out in attempt to invite you to participate in my doctoral research study regarding the leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges. I was hoping we could talk about your potential participation. Is this still a good time to talk?

If the individual cannot talk: Thank you is there another time during which I can call you to discuss my research?

If the individual is available to talk:

Student: Thank you. As I mentioned, the purpose of this study is to explore the leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges. The intent is to understand how whiteness and institutional racism impact the development of the participants leadership identity and the effects it has on their practice. I am interviewing members from the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) who have been or are employed at a community college in Texas. May I ask if you meet the criteria for my study?

If the individual does not meet the criteria: Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me about my study.

If the individual meets the criteria, I will send to them the Interview protocol and the unsigned letter of consent in for their review, and continue with the call:

Student: Great. This interview would take approximately 60-90 minutes. I want to assure you that you and your employer will remain anonymous throughout this process. I will be using pseudonyms in my writing, and will utilize these same pseudonyms in my written notes, so your identity will be kept confidential. All of my data will be password protected on my personal laptop. I will also share the full transcript of our interview and honor any changes you would like
to make. When the study is complete, I would be more than happy to share my findings with you. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw at any time we can go over these details and the consent form in person or via Zoom. I will be e-mailing the forms to you shortly for your review. Do you have any questions?

If the individual has questions, the student will answer it or refer it to the principal investigator prior to ask for schedule the interview.

If the individual does not have questions, the student will ask to schedule the interview:
Appendix C: Follow Up Recruitment Email (Potential Participant)

Dear __________

My name is Jonathan Anthony Pérez. I am a student at Abilene Christian University, College of Education, where I am completing requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. I am seeking participants for my qualitative study of Chicanos in Texas community colleges. The purpose of my research is to explore the leadership identity development of Chicanos who serve(d) at a community college in Texas and how challenges, if any, have an impact on their practice. My interest in this topic comes from my own background as a Chicano who worked at a community college in Texas. Therefore, this topic is of personal and professional interest to me.

You are a potential participant because you are a Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) member who serves(d) at a community college in Texas. Your contact information was provided to me by [insert name].

I am requesting your participation in this narrative study, which will be in the form of a semi structured interview. The 60-90-minute interview will take place at any location you choose, including via Zoom.

Participation is voluntary, confidential, and there will be no personally identifying information about you in the study. If you agree, a pseudonym will be used. Even if you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time.

If you would like to volunteer to participate please send an e-mail to me at xxxxxx@acu.edu. If you have any questions about my study, or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

Jonathan Anthony Pérez
EdD Candidate, Abilene Christian University
Appendix D: Unsigned Consent Form

Abilene Christian University, College of Education

Name of Investigator(s): Jonathan Anthony Pérez

Title of Project: Title: Testimonios of Chicanos in Texas community colleges

Request to Participate in Research

We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore the leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges through their testimonios.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The study will take place at a time and place that is convenient for you and will take about 60-90 minutes.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help me to learn more about the individual leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges how an understanding of this development impacts the higher education leadership pipeline.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researcher will know that you participated in this study. You will remain anonymous in any reports or publications based on this research. Pseudonyms will be used if any of your data are represented. We will not identify you or any individual as being of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.
You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call me, Jonathan Pérez, the person responsible for the research. If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, xxx Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box xxxxxxxx, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103, xxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxxxx@acu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish. You may keep this form for yourself.

Thank you.

I consent to participate in these interviews. I have read and understand the above information, or have had it explained to me.

__________________________________________  _________________________
Name                                           Date
Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Interview #1 Protocol

Guiding questions for individual interviews: Introduce myself and share informed consent, ask to create a pseudonym

Interviewee: ___________________________ Date: _________ Time: _________

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Just as a recap, the purpose of this qualitative inductive narrative is to explore the leadership identity development of Chicanos in Texas community colleges. Key to this phenomenon is how Chicanos understand the impact of whiteness, white supremacy, and institutional racism has on their practice. All of the interview data will be encoded to protect the identity of participants. The interview will last between 60 and 90 minutes and I will stop any time you ask me to. This interview will consist of additional questions regarding your leadership experience.

The Semistructured Interview

The following open-ended questions are used to guide the interviewer.

Voice recorder will be turned on and tested. I will start recording before consent is discussed.

I will begin interview by asking: ‘Do I have your permission to record this interview?’

________________________________________________________

1. Tell me about yourself, who is ‘name’? Where are you from? What is your community like?
   a) Were there any stories of family members or ancestors who immigrated to this country?
   b) What was growing up in your home or neighborhood like?

2. What are some early memories of Chicano influences?
   a) What Chicano values were passed on to you and by whom?
b) What Chicano influences are still important to you today?

c) How much of a factor in your life do you feel your Chicano background has been?

d) Can you think of a time where you have dealt with cultural adversity?

3. What does it mean to be ‘Chicano’?

   a) How did you develop this understanding?

4. Tell me why you got involved with TACHE and when?

   a) How did you begin to think of yourself as a person who could engage with others and get things done? prompts (if needed):

   b) What did you learn about yourself being a TACHE member?

5. Tell me about an experience leading a group?

   a) What was your role?

   b) What worked well and what didn’t?

6. Tell me more about your experiences of learning to work with other people?

   a) Were there any assumptions about your leadership by others, if so, what were they?

   b) What about working with people different than you?

7. How do you lead when you encounter resistance?

8. Does your race/ethnicity create more or less resistance when leading? If so, how?

9. What are some power structures you have observed in a group and what makes you believe that it is power?

10. Describe the racial climate at your institution?

    a) How do you see yourself in the climate?

11. What is it like to be a Chicano and a leader at your community college?

    a) What challenges arise as a Chicano?
b) What challenges arise as a leader?

12. How would you describe the leadership pipeline at your institution?
   a) What racial demographics does it consist of?
   b) Does your institution provide you leadership opportunities?

13. What does an ideal leader look like to you? Why?

14. How has working at a community college shaped your leadership? (race; campus climate, professional expectations)

15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your willingness to be interviewed for this research. As I have said, your responses will be held completely confidential. Again, thank you. (End recording)

---

**Interview #2 Protocol**

1. What initially compelled you to become a leader at your college? Within TACHE?

2. What were your expectations of being a leader member of TACHE and leader at your institution- meaning, what kind of leadership experiences have you gained other than being a TACHE member?

3. How have your actual experiences differed from other leaders who are not Chicano?

4. Why do you think there are so few Chicanos in the higher education leadership pipeline?

5. Do you ever compromise your Chicano identity when leading? Yes or no, why and how does it impact your leadership?

6. What roles have race and racial dynamics played in your experiences as a leader of color at your community college?
7. Tell me about a situation where you felt you experienced something that was directly attributable to your race.

8. Why have you chosen to continue to identify as a leader?

9. How do you show up as a leader? Do you feel like you can speak up when you see inequities or advocate for development of other Chicano?

10. How do you support other Chicano leaders?
Appendix F: From Codes to Themes (Sampling)

Table F1: Sampling List of Codes to Themes linked to Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testimonio</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing that culture shock. So, I didn’t feel comfortable, didn’t feel welcome there.</td>
<td>Out of place in White spaces</td>
<td>Racial Micro-Aggression</td>
<td>Resiliency Chicano Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We moved to the more white suburbs it was a culture shock to me.</td>
<td>Imposter Syndrome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominantly white, I learned about how to act and how to carry myself and just</td>
<td>Meritocracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It just it didn’t feel like my environment.</td>
<td>Need to prove self</td>
<td></td>
<td>Search for Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I think in higher ed, I feel like from my experience that there’s still that challenge of trying to know you’re consistently, authentically you in that space.</td>
<td>Out of place in White spaces</td>
<td>Racial Micro-Expectation</td>
<td>Negotiate Chicano Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And when I learned about my status in the country, I feel like that changed everything about how I felt about</td>
<td>White space White structure/system</td>
<td></td>
<td>Colorblind Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White norms</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance to Conform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
myself, my place here, and kind of learning what it meant to be undocumented and then kind of the negative context that came behind that, there were a lot

But starting to work at the community college and then going through different roles, I would say it was probably the TACHE organization who--I had mentors on campus as well that helped me, and those mentors looked like me, but they had the degree and they had that responsibility. So, I would look up to them.

But in action because it’s through the actions that I live it out, right? It’s what we do for each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of belonging</th>
<th>Racial Micro-Affirmation</th>
<th>Expect the Struggle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable around other Chicanos</td>
<td>TACHE provided guidance, support and Chicano validation</td>
<td>Brown Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived experiences helps meets today's challenges</td>
<td>Support from other Chicano leaders</td>
<td>Experiential Knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Someone who always pushes me to kind of connect with my identity and my roots and things like that, different colleagues within the field of higher education that have been really motivating and really encouraging.

I think that’s probably where they had planted the seed for me to want to continue.

The things that we experience, and advocating for things and education, or advocating for things that are lived out in a larger context in conversation that we need to get together on. And we experience it differently. We experience it differently in different spaces.

It’s scary to kind of speak up, and so that’s when I w
It’s understanding the politics. It’s understanding just the jargon would maybe hold back.

So, I try to help others that I’m bringing up. I try to hold their hands a little bit longer than I would others. Give them little nuggets and give them chances because you know you went through it, and there’s people that obviously helped us and opened doors for us.

TACHE has meant for me. It’s just a meaningful space where I can be very genuine and authentic in myself. And it helps build community. I think it helps even strengthen—

Chicano authenticity   Raza   Self-Dignity

About the collective

Pride

Looking out

Roots

Mi historia

Owning Chicano identity

Self-Dignity

Roots
because we’re not monolithic by any means. But just understanding more and talking about growing from the barrio.

Knowing what it means to you and your family to be Chicano or Mexican American or whatever, what that means to you, that growing up, what does that look like, so you kind of identify that to understand what it is and then just be proud of it.
Appendix G: Contextual Timeline
Appendix H: COVID-19 Timeline

As of 2021, Covid-19 has infected over 200 million people and took the life of 346,000 people in the United States.

**JANUARY 9, 2020**
World Health Organization (WHO) announces mysterious coronavirus-related pneumonia in Wuhan, China

**JANUARY 20, 2020**
The Center for Disease Control (CDC) begins conducting Coronavirus screenings in airports.

**JANUARY 23, 2020**
Wuhan, China residents are ordered to be on lockdown.

**FEBRUARY 2, 2020**
Countries around the world begin to restrict air travel

**FEBRUARY 3, 2020**
President Trump declares public health emergency

**FEBRUARY 25, 2020**
The CDC warns that Covid-19 will become a pandemic

**MARCH 6-21, 2020**
A U.S. cruise ship is docked carrying 3500 people due to positive cases on board

**MARCH 13, 2020**
Travel ban goes into place for non-U.S. citizens

**MARCH 19, 2020**
California is the first state to mandate stay at home orders with the rest of the country to follow

**APRIL 2, 2020**
10,000,000 Americans are out of work due to the pandemic

**June 10, 2020**
U.S. covid cases reach 2 million

Source: American Journal of Managed Care (AJMC)
A Timeline of Covid-19 in the U.S.

As of 2021, Covid-19 has infected over 20 million people and took the life of 346,000 people in the United States.

- **July 2, 2020**: States begin to reopen their economies
- **July 7, 2020**: U.S. surpasses 3 million infections
- **July 9, 2020**: WHO confirms that Covid-19 is airborne
- **July 13, 2020**: Over 5 million Americans lose health coverage
- **August 16, 2020**: CDC announces the plan to distribute a vaccine
- **August 18, 2020**: The national debate begins to reopen or close educational institutions
- **November 3, 2020**: Historic election of first Black Woman Vice-President
- **November 8, 2020**: U.S. surpassed 10 million infections
- **November 13, 2020**: National Mental Health crisis due to pandemic and lockdown
- **December 14, 2020**: The U.S. death toll reaches 300,000
- **December 29, 2020**: New Covid-19 variant found in Colorado
- **December 31, 2020**: Only 2.8 million U.S. citizens vaccinated
- **February 1, 2021**: White Americans are being vaccinated at rates of up to three times higher than Black Americans

Source: American Journal of Managed Care (AJMC)
Appendix I: No Sanctuary Campus Article

The Collegian prints article stating TCC is not a sanctuary campus
Appendix J: Request Letter of Support to TACHE

Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education
Tarrant County College Chapter
Fort Worth, Texas

March 31, 2017

Belinda Saldana Harmon
President
Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education
501 W. Cesar Chavez Blvd, 2.308
San Antonio, TX 78207-4414

Madam President and Executive Board,

As many of you know, there is much fear, distrust, and uncertainty among Latinos and students in higher education and throughout our country. Recently, Tarrant County College District (TCC) in Fort Worth, Texas sent out a climate survey to students and employees of TCC. The purpose of the survey was to assess the climate of the College by obtaining students’ and employees’ experiences and perceptions of TCC’s overall climate and institutional practices. Results from this, led the TCC-TACHE Executive Board to request a meeting with TCC’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer with the goal of discussing issues related to Chicanos/Latinos in higher education, specifically, at TCC. On Wednesday March 8, 2017, TCC-TACHE and TCC’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion officer met in a special meeting called by at the time, Vice-President, Mr. Jonathan Perez. All Executive Board members with the exception of Edgar Estrada were present to discuss these issues and several topics arose including, DREAMERS, Latino/Chicano employee climate of feeling oppressed and discriminated in their respective divisions, and a story of a specific TCC student who was detained and deported by Immigration officers. For the genuine concern of the student, and several TCC DREAMERS, and guided by TACHE’s purpose, “to provide state, regional, and local forums for the discussion of issues related to Chicanos/Latinos in higher education and to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to create workable solutions for these issues”, TCC-TACHE offered to propose resolutions to assist TCC in finding workable solutions for these needs. TCC’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer agreed
to review any proposal for resolutions submitted by TCC-TACHE and to be the bridge between TCC-TACHE and TCC Chancellor and college leadership. Attached, you will find drafted an unofficial, proposal, authored by Dr. Serafin Garcia, with the intent of being sent to TCC's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, which includes workable solutions for the needs of our students and chapter members. TCC-TACHE's Executive Board voted and approved these resolutions to be sent to TACHE State Board unanimously in a follow up special meeting on March 29, 2017. In accordance with our Chapter Constitution, next steps are to send these proposals to the State board for review, approval, and support before being sent to TCC. TCC-TACHE understands the current climate towards DREAMERS in our institutions of higher education throughout our region, state, and country. With this being said, it is not TCC-TACHE's intent to create a "sanctuary campus", nor call to create sanctuary campuses, but to provide and assist our institution of higher learning with developing and implementing workable solutions in equitably meeting the needs of all students, no matter national origin or immigration status. Below you will find a proposed timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 31 2017</td>
<td>Proposals sent to State Executive Board for review, approval, and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2017</td>
<td>State Executive Board communicates with TCC-TACHE President, Jonathan Perez with full-approval, approval with edits, or disapproval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7, 2017</td>
<td>TCC-TACHE President will schedule a meeting to present and discuss proposed resolutions to TCC-Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for purposes of transparency and support. Meeting will take place between April 10, April 14, 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20, 2017</td>
<td>TCC-TACHE announces proposed resolutions to members at General Meeting for members, students, and community to review, vote, and support proposed resolutions. (For purposes of transparency and support, a vote will take place by current members only).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21, 2017</td>
<td>If approved, TCC-TACHE will officially send proposed resolutions to TCC Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Madam President, I strongly urge you and the State Executive Board to consider the proposed resolution, and vote yes to approve and support TCC-TACHE's efforts of providing workable solutions in order to create a sense of trust, respect, and inclusive environment for DREAMERS and all students. Everyday DREAMERS move through our six TCC campuses. Some have found support systems, but many are without. The changed demographics of the Texas higher education student body, demonstrate that colleges should be prepared to support all students. TACHE should keep in mind, and at heart, that a large proportion of undocumented immigrants have a high incentive to invest in higher education as a way to honor the sacrifices of their family and community, and as an opportunity to gain economic stability, self-sufficiency, and full citizenship. THE TIME TO DREAM WITH OUR STUDENTS IS NOW!

TCC-TACHE CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Appendix K: President Trump’s Attack on Antiracism Work

September 4, 2020

M-20-34

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Russell Vought

Director

SUBJECT: Training in the Federal Government

It has come to the President’s attention that Executive Branch agencies have spent millions of taxpayer dollars to date “training” government workers to believe divisive, anti-American propaganda.

For example, according to press reports, employees across the Executive Branch have been required to attend trainings where they are told that “virtually all White people contribute to racism” or where they are required to say that they “benefit from racism.” According to press reports, in some cases these training have further claimed that there is racism embedded in the belief that America is the land of opportunity or the belief that the most qualified person should receive a job.

These types of “trainings” not only run counter to the fundamental beliefs for which our Nation has stood since its inception, but they also engender division and resentment within the Federal workforce. We can be proud that as an employer, the Federal government has employees of all races, ethnicities, and religions. We can be proud that Americans from all over the country seek to join our workforce and dedicate themselves to public service. We can be proud of our continued efforts to welcome all individuals who seek to serve their fellow Americans as Federal employees. However, we cannot accept our employees receiving training that seeks to undercut our core values as Americans and drive division within our workforce.

The President has directed me to ensure that Federal agencies cease and desist from using taxpayer dollars to fund these divisive, un-American propaganda training sessions. Accordingly, to that end, the Office of Management and Budget will shortly issue more detailed guidance on implementing the President’s directive. In the meantime, all agencies are directed to begin to identify all contracts or other agency spending related to any training on “critical race theory,” “white privilege,” or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil. In addition, all agencies should begin to identify all available avenues within the law to cancel any such contracts and/or to divert Federal dollars away from these un-American propaganda training sessions.
The President, and his Administration, are fully committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals in the United States. The President has a proven track record of standing for those whose voice has long been ignored and who have failed to benefit from all our country has to offer, and he intends to continue to support all Americans, regardless of race, religion, or creed. The divisive, false, and demeaning propaganda of the critical race theory movement is contrary to all we stand for as Americans and should have no place in the Federal government.
Appendix L: IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

September 9, 2020

Jonathan Perez
Department of Educational Leadership
Abilene Christian University

Dear Jonathan,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Testimonios of Chicano Leadership in Texas Community Colleges",

(IRB# 20-129 ) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs