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Stradling a Cultural Doctrine: Exploring Historical Trauma on Ethnic Identity Development Among the Mestizo Peoples

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STRADLING A CULTURAL DOCTRINE: EXPLORING HISTORICAL TRAUMA ON ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE MESTIZO PEOPLES

by

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ABSTRACT

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The modern descendants from the territory now known as Mexico, the Mestizo, are known to primarily be an admixture of Indigenous and European ancestry. Mestizo ethnic nomenclature acknowledges the presence of Indigenous Peoples in an individual's ethnic background. Though the Mestizo narrative is saturated in collective mass group trauma and chronic complex forms of racism, discrimination, and systemic oppressive forces that delineate from colonialism, the Mestizo are also known to be resilient. Consequently, it is prudent to evaluate the extent to which the legacy of colonization affects ethnic identity facets among the Mexican-origin populations as ethnic identity is known to greatly influence mental health wellness, as mental health services are underutilized by those originating from Mexico. Post-colonization brings myriad ethnic labels rooted in Eurocentrism. Contemporary ethnic labels affect how individuals understand themselves, how others perceive them, and how community members use this information to connect to one another. Given that Mestizo people ensued conquest, exploitation, and current Eurocentric influences, the applicability of historical trauma is essential to evaluate ethnic identity development among this population. Thus, this project involved the use of a historical trauma paradigm to understand ethnic identity formation among Mestizos in the hopes that results could be used to deepen the scope of culturally adaptive mental health services available

to this population. This qualitative inquiry captured intergenerational historical trauma using the Trauma and the Continuity of Self: A Multidimensional, Multidisciplinary Integrative Framework. The Nigrescence model of ethnic identity was also used to explore ethnic identity experiences among participants. A total of nine self-identified Mestizo participants recruited for this project completed the Comprehensive History Questionnaire in conjunction with an in-person interview. Findings from this project indicate ethnic identity factors such as ethnic affirming college courses/organizations, community, family, pride, forms of resistance, and indigeneity helped foster a cohesive ethnic identity development. Conversely, navigating identity confusion and feeling like an outsider contributed to a disrupted sense of self. In addition, findings support that participants' ethnic identity formation was disrupted by historical trauma-related constructs. This research inquiry offers insight into possible interventions to support healthy ethnic identity formation among Mexican-origin individuals.

To my grandmother, Rebeca, who left this realm before she could see this but always knew I could. Your guidance and nourishment continue to live past your lifetime.

To my children, may this be proof that your dreams can morph into reality.

To my ancestors and fellow Mestizos,
may your roots find your branches, and your branches find your roots.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to express my greatest gratitude to Dr. Leah Rouse, who guided my understanding of the greater purpose of the work we do and was the catalyst to my own decolonizing work. For this I am forever grateful. May I carry this knowledge forward in the work I do and the people I meet. In addition, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Marty Sapp, who unconditionally believed in my potential and taught me to use research to elevate voices that continue to rise against oppressive forces. My gratitude also goes out to the counseling psychology faculty, including Dr. Fouad, Dr. Wester, Dr. Chavez-Korell, Dr. Hains, and Dr. Autin. I take with me your wisdom, knowledge, and guidance.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> The presence of the Indio in La Raza is as real as the barrio. Tortillas, tamales, *chiles* [peppers], *la curandera* [witch doctor], *el empacho* [indigestion], *el molcajete* [mortar], *atole* [corn hot drink], La Virgen de Guadalupe these are hard-core realities of our people. These and thousands of other little human customs and traditions are interwoven into the fiber of our daily life. América Indigena is not ancient history. It exists today in the barrio, having survived even the subversive onslaught of the twentieth-century. (Valdez, 1972, p. xv)

This quote is from "La Plebe," a seminal literary composition authored by Luis Valdez, whose writing stressed the perseverance of the Indigenous customs that are alive and thriving among present-day Mexican-origin people (Valdez, 1972). Despite prolonged conquest sustained through the Spanish *conquistadors* and the trajectory of governmental attempts to dismantle any signs of Indigenous culture, the aforementioned myriad cultural customs are pieces belonging to a complex mosaic giving rise to the formation of the Mestizo people, whose historically rich narrative—immersed in conquest and colonization—formulated the complex foundation used in the present study to understand contemporary Mestizo ethnic identity.

The admixture composed of African, Asian, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, and European ancestry completes the lineage of the Mestizo population. This population is a reflection of decades of colonization beginning in the 16th century with the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish, and more recently, the loss of Mexico's northern territories to the American notion of Manifest Destiny (Zentella, 2014). Although the composition of the Mestizo people is diverse, the focus in the present study was primarily on the Indigenous and European hybridity known to be salient among the contemporary Mexican-origin population's ethnicity. The history of colonization among Mestizos is plagued with catastrophic events, including discrimination, alienation from cultural norms, racism, forced government relocation, the threat to life (lynching), slavery, and forced assimilation (Forbes, 2005). Initially, these historical markers of colonization were initiated by foreign diplomats interested in expanding their own economic

triumph. The mechanisms used to mobilize these efforts took the form of tailored political agendas scripted to surpass any bystanders (Almaguer, 1975).

Consistent with the trajectory of Mestizo colonization, Yellow Horse Brave Heart (2003) is among a list of contemporary scholars to theorize the American Indian genocide as historical trauma, or "the collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a cataclysmic history of genocide" (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1990b, p. 2). Recent scholarship on this topic pays tribute to the American Indian genocide and its consequential responses to mass trauma, and as such operates as an archetype to understanding historical implications and their impact on current disparities pertinent to American Indian populations (e.g., Evans-Campbell, 2008; Hartmann & Gone, 2016; Rouse Arndt & Davis, 2011; Walters et al., 2002). The present study paralleled the use of the historical trauma construct with diverse communities (Rouse Arndt & Davis, 2011; Xiong, 2015) to examine the implications of historical trauma on the ethnic identity development of Mestizos living in the United States.

It is evident that the impact of colonization imposed on the American Indian populations also extends to the Mestizo people (Estrada, 2009; Hurd, 2008). For instance, part of historical trauma encompasses the process of subjugation among Indigenous groups through multiple and complex forms of oppression (Estrada, 2009). Indeed, for the Mestizo people, different forms of oppression were mainly a byproduct of racial class order. Superiority primarily was based on skin phenotypes in that darker-skinned Indigenous people were placed at the very bottom and were subsequently viewed as inferior and ultimately confined to lower-ranking roles than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Forbes, 2005).

This hierarchical racial categorization is known as Mexico's caste system, which gave rise to the term Mestizo, originally used to describe those of mixed European and Indigenous descent (Schwaller, 2010). As a result of a racially mixed character, Mestizos were susceptible to cultural confusion (C. Taylor, 1994), "with one parent representing the rulers and the other, the ruled" (Vigil, 2012, p. 92). A new hybrid made up of European and Indigenous blood produced "shades of races," described as a phenotypical spectrum composed of light to dark skin and everything in between (Vigil, 2012, p. 100). Because of their physical ambiguity, Mestizos were frequently oppressed by their European counterparts and simultaneously experienced a disconnect from their native roots (Vigil, 2012). Scholars have highlighted the historical influences of Eurocentric ideology on the creation of discriminatory actions against Mestizos and natives that continue to exist in the lives of contemporary people with Indigenous ancestry (C. Taylor, 1994; Vigil, 2012; Zentella, 2014).

To this day, the legacy of Mestizo colonization continues to exist within the current political climate. Kteily and Bruneau (2017) discussed the recent 2016 U.S. Republican primaries and now the current administration as explicitly dehumanizing the portrayal of Mexican immigrants alongside other marginalized groups. Currently, the hostile political context used to depict people of Mestizo background has not only promoted the support of aggressive immigration policies but encouraged the continuation of the campaign's dehumanizing rhetoric as a platform for everyday interactions between marginalized groups and dominant society (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017).

Unfortunately, deprecating portrayals of Mestizos are not exclusive to contemporary political issues but are rather well documented throughout Mestizo history. Presently, derogatory language used along the campaign trail to describe contemporary people of Mexican origin

includes “criminals,” “anchor babies,” and “rapists,” and notions of these individuals as cheap and disposable labor may add to the complexity of Mestizo ethnic identity formation. Thus, the shadows of past conquest continue to undermine the worth of Mestizos in the U.S. economy and may inherently continue the transmission of oppressive internalized messages to new generations.

The post-colonization era has brought a list of contemporary labels to individuals originating from Mexico. Today’s ethnic labels are known to influence how individuals understand themselves, how others understand them, and how community members use this information to relate to one another (Phinney, 1990). Specific group membership is ascribed when ethnic labels ensue (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Thus, building fundamental characteristics is essential for social identity (Phinney, 1990). Present-day individuals living in the United States who trace their ancestry to Mexico are bombarded by ever-evolving labels used in an attempt to describe racial and ethnic affiliation. Most notable are the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino,” which are used commonly in the U.S. census. The term “Hispanic” is saturated in politics and popular culture. It derives from Eurocentric ideology and is used to describe a group of people belonging to countries where Spanish is spoken and excludes affiliation with any tribal nation (Rinderle, 2005). Many Mexican-origin populations embrace their Spanish heritage, whereas others actively separate themselves from any residual impacts of colonization (Hidalgo, 2011; Rinderle, 2005).

Although ethnic labels such as Hispanic have existed for decades, results of a recent survey conducted by the Pew Research Center indicated most Mexican-origin individuals do not believe these labels reflect their beliefs and attitudes about how they perceive their own identity (P. Taylor et al., 2012). To address the negligence in acknowledging tribal ancestral affiliation,

the researcher in the present study disregarded the aforementioned ethnic labels. Thus, unique to this study is the idea of examining ethnic identity formation among those who self-identify as Mestizo. Chavez-Dueñas et al. (2013) posited that if mental health providers are genuinely committed to fulfilling the American Psychological Association's (2003) *Multicultural Guidelines*, "the living legacy of history must be studied to avoid its many pitfalls. In fact, the Multicultural Guidelines call on us to understand the influence that social, political, historical, and economic context have on individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors" (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2013, p. 3).

Mental health research and clinical practice indicate the Mestizo population grossly underutilizes mental health services for numerous reasons, including language barriers, lack of sufficient transportation to agencies, and low health insurance coverage, to name a few (Cabassa et al., 2006; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2003). Adding to this list is the lack of multicultural awareness around historical trauma and its applicability to how ethnic identity is conceptualized in mental health treatment, which may also contribute to insufficient services for the Mestizo people. As previously stated, the APA's (2003) *Multicultural Guidelines* indicate that for mental health practitioners to indeed service clients to the best of their abilities, they must attempt to understand the complexities of the world in which their clients live, including how past circumstances influence present realities. Given that Mestizo people were born during times of conquest, slavery, and contemporary Eurocentric influences (Schweniger, 1999), it becomes pertinent to consider historical trauma in evaluating ethnic identity development.

Theoretical Framework

Given the complexity of historical trauma among Mestizos, the researcher in the present study conceptualized the transmission of historical trauma using Danieli's (1998) Trauma and

the Continuity of Self: A Multidimensional, Multidisciplinary Integrative (TCMI) Framework. Other theoretical paradigms attest to the existence of the transmission of trauma through various avenues, but often simplify the understanding of a complex system.

Contrary to past approaches, TCMI pays explicit tribute to the intergenerational transmission of trauma and simultaneously acknowledges other dimensions working together. Danieli (1998) stated, "The attempt to delineate and encompass the nature and extent of the destruction of catastrophic massive trauma, having to account for the different contextual dimensions and levels of it, and the diversity in and in response to it" (p. 6). Unique to TCMI is the emphasis on identity and the many ecological levels that make up its foundation (e.g., individual, familial, social, cultural). The complexity of identity is founded on the idea that a disruption on one level may interrupt the function of identity in its entirety.

In conjunction with TCMI, the researcher in the present study used Cross's (1991) model of Nigrescence to operationalize ethnic identity and examined its usefulness with this population while simultaneously evaluating its effectiveness in capturing the effects of historical trauma constructs on ethnic identity formation. These concepts are crucial in understanding ethnic identity development as prolonged exposure to the effects of colonization has transformed into present-day internalized oppression. Cross operationalized varying levels of internalized oppression into distinct stages that are developmental while also tracing the process of assimilation (Cokley, 2002), both factors pertinent to the lived experiences of Mestizos.

This study involved an examination of the points of congruence that reinforced previous theoretical frameworks. This research inquiry also involved a focus on theoretical divergence that may restructure how an individual understands their ethnicity. In the following chapters, the investigator elaborates on each of the above-mentioned theoretical approaches as relevant to

conceptualizing historical trauma and understanding how this experience interacts with ethnic identity formation among the Mestizo people.

Purpose Statement

Ethnic identity is multilayered and ever-evolving through the continuum of time and context. The construct of ethnic identity concerning Mexican-origin individuals has been vastly studied (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008); however, past investigations targeted populations who self-identified as Latino and Hispanic, disregarding vital contextual information needed to grasp ethnic identity formation fully. Past studies (Ortiz & Santos, 2010; Padilla & Perez, 2003) also were limited to using simple associations between variables to conceptualize ethnic identity and neglected to pay tribute to the impact of historical trauma experienced by those who share a lineage with Mexican Indigenous groups.

Unique to this study is the integration of a qualitative methodological framework with theories known to emphasize the contextual importance of historical context within modern-day phenomena. Thus, the study was designed to examine Mestizo people as an acknowledgment of their Indigenous ancestry and honor possible historical implications that may influence their ethnic identity development, and therefore how their ethnic identity is understood. This is crucial in contemporary psychological work because, among other benefits, a strong and stable ethnic identity produces a healthy sense of self (Phinney, 1989). As the Mestizo population continues to grow in the United States, so should mental health providers' understanding of how ethnic identity affects the mental health wellness of this population.

Thus, this study was designed to examine ethnic identity development specific to the Mestizo population and examine the applicability of historical trauma to its formation. This study was intended to provide a better understanding of culturally adaptive therapeutic interventions

for Mexican-origin populations and provide insight into the social justice-related challenges many Mestizos face. This notion parallels the work of liberation psychology, which emphasizes that to liberate from the oppressor fully, one must understand the extent to which marginalized communities internalize oppressive messages (Montero, 2007). Therefore, research endeavors that focus on therapeutic interventions are needed to disentangle historically oppressive messages from morphing into a damaged sense of identity.

The study's primary purpose was to examine the applicability of historical trauma related constructs to ethnic identity development among the Mestizo peoples. Danieli's (1998) TCMI Framework and the Nigrescence ethnic identity model (Cross, 1971) were applied to explore this study's purpose. The study was designed to address the following research aims:

1. What are the experiences of the Mestizo population as they come to adopt a Mestizo ethnic identity?
2. What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to previous aims, if at all?

Definition of Terms

- *Acculturation*: The process of integrating new cultural norms into preexisting cultural values.
- *Assimilation*: The process by which a person adopts the cultural identity of the dominant group.
- *Colonization*: The invasion of a foreign dominant political power whose goals are to control territories and their original populations through catastrophic means, including force and subjugation.

- *Ethnic identity*: The labels individuals ascribe themselves to identify with an ethnic group that also hold emotional ties based on common sociocultural experiences and ancestral lineage.
- *Group membership*: A sense of feeling connected to others in the community based on common ethnic cultural practices.
- *Historical trauma*: The accumulation of a legacy of traumatic events experienced by a community that interferes with factors influencing aspects of their psychological well-being, which are subsequently transmitted to future generations.
- *Indigenous Peoples of Mexico*: The original people who inhabited pre-colonial Mexico.
- *Intergenerational historical trauma*: The tendency of historical trauma symptoms to be passed down from one generation to another.
- *Internalized oppression*: The process by which marginalized populations accept their oppressors' beliefs as a result of their historical legacy of powerlessness.
- *Mestizo*: An individual who holds ancestral heritage to Mexico and identifies as primarily mixed European and Indigenous ancestry.
- *Minor caste system*: During colonial times, a system used to rank people based on socially constructed racial categorization established by the Spanish to oppress and dismantle the Indigenous People's way of life.
- *Positive sense of self*: A positive perception an individual possesses about their worth and contribution to the world into which they are born.

- *Trauma*: The response to direct or indirect exposure to a disturbing and dangerous experience (e.g., threat to life) that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope and integrate emotional response.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter includes an overview of the literature addressing the experiences of Mestizo in terms of historical trauma and its potential implications for ethnic identity development. The chapter begins with a review of the pivotal historical markers that may contribute to the experience of modern-day Mestizo ethnic identity development. The concept of historical trauma is introduced, and its relevance to the Mestizo population is further discussed in detail. Core to this endeavor is a detailed overview of immigration, conceptualized as a contemporary and potentially traumatic event experienced by many Mestizos living in the United States.

The last portion of the chapter contains a focus on the current literature on ethnic identity development, including a summary of the historical caste system related to Mestizo-identified persons. Finally, the chapter concludes with the theoretical paradigm used in the present study.

Colonizing the Mestizo

To better understand the complexities that may contribute to the experiences of the current Mestizo population and the applicability of historical trauma to ethnic identity formation, it is crucial to explore the broader historical and sociopolitical context existing since colonization. First, a brief snapshot of the most pervasive colonization experience for Mestizo persons, the Spanish invasion, is provided. Second, a historical account of the colonization of the Mestizo population by the United States is considered. It is essential to highlight that the eras of colonialism discussed in this study do not format a chronological structure, but instead, unfold in a thematic manner. Together, this brief reflection on historical events provides a foundation with which to better understand experiences that may be associated with modern ethnic identity development among the Mestizo community.

Initial Contact

Prior to the invasion by Hernan Cortés in 1519, the land now known as Mexico was inhabited by a multitude of Indigenous groups who were diverse in culture and language. Indigenous communities were prosperous and used integrative systems to guide their way of life (Diaz, 1963). Although Indigenous documents portraying their advancements did not survive the Spanish conquest, many of these systems made monumental contributions to contemporary social advancements (e.g., mathematics, medicine, development of new plant species, water irrigation, astrology, and theology). Contributions were made by the Aztec, Toltec, Maya, Totonaco, Zapotec, Otomi, and Chichimeca, to name a few (Gibson, 1964). Each tribal nation was uniquely rich in scientific knowledge, which was reflected in forms of oral teaching, written languages, architectural structures, cultural traditions, political governance, economics, art, and social order (K. Knight, 2002).

These sustainable practices were grounded in a strong relationship between land and its inhabitants. Zentella (2014) stated, "The emotional internalization of the land as mother, includes the emotional relationship among land, place, and culture, and ethnic identity" (p. 182). Thus, prior to the initial contact with the Spanish, Indigenous peoples relied heavily on land. For instance, agriculture, along with natural resources, was fundamental to the prosperity of Indigenous groups. As such, agricultural life was sustained through the development of complex technological systems that targeted the mobility of the water supply to the people. These systems included reservoirs, canals, dikes, and aqueducts that buffered against natural elements, such as those experienced during droughts (Edmonds-Poli & Shirk, 2009). Over the span of thousands of years, Indigenous populations were also able to cultivate and domesticate numerous plant species that today constitute half of all current global produce (Carroll, 2010). Indigenous communities

are documented to have developed new plant species, specifically maize, or corn, now a predominant grain across the globe, by mastering artificial selection (Carroll, 2010).

In addition, K. Knight (2002) highlighted that land sustainability practices enabled Indigenous groups to participate in a free trade market founded on the basis of reciprocity and redistribution. He described reciprocity as the joint exchange of wanted goods between individuals. Selected leaders of the community took on the responsibility to evenly distribute essential goods to their people during times of hardship (K. Knight, 2002). Their fundamental reliance on land and social structure was a key component in the successful sustainability of Indigenous groups.

It was in this setting that the Spanish first made contact with inhabitants in the territory now known as Mexico. Gibson (1964) discussed that despite the advanced societies of Indigenous groups, many Spanish settlers depicted Indigenous groups as barbaric savages who participated in animalistic practices. These notions of Indigenous groups as beasts were mainly set in place by the Catholic Church, whose notion of a civilized society differed significantly from that of those who inhabited the Americas (Gibson, 1964). Subsequently, the Spanish perceived Indigenous groups as inferior and worthy of subjugation, which gave rise to a genocide still felt today.

Warfare and Disease

Consecutive invasions from European nations began the trajectory of 500 years of colonization by many, including the French, Portuguese, Spanish, and English, and, more recently, the invasion of Anglo-Americans and the United States into Southwestern regions that were previously sovereign Mexican territory (Thomas, 1995). The historical process of colonization affected every aspect of their prior cultural norms, including those of religion,

language, political, economic, and social spheres known to guide identity formation (Zentella, 2014).

At first contact, a variety of Indigenous groups inhabited Mexican lands and, unlike the present day, these tribal groups, free of borders, moved liberally throughout the American continent. As previously mentioned, these ethnically diverse Indigenous groups varied in language and culture. A large concentration of various Indigenous groups gathered in a portion of Mexico known as Mesoamerica, a focal point for the free trade market, religious ceremonies, and astounding architectural temples. Mesoamerica was a reflection of prosperous civilizations before the Spanish arrival (Diaz, 1963).

The Spaniards sought to proclaim land in the name of the Spanish ruler (Gibson, 1964). Hernan Cortés, a Spaniard sent by the Spanish empire, invaded Veracruz in 1519 (Diaz, 1963). At first contact, the Spaniards became conscious of the wealth of natural resources present among these diverse communities, especially the abundance of silver and gold (León-Portilla, 1992). The existence of these natural resources and the desire on the part of the Spanish to acquire these goods were the catalysts for the initiation of historical events plagued with catastrophic and brutal treatment and obliteration of the Indigenous People residing in today's Mexico.

With the goal in mind to overthrow the Aztec empire and obtain rich natural resources, the prolonged trajectory of colonization began with deceit and deception. For instance, the ruler of the Aztec empire, known as Montezuma, believed Cortés to be the serpent god Quetzalcoatl, an imperative God in Mesoamerica (Cartwright, 2013), and welcomed him along with his Spanish followers into the city of Tenochtitlán (Gibson, 1964). With their arrival came weapons of various forms, including those of steel, guns, and germs. Indeed, the Spanish entered sacred

grounds with a concealed arsenal of firearms, steel swords, lances, daggers, and domesticated animals used to advance their mobility over the native populations (León-Portilla, 1992). The Indigenous communities welcomed the Spaniards into their lands as guests but were unaware that the Spanish had recruited other Indigenous allies to overthrow the Aztec empire. The recruitment of allies was nothing short of forceful. Although many preexisting tensions existed between other tribal nations and the Aztecs, Cortés used preexisting divisions along with his arsenal of weaponry as a scare tactic to secure the alliances of tribal groups. Often this meant killing critical tribal leaders and displaying the Spaniards' means of weaponry to frighten communities. León-Portilla (1992) recounted messages given to Montezuma by tribal groups about the Spaniards as:

> A thing like a ball of stone comes out of its entrails: it comes out shooting sparks and raining fire. The smoke that comes out of it has a pestilent odor, like that of rotten mud. This odor penetrates even to the brain and causes the greatest discomfort. If the cannon is aimed against a mountain, the mountain splits and cracks open. If it is aimed against a tree, it shatters the tree into splinters. This is a most unnatural sight, as if the tree had exploded from within. Their trappings and arms are all made of iron. They dress in iron and wear iron casques [helmets] on their heads. Their swords are iron; their bows are iron; their shields are iron; their spears are iron. Their deer carry them on their backs wherever they wish to go. These deer, our lord, are as tall as the roof of a house. The strangers' bodies are completely covered, so that only their faces can be seen. Their skin is white, as if it were made of lime. (p. 112)

This passage illustrates the colonizers' versatile weaponry used to inflict ethnocidal eradication on the Indigenous populations.

Once Cortés gathered enough allies, he visited the Aztec empire in 1521, and alongside these Indigenous groups seized the Aztec empire (Diaz, 1963; León-Portilla, 1992). Warfare was continuous between the Aztecs and the Spaniards. The first main attack happened during an annual public celebration where the energy was jovial and calm (Diaz, 1963). The Spanish took advantage of the unarmed mentality to attack the Indigenous population and kill the already ill Montezuma (Thomas, 1995). His successor, Cuauhtémoc, was also killed, but not before being

tortured and questioned about the supposed Aztec treasure (Thomas, 1995). The bloodshed of Indigenous People was described by Bernardino de Sahagun (as cited in Stannard, 1992) as follows:

> The first Spaniards to start fighting suddenly attacked those who were playing the music for the singers and dancers. They chopped off their hands and their heads, arms, and legs and to disembowel the Indians . . . Those who reached the exits were slain by the Spaniards guarding them . . . So great was the bloodshed that rivulets [of blood] ran through the courtyard like water in a heavy rain . . . Now that nearly all were fallen and dead, the Spaniards went searching for those who had climbed up the temple and those who had hidden among the dead, killing all those they found alive. (pp. 76-77)

However, it was the unseen weaponry of disease that took the lives of many Indigenous people, including those in positions of power and leadership (Thomas, 1995). Specifically, smallpox and measles, already prevalent in European countries, plagued communities and brought death to every corner of the Americas (León-Portilla, 1992). Because of their prior immunity to diseases, many European settlers resisted the death sentence or any sign of illness, yet they carried viruses across vast regions (Thomas, 1995). Before the arrival of the Spanish, smallpox and other foreign pathogens were unknown illnesses to tribal communities. The presence of these diseases, carried over by European settlers, obliterated the Indigenous population on top of the already rising death tolls caused by continuous mass massacres (León-Portilla, 1992). Records indicate half of Tenochtitlan's population may have died from smallpox over a short period of 5 years (Thomas, 1995). Cruz (2012) described what the Indigenous populations saw:

> It began to spread during the thirteenth month and lasted for seventy days, striking everywhere in the city and killing a vast number of our people. Sores erupted on our faces, our breasts, our bellies; we were covered with agonizing sores from head to foot.
>
> The illness was so dreadful that no one could walk or move. The sick were so utterly helpless that they could only lie on their beds like corpses, unable to move their limbs or even their heads. They could not lie face down or roll from one side to the other. If they did move their bodies, they screamed with pain.

> A great many died from this plague, and many others died of hunger. They could not get up to search for food, and everyone **else** was too sick to care for them, so they starved to death in their beds. (p. 66)

The plunging death toll caused adverse ripple effects among Native communities. Many communities did not have enough people to harvest lands and supply essential goods for survival (Thomas, 1995). Eventually, European settlers attacked the already ill-ridden communities and triumphed over the original inhabitants of what is now referred to as Mexico (León-Portilla, 1992). The land, once known to belong to Indigenous populations, was retitled New Spain (León-Portilla, 1992). The effects of colonization were brutal to Indigenous populations. The death toll for Indigenous populations is hypothesized to account for 24 million lives (Gibson, 1964).

Economic and Political Exploitation

The next era was filled with political and economic reforms tailored to suit the advancement of Spanish settlers and the Spanish empire, which in the eyes of the Spanish could only be accomplished through further Indigenous subjugation. With the Aztec empire's demise, Spanish conquistadors were free to implement institutionalized systems of oppression disguised as political reforms (Stannard, 1992), many of which are still felt among contemporary Mestizos. The aforementioned historical markers, especially the depopulation of Indigenous populations, significantly contributed to the continuation of power and control over native lands and their people (Thomas, 1995). Subsequent eras came with severe traumatic experiences that left Indigenous populations powerless and without any political recognition. The rationale behind these reforms came from the Spanish who perceived themselves as superior to Indigenous People. Thus, they sought to confiscate natural resources and exploit Native populations using abusive labor systems (Gibson, 1964).

Spaniards came to recognize the abundance of metals, most notably gold and silver, which placed Indigenous groups into a lengthy history of slavery (Stannard, 1992). The treatment of children, women, and men was equally brutal, described as "chaining them together at the neck and marching them in columns to toil in gold and silver mines, decapitating any who did not walk quickly enough" (Stannard, 1992, p. 430). Millions of lives were lost while mining for gold and silver. To fill the gap in labor, the Spanish initiated a recruitment process to enslave people from Africa (Werner, 2001). To prevent potential uprising, Spanish law prohibited the intermarriage of Africans and Indigenous populations (Romero et al., 1997).

In addition to overt slavery, the Indigenous People of Mexico were exploited by multiple labor systems imposed at different times in history. The premise of these systems was to control the surviving Indigenous communities and use their labor to exploit natural resources. The first labor system was coined encomienda, which later transitioned into the hacienda system (Meyer & Sherman, 1979). These systems, although not documented by the Spanish as slavery, were nothing short of it. Spanish rulers granted Spanish settlers lands and assumed they would execute the wishes of the Spanish empire while also "protecting" native communities (Gibson, 1964). In exchange, the Indigenous communities were expected to pay tribute in grains, physical labor, gold, silver, and other natural resources (León-Portilla, 1992). The portrayal of a mutual exchange between goods and protection was at its core factitious. Indeed, many Spanish elites subjected communities to catastrophic punitive punishments, confiscated lands and agricultural products, and sold their tribute back to Indigenous populations at an inflated price. Those who disobeyed were killed instantaneously (Gibson, 1964).

The continuation of debilitating and dehumanizing conditions witnessed in the labor systems, along with the spread of foreign pathogens, contributed to the extension of the

Indigenous depopulation (León-Portilla, 1992). Over a period of time, the Indigenous populations plummeted to approximately one million (Gibson, 1964). As the economic and political impositions and subjugations continued among Indigenous populations, so did their understanding of their cultural practices yielding a distorted image of who they were as a collective group, a permanent wound imposed on current Mexican-origin communities (Zentella, 2014).

Religious Imposition

The next era was flooded with Jesuit missionaries who drastically altered the lives and cultures of many Indigenous groups. Members of the Catholic Church dismantled numerous land structures affiliated with Indigenous religions. In fact, many of the present Catholic cathedrals, monasteries, and convents were built by the very rubble that once upheld sacred temples (León-Portilla, 1992; Stannard, 1992). Well over 500 temples and 200,000 Indigenous images were destroyed within a span of 7 years (Cocker, 1998). The conversion of Indigenous architectural sacred monuments into Spanish Catholic institutions sent the message that their way of life consisted of immoral cultural practices. Cocker (1998) depicted the way in which Spaniards perceived the Indigenous way of life:

> Mesoamerican belief was a gross falsehood, the orientation of native society a monumental delusion. Their very gods, the symbols of what was most valued in their world, were not images of the divine, but of the devil, hideously ugly and unspeakably evil. (p. 78)

Those who resisted converting to Catholicism were tortured and killed using barbaric methods of execution. Many, who feared for their lives and were traumatized by the obscene vicious acts, forcefully accepted Catholicism (Gibson, 1964). Even more devastating was the abduction of young children from Indigenous homes to isolate them from their families for the sake of raising them by way of Catholic teachings (Cocker, 1998; Gibson, 1964). Once converted, the same

individuals executed Spanish orders to uphold Catholic teachings by participating in the destruction of Indigenous religious monuments (León-Portilla, 1992).

Scholars point to this pivotal time in history as "detribalization" (Balaños, 2010), or the loss of the Indigenous way of life, including language and cultural traditions to assimilate into dominant society (Burns, 1994; Gibson, 1964). At the core of detribalization is the justification of subjugation and the expansion of settlers into Indigenous lands by illustrating their existence as profoundly immoral, vicious, and sinful and in need of dire salvation (Cocker, 1998).

Independence for the Mexican people came on September 16, 1810, when the Mexican people defeated the Spanish; however, past extensive Spanish policies were developed to erode any rights for Indigenous populations (Schele & Freidel, 1990). Governmental policies were strictly created to uphold Spanish financial security while restricting and compromising the ability of Native people to regain a sense of prosperity (Altman et al., 2003).

The Second Conquest

These historical patterns of forced removal, subjugation, and extermination of Indigenous populations were not isolated to territories now known as Mexico. Indigenous groups of the North American continent also flourished and inhabited what is now coined as the United States and were the first to experience the brutality of European westward expansion. As the population of European immigrants grew along the East Coast and knowledge of the land's natural resources spread, many felt the displacement of its original inhabitants was justified. A series of catastrophic events were fueled by nationalistic Eurocentric ideologies and their demand for more land on which to settle. Many policies were set to remove Indigenous communities by force, which led to ruthless, violent actions. Private John Burnett (as cited in Zinn & Amove, 2009) described the process experienced during the Trail of Tears:

> I saw the helpless Cherokees arrested and dragged from their homes, and driven at the bayonet point into the stockades. And in the chill of a drizzling rain on an October morning I saw them loaded like cattle or sheep into six hundred and forty-five wagons and started toward the west . . . On the morning of November the 17th we encountered a terrific sleet and snow storm with freezing temperatures and from that day until we reached the end of the fateful journey on March the 26th 1839, the sufferings of the Cherokees were awful. The trail of the exiles was a trail of death. They had to sleep in the wagons and on the ground without fire. And I have known as many as twenty-two of them to die in one night of pneumonia due to ill treatment, cold and exposure. (p. 143)

As part of the Indigenous family, both Indigenous groups from territories of Mexico and the United States have subsequently endured psychological injuries and their residual impacts are integrated into their collective cultural experiences felt through generational waves of cultural destruction (Zentella, 2014). Today, the devaluation of Mexican-origin populations stems from historical conquest. This sentiment continues to infiltrate the current administration's dehumanization of Mexican origin U.S. population, especially as it pertains to immigration policies (Zentella, 2014).

The history of these policies began in the early 19th century. Anglo Americans, motivated by the notion of Manifest Destiny, or the doctrine that led many Americans to believe that America was inherently destined by God to expand throughout the North American continent, moved into the Southwestern portion of former Mexico (K. Knight, 2002). This ideology, fueled by a nationalistic stance, gave way to historical occurrences saturated with violent territorial expansions. European settlers justified their actions because they proclaimed it was their duty to civilize Indigenous communities (León-Portilla, 1992).

In 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. Shortly after, military forces were sent to control territories and their natural resources along with essential trading paths (K. Knight, 2002). Fire ceased after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, transforming 525,000 square miles of Mexican lands into American territories (Acuña, 2004).

Present-day California, Texas, Nevada, Arizona, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, and portions of Utah were seized and controlled by the U.S. government (Gibson, 1964).

The original Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War, included Article X, initially written by the Mexican government to protect existing Mexican landowners' rights, as it was ultimately omitted from the final draft (Martinez, 1996). The article stated:

> All grants of land made by the Mexican government . . . in territories previously appertaining to Mexico . . . shall be respected as valid, to the same extent if said territories had remained within the limits of Mexico. (Martinez, 1996, p. 36)

Subsequently, any prior rights promised during federal negotiations between the U.S. and Mexican governments regarding Mexican land rights were disregarded by the U.S. government. The removal of Article X encouraged the displacement and dispossession of Mexican people, which led many Anglo civilians to overtly take over former Mexican lands (Martinez, 1996).

Many original land grant holders resisted the confiscation of their property; however, external political coercive policies and intimidation through riots and murders surpassed any efforts (Martinez, 1996). Factors such as high illiteracy rates, a lack of financial means to obtain proper litigation, and the absence of "proper" documentation added to the displacement of Indigenous populations in the Southwest (León-Portilla, 1992; Martinez, 1996). For instance, in the territory now known as New Mexico, merely 30% of the original landowners still possessed control over their original lands (Acuña, 1988). An illustration of this era was described by DeBuys (1985) as:

> Immigrant Anglos, quite on their own initiative, soon compiled a record of unscrupulousness beside which even the worst swindles of New Mexico's Spanish and Mexican past seemed timid. By exploiting the discordance between Spanish and American codes of law, Euroamerican speculators often assisted by native New Mexican *ricos* [rich] and *politicos* [politicians], managed to buy up many tens of thousands of acres of valuable land grants for very little money. (p. 171)

The U.S. government justified the westward expansion of America and the treatment of its inhabitants by portraying Mexicans and Indigenous communities as inferior and worthy of maltreatment (Zinn, 1995). The separation between "us" and "them" encouraged Americans to side with the U.S. government and proceed with annexation.

Annexation for the Indigenous populations and Mestizos represented an uncontrolled loss of land and cultural identity. The years after this era were flooded with governmental policies and forced assimilation (Zentella, 2014). For instance, in the 1930s, the school climate was recorded as hostile toward Mexican-origin individuals as school systems endorsed American-only values through the establishment of rules that prohibited speaking Spanish and expressing Mexican values (Winn, 2006). The imposition of Eurocentric mentalities exacerbated the notion of being "a foreigner in my own native land" (Seguin, 1858, as cited in Weber, 1973, p. 178). Subsequently, the second wave of colonization in the now Southwest region of the United States continued the trajectory of historical trauma.

Exploitive Workforce Practices

Although both Mexican and American identity labels create a depiction of bicultural group affiliation, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, alongside the 1853 Gadsden Purchase, created a distinct border and cultural divide between Mexico and the United States (Hamnett, 1999). The first appearance of border patrol personnel occurred in 1924 (Stannard, 1992). This action, in turn, reinforced the notion of "us vs. them," consequently normalizing the use of an oppressive mentality and the resulting harmful behaviors toward those of Mexican origin (León-Portilla, 1992).

Such oppressive behaviors are illustrated in 19th-century immigration policies that were mainly dictated by American capitalism (Acuña, 2000). Specifically, the influx of the Mexican

labor force was much dependent on the United States' economic and populace stance (Balderrama & Rodriguez, 1995). This notion is well established in the enlistment of braceros or strong-armed laborers from regions of Mexico during historical markers, such as those depicted during World War II (Balderrama & Rodriguez, 1995). Once the American military personal returned from abroad, the labor force recruited from Mexico was forced to return to Mexico. In a similar scenario, an estimated four million Mexican-origin individuals were deported between the Great Depression and the 1950s (Balderrama & Rodriguez, 1995), of which many were born in the United States (Acuña, 2000).

Historical discriminatory practices in the U.S. labor force are abundant. For instance, the exclusion of Mexican-origin individuals from work unions did not allow them to voice their opinions and concerns related to volatile work conditions (Vargas, 2001). As stated in the bylaws of the New Mexico Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, "Mexicans or those of Spanish extraction are not eligible" (Vargas, 2001, p. 394).

To this day, Zinn (1995) attributed the hostile relations between current U.S. Mestizos and their White U.S. counterparts to the negative historical notions of Mexicans passed on from the Mexican American War. The history of colonization among the Mestizo population is vast, and so are its adverse effects. As such, one can make the case that negative historical events have had an intergenerational impact on many Mestizos (e.g., Estrada, 2009; Zentella, 2014). Thus, these historical markers weave a narrative that is indicative of what it may mean to be of Mestizo ethnic identity in modern-day society.

Historical Trauma

As previously illustrated, people who have ancestral lineage to the territory now known as Mexico have endured more than 500 years of colonization. The trajectory of violent historical

accounts and their consequential manifestations on the Mestizo community are best depicted by using the term historical trauma and other terms describing this phenomenon, such as unresolved grief, soul wound, and historical trauma response. These terms were first used to describe the cumulative traumatic experiences leading to consequential emotional and psychological wounding among American Indians and Holocaust survivors (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2000; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998).

The origin of these constructs came in response to the lack of context in Western models of traumatology (Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Past research on the effects of trauma was primarily conceptualized at the individual level as illustrated by the criteria used in the diagnoses of disorders, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, and conceptualizing trauma through the use of complex trauma models (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2000). However, Yellow Horse Brave Heart (2003) highlighted that this type of conceptual framework is limited to the individual sphere and fails to incorporate whole groups and the transcendence of trauma symptoms onto future generations.

Therefore, the term historical trauma is better suited to describe the immense genocidal dimensions documented during colonization, as it reflects the continuation of oppressive systems indoctrinated during times of conquest (Duran, 2006). Historical trauma is a compilation of traumatic events experienced by communities over several generations, which in time produces psychological and social outcomes (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Unique to historical trauma is the concept that the community, not just the individual, experiences significant loss (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Loss is not an isolated traumatic event; it is recognized as a cumulative traumatic experience (Duran & Duran, 1995)

that leads to immense unrequited grief among community members (Danieli, 1998). Thus, historical trauma was used in the current study as a construct with which to conceptualize the effects of colonization on the Mestizo population and their experiences of ethnic identity formation.

Sotero (2006) formulated three distinct stages that depict the trajectory of historical trauma. First, the dominant group inflicts massive trauma onto a population that results in alienation and displacement, mental and corporeal abuse, financial obliteration, and cultural deprivation. Second, the first-generation experiences the resulting symptoms of proximate trauma through different pathways, including the somatic, psychological, and societal. Third, the first-generation's trauma responses are passed on to the next generation through various channels (e.g., institutionalized racism, economic disadvantages, sociopolitical legislation, societal, community, and family patterns).

The loss experienced by the community goes beyond collective bereavement for a loved one. Indeed, historical trauma encompasses the loss of cultural traditions previously used to endure additional stressors (Evans-Campbell, 2008). The stripping of cultural traditions leaves behind limited resources to help communities understand and cope with everyday life circumstances. The imposed notion that their cultural norms are somehow devious, and historically punishable by death, severs the transcendence of cultural traditions to future generations (Adelman, 1995; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003).

To better illustrate this concept, Duran (2006) and Yellow Horse Brave Heart (2000) used the term "soul wound" to describe the experiences of historical trauma within American Indian populations. This concept encompasses the individual and includes collective group members who also experience the transgenerational effects of decades and centuries of brutal colonization

(Duran, 2006; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2000). The residual impact of the soul wound is reproduced in several dysfunctions, such as those seen in political upheaval, substance abuse, suicide, domestic violence, helplessness, and various forms of abuse (Duran, 2006). Thus, the manifestations stemming from historical trauma are perceived as a direct byproduct of unresolved grief directed at the experiences of colonization and not an innate flaw in character (Duran & Duran, 1995).

Acknowledging unresolved grief associated with ancestral lineage of mass massacres, cultural deprivation, racist institutionalized policies, and dehumanizing practices is an essential component of historical trauma (Duran, 2006). Without appropriate interventions, each generation is vulnerable to passing adverse manifestation to the next generation more cumulatively and severely (Duran & Duran, 1995; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2000). The impact related to colonization over time has both individual and collective observable symptomology (Duran & Duran, 1995). However, Duran (2006) indicated the transcendence of historical trauma responses only heals through acknowledging the pain experienced. This is a critical piece to addressing the continuation of the historical trauma response.

Estrada (2009) drew a parallel between the historical and political series of events experienced by American Indians and Mexican Indigenous groups. As previously stated, Mexican Indigenous populations flourished and were prosperous, but were later conquered and devalued by outside forces. The effects of colonization can be seen in modern-day internalized oppression (Duran, 2006). Scholars point to internalized oppression as a byproduct of historical trauma that can be seen in how the oppressed begin to internalize the messages elicited by the oppressor that perpetuates a cycle of self-deprecating behavior (Duran & Duran, 1995). For

instance, it is typical for Mexican-origin populations to use the term Indio to cause insult. This comes as no surprise, as affiliation with tribal membership meant a lower value in society (Estrada, 2009). As such, historical trauma constructs may influence how an individual perceives their ethnic identity.

Disparities

Disproportionate rates of both mental and physical health are understood to be a byproduct of historical trauma (Duran & Duran, 1995). Specifically, the quality of mental and physical health among the Mestizo population living in the United States is drastically influenced by past historical oppression known to influence various facets of their social and cultural foundations (Duran, 2006). As Duran (2006) explained, it is essential to note that historical trauma and disparities in physical and mental health wellness are multifaceted and do not solely pertain to the present time. Instead, without intervention, these disparities are passed down from one generation to the next with each historical trauma building on each other. Thus, from a historical trauma framework, the loss of cultural norms and overall sense of ethnic identity present among Mestizos from the initiation of conquest has subsequently compounded into a sense of ethnic distortion. Such deep-seated, intricate, and complex issues stemming from decades of colonization and oppression give way to mental and physical disparities that are only now taking precedence in the contemporary research (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran, 1995; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998).

Estrada (2009) argued that the relationship between historical trauma and health is integral to holistically understand its impact on Mestizo wellness:

> Principally, historical and social events have created institutions and perceptions that are racist and discriminatory toward Mexicans and Mexican Americans and, in turn, have negatively influenced their eligibility for health insurance coverage and access and

> availability to health care through cultural or institutional barriers that prevent them from obtaining health care when needed. (p. 335)

With multiple generations being affected by the lack of utility and accessibility to health care, generations of Mestizos have begun to experience high rates of Type 2 diabetes mellitus, substance abuse, hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and antisocial personality disorder (Estrada, 2009; Rogers & Gallegos, 2007). The health concerns mentioned above are known to be byproducts of psychosocial stressors, such as those found in discriminatory institutionalized policies or daily exposure to microaggressions (Estrada, 2009). The accumulated historical trauma transcending generations of Mestizos is said to be a result of a psychobiological stress response feedback loop affecting responses from multiple organic systems, including neuroendocrine hyperactivity, autonomic and metabolic responses, and the immune system (Brunello et al., 2001; Schnurr & Green, 2004; Sotero, 2006).

Estrada (2009) adapted the Indigenist Stress-Coping Model from Walters et al. (2002) to conceptualize the implications of historical trauma on people originating from Mexico. This model was initially developed to conceptualize multiple issues afflicting the American Indian population and has been used to operationalize the permeable influences of historical trauma on the Mestizo community. In the adapted model, historical trauma is structured at the base of many contemporary issues, including poverty, unemployment, discriminatory behavior, institutionalized racism, and low rates of educational achievement that plague many Mestizo communities. In addition, factors under the sociocultural and socio-environmental umbrella affecting the Mestizo community include high access to illegal drugs, high rates of police enforcement, and neighborhoods lacking organization. The model also highlights ethnic pride and cultural identity acting as buffers to the consequential impact of historical trauma (Estrada, 2009).

Current immigration policies present an added layer to the trajectory of historical trauma among the Mestizo community. The current administration campaigned on the notion that it would build a 2,000-mile wall separating Mexico and the United States. The physical division of territory brings to the surface the unresolved grief stemming from lands lost during the Mexican American War. The current administration also campaigned under the promise to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants, depicted as the cause of criminal and drug activity in the United States (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017). Unlike the portrayal posed by the administration, crimes committed are mainly the result of not having proper documentation to reside in the United States. At the time the current study was being conducted, immigration policies dehumanizing the Mestizo community continue to occur and reflect those of past imposed policies. Their impacts were a major focus in the present study.

Immigration as Historical Trauma

For many Mestizos, immigrating to the United States involves a series of traumatic events with accompanying profound psychological and physical effects (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). Immigrants from Mexico, along with other Latino immigrants, face life-threatening obstacles in attempting to reach U.S. soil. *New York Times* journalist Ananda Rose (2012) estimated that annually 100,000 immigrants from Mexico are willing to live through the treacherous task, and may potentially die from medical inflictions, mostly from medical complications related to dehydration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989).

Rose (2012) pointed to increased technological methods, increased checkpoints, and overall organization of border security resulting in impassable routes to the United States. Consequently, many migrants opt for less safe passages such as those amidst Arizona's dangerous deserts. The outcome of such passages may result in severe dehydration, which can

later manifest as cognitive impairments (e.g., mood instability, impaired visual acuity, slowed response time, impaired ability to concentrate, fatigue, anxiety, and irritability; Armstrong et al., 2012; Ganio et al., 2011).

If detained by border patrol, many immigrants are subject to mistreatment. Contrary to what happens, names such as "Operation Safeguard" and "Operation Hold the Line" add to the assumption that border personnel are following protocol to keep U.S. citizens safe. Many immigrants experience hardships at the hands of border patrol (Koulish et al., 1994). Amnesty International (1998) brought attention to the abusive behavior perpetuated by border patrol personnel. Such atrocious behavior includes physical abuse, unjustified shootings, refusing to provide food or water, sexual abuse, medical negligence, and discriminatory charged behavior. Before detention, many immigrants entrust coyotes, or geographically knowledgeable individuals, to guide them on their journey to the United States; however, many are abandoned amidst deserted desserts (Koulish et al., 1994). Among the influx of undocumented immigrants, undocumented female immigrants are the most vulnerable to robbery, abandonment, and sexual assault (Rose, 2012).

Once in the United States, immigrants live in fear of deportation. Rounds of deportation have been prevalent in U.S. history. Koulish et al. (1994) described several government policies, such as "Operation Wetback" in the 1950s, that were established to expedite the process of deportations as devastating to immigrant families. The effects of these rounds of deportation continue to be felt by Mexican-origin families even today.

Research on ethnic identity development and immigration is inconsistent (Cuéllar et al., 1997; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Unlike previous studies, the researcher in the present study did not consider the process of immigration to be one event. Instead, within this study the

researcher collectively addressed immigration as part of a more extensive series of historical events with the potential to proliferate its outcomes onto future generations. As a result, the conceptualization of migration as part of the cumulative experience of historical trauma may lend itself to a more holistic landscape in which ethnic development can be better understood.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is operationalized as "a complex construct including a commitment and sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in activities and traditions of the group" (Phinney & Ong, 2007, p. 479). Ethnic identity enables individuals to identify with and nourish group membership through cultural norms, behaviors, and attitudes (Cuéllar et al., 1997). This process is complex. Nagel (1994) wrote the following about the complexity of ethnic identity: "An American Indian individual might be 'mixed-blood' on the reservation, from 'Pine Ridge' when speaking to someone from another reservation, a 'Sioux' or 'Lakota' when responding to the U.S. census, and 'Native American' when interacting with non-Indians" (p. 241). In this fashion, individuals keep in mind who they feel they should be, but also attempt to understand how others may perceive them. Researchers agree that ethnic identity development is a complex system with no direct path and is ever-evolving through the band of time and context (Phinney, 1996).

Social psychology has dramatically influenced how present-day ethnic identity is conceptualized. For instance, according to social identity theory, humans are driven to obtain in-group status (Tajfel, 1978). This is imperative as institutionalized racism and other politically oppressive forces often threatened marginalized groups by devaluing their cultural norms, thereby categorizing them into an out-group status and threatening a stable and secure sense of

self. This information is based on social identity theory and is at the heart of understanding present-day ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1996).

However, it is essential to note that greater society, at times, assumes others' ethnic identity based on racial grounds, such as skin color. For instance, Nagel (1994) argued that unlike their White counterparts, minorities in the United States are minimized to a few categories purely based on racial phenotypes. The author described how these racial categories ascribe an ethnic affiliation based on social and political forces that is then later enforced by the dominant culture stereotypes. Attached to these categories are privileges and preconceived notions of what it means to be affiliated with a particular ethnic group. Society's preconceived of an ethnic group create a feedback loop that intervenes with an individual's ability to make sense of their own ethnic identity (Nagel, 1994).

External ascription retracts the ability of racial minorities to develop an independent sense of ethnic identity. Thus, minorities in the United States are ascribed ethnic labels based on appearance even before cognitively creating their sense of group membership. This imposition is reinforced through the dominant society's stigmatizing of customs, which interfere with the individual's ethnic development (Nagel, 1994).

Early work on ethnic identity development was based on the experiences of Irish and Polish populations (DeVos & Romanucci-Ross, 1982). As the demographics in the United States shifted, so did the inclusion of minorities within the ethnic identity development research (Phinney, 1990). Now three main models have emerged to evaluate ethnic identity development: those of Cross (1971), Helms (1995), and Phinney (1989). These models each include a process of ethnic awareness, exploration, and holistic understanding about the individual's place in the world in which they live.

Various models have emerged in response to there being a greater understanding of the importance of a strong ethnic identity to an individual's overall psychological stability. A healthy psychological foundation is associated with a stable and strong ethnic identity, especially as it pertains to a healthy sense of self-esteem and self-perception (Phinney, 1989). Other researchers, such as Torres and Ong (2010), have suggested that after experiencing oppressive behavior, a strong ethnic identity is a buffer against symptoms related to depression. However, this is dependent on the progression of one's ethnic identity development. For instance, different stages of ethnic identity, such as the exploration stage in Phinney's model (Phinney, 1989), lend themselves to the individual's heightened awareness of institutionalized racism and simultaneously increase vulnerability to depression (Torres & Ong, 2010). Ortiz and Santos (2010) found a link between a strong sense of ethnic identity and increased social support, lower rates of anxiety, increased academic achievement, and overall positive mental health outcomes. Other researchers, such as Kiang et al. (2010), highlighted that adolescents who felt a strong connection to their parents also exemplified closer ethnic membership.

Although the benefits of developing a strong sense of ethnic identity are evident, the hostile sociopolitical climate in which many minorities live makes it hard to obtain or sustain a healthy ethnic identity. The formation of ethnic identity is further complicated by institutionalized oppressive forces such as racism, forced assimilation, prejudice, and discrimination (Sue, 2003; Wexler, 2009). This is an essential concept because past studies indicated ethnic identity influences how individuals adapt to social situations as well as interactions between groups (Phinney, 1996). This concept is even more salient for the Mestizo people, who have endured centuries of distorted identities and imposed indoctrination.

The Evolution of the Mestizo Ethnic Identity

The roots of Mestizo ethnic identity are anchored in colonization (Forbes, 2005). As previously stated, during the 16th century, Spanish conquistadors were given instructions by Spanish rulers to "divide and conquer" (Forbes, 2005, p. 3). In the name of the Spanish empire, conquistadors perceived native populations as a hindrance to their ultimate mission. Therefore, a hierarchical race system was established to suppress and subjugate Indigenous groups into submission and transfer control of their lands to Spanish rulers. Katzew (2005) quoted José Gumilla, a Spanish Jesuit missionary, as describing this process in the following terms:

> The general idea underlying the sistema de castas [caste system] was threefold: first, to guarantee that each race occupy a social niche assigned by nature; second, to offer the possibility of improving one's blood through the right pattern of mixing; third, to inhibit the mixture of Indians and blacks, which was deemed the more dangerous to the Spanish social order. In view of this, the sistema de castas [caste system] as functioned as a divide-and-conquer method through which the Spaniards and creoles attempted to control the colony's reproduction. (p. 51)

This statement describes how the diversity among Mestizos in terms of culture and physical appearance was weaponized by the Spanish to dominate and govern Indigenous populations. The system was termed sistema de castas, or the minor caste system, which classified a person's worth in society based on their birth and racial affiliation (Schwaller, 2010).

There were several different categories affiliated with the percentage of mixed Indigenous, White, and African heritage. For the purpose of the current study, only a few are discussed. The main hierarchical groups included Spaniards, as the elite; Criollo, individuals who had Spanish parents but were born in Mexico; Mestizos, who had a mixture of native and Spanish heritage; and Natives, who were perceived as the lowest position of power (Hurd, 2008).

The minor caste system was described by Forbes (2005) to include a spectrum of privileges or deprivations attached to designated group affiliations, such as lower taxes for upper castes (Schwaller, 2010). Adding to the complexity of the hierarchical race system was the

economic network established to subjugate native people. For example, consider the creation of the *encomienda*, a labor system designed to ensure Natives not only worked on land owned by Spaniards but were also forced to pay tribute to the Spanish landowners. An overarching sociopolitical theme depicted those who resembled Natives in appearance as inherently flawed with scarce opportunities to reach a higher status (Estrada, 2009).

Many Mestizos adopted cultural norms from the Spaniards while also incorporating Indigenous traditional practices. However, merging the cultures into one created tension between native groups and people of Spanish descent. The participation of Mestizos in Spanish cultural norms displayed a sense of disloyalty to the Indigenous people of Mexico (Forbes, 2005). Conversely, the Spaniards refused to consider Mestizo individuals as part of the Spanish group membership (Hurd, 2008).

This worked to the advantage of the Spaniards, because as described by Hurd (2008), tribes were turned against each other. Burns (1994) described the outcome of the minor caste system as creating cultural confusion through "isolation from Spanish and Indian society along with the lack of their own culture . . . often [feeling] pushed and pulled by different segments of society" (p. 6). In practice, the establishment of a caste system prevented mixed Indigenous people from aligning with other Native communities in a united front to overthrow the Spanish conquistadors (Forbes, 2005).

The historical implications make ethnic identity for many current-day Mestizos quite complex. Given the historical context, C. Taylor (1994) assigned the term "distortion" to Mestizo ethnic identity. Hurd (2008) stated:

> They are always caught in the middle, no matter how much they identify with one side or another. They are never fully the race or culture to which they identify. They are forever characterized into a middle-class race and culture. (p. 23)

This statement depicts the experiences of the Mestizo as living within a fluid, interstitial ethnic space.

The Modern Mestizo Ethnicity

In modern-day society, there is an ongoing debate over what defines the Mestizo population. While reviewing the empirical paradigm, a variety of perspectives emerged from the literature. This is because a Mestizo identity holds various facets, all of which are important to develop a cohesive understanding of the identity of the population. For instance, in the past, researchers have simply categorized the Mestizo population by exploring inherent biological components passed down through genetics and expressed as phenotypes (Bowman, 1974; Brookover et al., 1965; Capelli et al., 2001; Crawford, 1979; Healey, 1969; Wang et al., 2008).

Contrary to this linear approach, scholars define the Mestizo population as complex with sociocultural factors as taking precedence over a biological racial phenotype (Forbes, 2005; Rodriguez, 1999). Despite these differences, both paradigms highlight its roots in the 16th century, a time in history when European and Indigenous cultural norms, including biological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual, blended (mixed) to create a multifaceted identity by merging two groups of people from opposing continents (Cervantes, 2010).

U.S. Census and Ethnic Identity. Informally, categorical ascriptions transform how people view their own ethnic affiliation. This is in conjunction with governmental policies that formally categorize people into ethnic groups. In this manner, policies affiliated with political agendas shape and draw lines that change, create, or omit what it means to belong to a particular ethnic group (Nagel, 1986). Thus:

> Official ethnic categories and meanings are generally political. As the state has become the dominant institution in society, political policies regulating ethnicity increasingly shape ethnic boundaries and influence patterns of ethnic identification. There are several ways that ethnicity is "politically constructed," i.e., the ways in which ethnic boundaries,

> identities, cultures, are negotiated, defined, and produced by political policies and institutions. (Nagel, 1986, p. 157)

As an illustration of this notion, various world policies encourage the use of census information to understand the current population makeup of particular geographic regions (Horowitz, 1985). This information is then used to develop governmental policies. In turn, the government influences the transformation of ethnic group classification and directly affects how society assigns meaning to ethnic group identities. These policies have profound effects. For instance, Weaver and Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1999) explained that some American Indian communities are not recognized as tribal nations by the U.S. government. The absence of tribal affiliation makes it difficult for outside organizations to acknowledge their qualifications as members of the American Indian community. Consequently, "lack of outside recognition or acknowledgment may have implications for an individual's sense of self" (Weaver & Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999, p. 25).

In comparison, the U.S. census does not include a category for tribal recognition specific to the Mestizo population. Instead, the U.S. Census Bureau has imposed terms such as "Hispanic" as an overarching definition for people who originate from Latin American countries and speak Spanish (Oboler, 1995). Scholars have argued that this overarching term lessens the importance of ethnicity among people who come from Latin American countries (Gimenez, 1999). These reductionistic mass groupings are illustrated in the results of the 2010 U.S. census, which identified "Hispanics" as 53% White, 36.7% as "other race," and 1.4% recognized American Indian and Alaska Native affiliation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In other words, about half of U.S. census participants who identified as Hispanics disregarded Indigenous racial or ethnic affiliation. This is despite well-documented records that show modern Mestizos have a

direct ancestral line to Indigenous populations. The lack of modern-day ancestral recognition of native populations may have implications for their ethnic identity development.

Cultural Variables and Ethnic Identity. Many Mestizos are forced to relocate their families to the United States in the hopes of a better life for themselves and their children (Perreira et al., 2006). Although Mestizos who immigrate to the United States are rooted in their cultural identity, they are also pulled to change certain aspects of their lifestyle to better acclimate to the dominant society (Bush et al., 2005; Riffe et al., 2008; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). This is especially difficult for families who experience a clash between dominant society's tendency to praise independence from others and their own collectivistic lens valuing interdependence on their community and families (Lopez et al., 2012).

***Familismo*.** Familism, or *familismo*, is at the heart of the Mestizo culture (Falicov, 1998; Sue, 2003) and refers to a heightened sense of loyalty and interdependence on the nuclear as well as the extended family (Comas-Díaz, 2006; Sue, 2003). The concept was first formally identified in the 1950s and described as "strong in-group feelings, emphasis on family goals, common property, mutual support, and the desire to pursue the perpetuation of the family" (Bardis, 1959, p. 340). Other characteristics linked with *familismo* include harmony, loyalty, and mutual dependence (Dillon et al., 2012; Falicov, 1998; Sue, 2003).

Indeed, *familismo* is such a salient characteristic in the life choices of Mestizos that researchers typically conceptualize their identity within the context of the family unit (Comas-Díaz, 2006; Sue, 2003). Unlike mainstream culture, Mestizos depend on their families for a large portion of emotional support, dedicate more time to be spent with family, and include a higher number of family members in their understanding of a family unit (Baca Zinn & Wells, 2000; Buriel & Rivera, 1980; Marin & Gamba, 2003). This is important because family significantly

influences ethnic identity development (Guilano-Ramos et al., 2007). G. P. Knight et al. (1993) emphasized the importance of family as the primary source of socialization to Mexican culture. Researchers in this study found a parent's degree of socialization around Mexican traditions was associated with a child's likelihood to identify with Mexican culture.

Characteristics related to *familismo* do not end with the family unit, but also extend to the community (Falicov, 1998). In fact, a great sense of community connectedness is pivotal to ethnic identity formation. This notion differs from the dominant society's message that individuals are independent and should be self-sufficient. For the Mestizo community, group cohesion promotes a sense of well-being and interdependence that is crucial to belongingness (Phinney et al., 2001).

Spirituality and Religion. Owing to the historical prevalence of Catholic missionaries in Mexico, many Mestizos identify with the Catholic teachings and follow *fatalismo*, or the notion that life circumstances are God's will (Sue, 2003). Results of a study conducted by Calvillo and Bailey (2015) indicated people who originate from Latin America and continue to practice Catholicism in the United States are more likely to speak Spanish in the home and have a higher likelihood of upholding their ethnic identity.

Like religion, spirituality is infused into many dynamics of Mestizos' lives, including cosmos, family, community, environment, and ancestry (Comas-Díaz, 2006). Although 80% of Mestizos follow Christian teaching (Pew Research Center, 2014), many practice a blend between Catholicism and Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices (Falicov, 1999). As an illustration, parents pass down the value in wisdom and pay respects to their ancestors (Cervantes, 2010; Comas-Díaz, 2006). Expressions of blended Indigenous and Catholic beliefs are often evident in communal events such as *posadas*, *novenas*, and religious gatherings (Comas-Díaz, 2006).

Acculturation. Migrating under duress to uncharted territories constitutes a level of grief felt in losing the ability to navigate what once was socially normal (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). This is true for many Mestizos living in the United States who have faced the decision to incorporate their host country's cultural backdrop into their own identity in the United States. This process is known as acculturation and entails merging the host country's attitudes and beliefs into the individual's preexisting culture (Padilla & Perez, 2003). More specifically for Mestizos, Schofield et al. (2008) described it as "the degree to which Mexican American families have adopted the values, attitudes, and language of the host culture" (p. 1190).

For many immigrant Mestizos, acculturation means engagement in both the dominant culture and their culture of origin (LaFromboise et al., 1993), which is then greatly felt within the family system (Sue & Sue, 2008). This can be a strenuous process for newcomers as their new environment requires them to quickly absorb new knowledge related to governmental laws and regulations, learn a new language, and acquire mainstream norms into their own repertoire (Organista et al., 2003).

Studies on acculturation and ethnic identity among Mestizos are still needed as results are not clear as to how one influences the other. For instance, Cuéllar et al. (1997) found Mestizos who ranked high on acculturation also ranked low in ethnic identity. On the contrary, Phinney (1989) proposed that high acculturation status did not indicate an unstable ethnicity.

Group Belongingness as a Positive Sense of Self

The term belongingness refers to a sense of connectedness an individual feels with their present social situation. Belongingness has the potential to greatly influence an individual's sense of well-being and life stability. A sense of belongingness is even said to be a key component in successful human evolution and important across all cultures (Baumeister &

Leary, 1995). Although belongingness is an important factor in every culture, collectivistic oriented groups—known to emphasize community and family cohesion—may rely heavily on this concept to nurture their sense of well-being (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Given the variety of ethnic labels (e.g., Latinos, Hispanics, Spanish) and their cultural implications, Mestizos may find it difficult to pinpoint a specific ethnic identity group, which may affect their overall sense of self. Forbes (2005) argued that individuals with Indigenous heritage identified as belonging to a tribal nation at one point in history. However, historical trauma experiences created a hostile environment in which tribal affiliation condemned Indigenous group membership to a lifetime of marginalization at best (Forbes, 2005). In essence, individuals who, to some degree, self-identified as Indigenous made themselves vulnerable to exploitation; therefore, estrangement from one's native culture engendered more opportunities and less oppression.

Although Mestizos are descendants of Indigenous groups, for some present-day Mestizos, it is difficult to trace back their ancestral line in a mainstream manner. It is even more challenging to tease apart ethnic components of their multi-ethnic identity. Racial phenotypes such as skin variation are easy to classify; however, as time lapses, it becomes more difficult for modern Mestizos to identify unique ethnic traditions from centuries of Indigenous ways of living.

Centuries ago, larger numbers of Mestizo people were more familiar with their Indigenous customs, traditions, and rituals. However, external influences, such as those encountered under colonization, affected the way in which people perceived themselves as well as how they perceived others. In fact, the constructionist viewpoint unravels the creation of ethnic identity as a dependent and symbiotic relationship between individuals and social

interactions: “The origin, content, and form of ethnicity reflect the creative choices of individuals and groups as they define themselves and others in ethnic ways” (Nagel, 1994, p. 152).

Empirical research indicates it is most beneficial for those experiencing oppression to affiliate with their marginalized group, which, in turn, acts as a buffer against stressors related to discrimination (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). For instance, empirical studies indicate mental health ailments, such as depression, are lower for those identifying with marginalized groups (Gaudet et al., 2005). Studies have shown the same phenomenon holds true for related stress disorders (Sellers et al., 2003) and low self-esteem (Phinney, 1990). Affirmation of group identification is even more important for communities that have historically been discriminated against.

Adding to this phenomenon is the lack of belongingness felt by many Mexican American immigrants resulting from their own displacement from their country of origin (L. Miranda, 2011). Fullilove (1996) noted the importance of belongingness among African Americans who were forcefully displaced from their country of origin and who consequently lacked a sense of community support. Following this notion, Mexican-American immigrants displaced from their land experience instability around identity, family, and lack of belongingness (L. Miranda, 2011).

Ethnic Identity and Historical Trauma

As previously stated, the dynamics of ethnic identity development involve numerous intricate social and political systems known to interact with one another reciprocally. Such systems may include components associated with historical trauma. A review of the literature revealed no research examining historical trauma and its applicability to Mestizo ethnic identity development. However, past researchers have looked at the effects of cultural trauma, historical

trauma, and colonization among other marginalized groups, but only mentioned components of ethnic identity as a side note to the study's primary purpose. Sue (2010) proposed that institutionalized racism evolved from a legacy of conquest targeting minority groups. This concept is pivotal because it illustrates how the past is known to influence the present, which may have applications to how ethnic identity development is understood.

Sue (2010) spoke to the historical experience of colonization within American Indian communities. Much like the effects of colonization on the Mestizo population, the salience and trajectory of trauma among American Indian peoples are among the highest compared to other populations (Greenfield & Smith, 1999). Colonization experienced as historical trauma among American Indian communities includes implementing genocidal governmental policies, such as the boarding school era, prohibition of communication in native tongues or openly expressing religious facets, and mass massacres. In addition, many American Indian communities are plagued with environmental intrusions, including the displacement of materials on native grounds, the prohibition of culturally centered hunting, overt exposure to deadly diseases (Evans-Campbell, 2008), and restricted access to healthcare.

Myhra (2011) used ethnographic research to better understand common themes associated with the transmission of intergenerational trauma in a culturally adaptive American Indian sobriety rehabilitation program. The results of the ethnographic study illuminated three main categories as well as the impact of historical trauma on ethnic identity. Indeed, participants felt the development of their ethnic identity, or "what it means to be American Indian," was founded on deficiencies brought forth by the dominant culture. Participants recalled growing up in foster homes where the notion of being American Indian was that of a lower-class citizen. It is important to note that historically American Indian children were put in the foster care system by

government agencies more readily than any other group. In fact, before the enactment of the Indian Child Welfare Act, as many as 35% of American Indian children were placed in non-native homes (Johnson, 1999). Below is a transcription of a participant from Myhra's (2011) study who had previously been placed in foster care and learned of her affiliation with an American Indian identity:

> I truly didn't believe I was a Native American, because I didn't want to be. When my [foster] brother told me that I was an Indian . . . the only things about Indians I would learn in the school that Indians were bad people. And when I heard that I went and sat down by my brother's car and it was that really fine white dust on it. I took it and rub it all over my face, hair and everything. I went to my brother and told him "I am not an Indian, I am just like you." I ran to my sister's cabin and found baby powder and poured all over myself and went outside crying telling him "I am not an Indian." Believe me I wasn't an Indian. (p. 23)

This passage illustrates how governmental policies, such as the placement of American Indian children into foster homes with non-native parents, gave little credence to the American Indian ethnicity. In turn, this may change the way an individual views their own group affiliation (Myhra, 2011).

Other participants in Myhra's (2011) study mentioned how microaggressions and other negative responses to their marginalized status interfered with a sense of belongingness to the dominant culture. These feelings were strengthened by daily messages degrading their ethnicity and ultimately affected their sense of belongingness to a mainstream Eurocentric society. Subsequently, such underlying messages of subordinacy imposed on American Indian populations encouraged internalized oppression. Specific historical events, such as forced relocation (e.g., foster care placement), contributed to severing cultural norms, which in turn deprives future generations of gaining ethnically congruent coping skills (Myhra, 2011).

Weaver and Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1999) also examined ethnic identity factors among Native communities. The authors surveyed 45 Lakota members to evaluate how historical

trauma may affect ethnic identity. Results of their study indicated 72.1% of the participants forcefully attended boarding school. It is important to note that the boarding school era is recognized among American Indian researchers as the single most harmful policy in expediting assimilation among American Indian peoples (Kirmayer et al., 2014). The boarding school era entailed a period of policies that forcibly removed Native American children from their homes and relocated them to government buildings. Boarding schools were established to eradicate the use of their native languages and constrict the use of cultural values, which were then replaced with mainstream capitalistic values (Evans-Campbell et al., 2012).

Weaver and Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1999) used a self-report method to collect factors that encompass ethnic identity. They included fluency in native languages, ownership of accessories associated with ethnic tribal membership, and involvement in tribal events (e.g., social and political). Participants were also asked to rate how well they felt their physical features resembled those of their tribal members. Measures around self-concept, grief, and trauma were also collected. The results indicated the boarding school era generated a plethora of negative experiences. Interestingly, men—not women—were more likely to experience racism, were more likely to be disciplined for speaking their native language, and were more likely to experience physical abuse and sexual abuse. Battered emotionally and physically, these men reported appearing less Native and were less involved in spiritual practices than their female counterparts. Weaver and Yellow Horse Brave Heart interpreted the results to suggest that "men's greater experience of racism and physical and sexual abuse at boarding school may have impacted their self-image and a need to see themselves as looking less Indian than they actually do" (p. 28). In essence, the atrocities experienced during boarding school may have interfered with their ethnic formation, targeting the question of what it means to affiliate with their ethnic

group. Perhaps appearing more traditionally American Indian was associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing brutalities. Weaver and Yellow Horse Brave Heart also highlighted the lack of involvement in Native spiritual events in conjunction with a less precise depiction of their phenotypical appearance as potentially leading to a decreased sense of ethnic identity. It may be possible that particular historical events specific to the Mestizo population, such as those found in immigration policies, may affect how Mestizos formulate a sense of their ethnic identity.

The effects of historical trauma on ethnic identity development were also evident in a study conducted by Mobasher (2006). This researcher explored how the U.S. media's portrayal of historical events like the Iranian Revolution and the 1979 U.S. Embassy Hostage Crisis in Tehran affected ethnic identity formation among current Iranian immigrants living in the United States. Media portrayal in the United States of the hostage crisis depicted Muslim Iranians as "anti-American," "barbaric," and "uncivilized terrorists." As a result, many Iranian immigrants opted to silence aspects of their ethnic upbringing in order to avoid associations with the U.S. media's portrayal of Muslim Iranians. In his study, Mobasher cited Ali Behdad, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, as stating the following to depict this phenomenon:

> To be Iranian was marked for people of my generation in this country by the hostage crisis, the way we were ashamed of our Iranianness. I did not cook anything Iranian until four or five years ago. I didn't have any Iranian things as I now do anywhere in my apartment. It was not until two or three years ago that I celebrated Norooz and put out the Haft Seen. Those are elements of culture that were being repressed. When I wanted to go out and socialize with people during the hostage crisis I would say I was Afghani, I was Italian—anything so as not to say I was Iranian. I was ashamed to own my Iranianness. (Mobasher, 2001, p. 112)

Mobasher (2006) concluded that the media, influenced by the U.S. government's portrayal of Iranian immigrants as lesser than status, affected the Muslim Iranian ethnic identity. Specific to the current study is the parallel between the negative depiction of Iranian Muslims, which the

U.S. government used to justify political actions against (Mobasher, 2006), and the portrayal of Mexican-origin communities used to defend the expansion of America to the Southwest (Zinn, 1995). Mastro et al. (2008) stated more research is needed to understand the impact of media on ethnic identity formation among Mestizos. However, further investigation is not necessary to recognize that the media assigns stereotypical roles to those who are of Mestizo background (e.g., feisty, lazy, criminals, and gang members; Mastro et al., 2008). This is imperative because the media serves as a basis by which people assign roles to others and themselves.

Another lens with which to conceptualize possible implications of historical trauma on ethnic identity development is through the process of uplifting oppressive barriers created during the infliction of historical trauma and evaluating their outcomes on ethnic identity formation. This concept is illustrated in the creation of new organizations targeting the empowerment of pre-colonial ethnic norms. Hales (2002) made the connection between strengthening Indigenous political organizations and a more robust movement toward re-Indianization, or giving Indigenous communities a platform to reconnect to their cultural practices and the effects of historical oppression. In recent years, Indigenous populations from Latin American countries have been growing faster than the rest of society. Apart from being a consequence of improving access to healthcare and overall higher quality of life, this phenomenon is linked to the political process of "ethnic mobilization," or redefining what it means to be of Indigenous origins (Balaños, 2010). That is, not only are Indigenous individuals living longer, but more individuals are identifying as Indigenous.

Organizations that nurture empowerment among Indigenous groups attempt to encourage culturally affiliated practices and, in doing so, dismantle negative notions about Indigenous communities and welcome pride in Indigenous ways of life (Hales, 2002). The political gains of

Indigenous communities coincide with redefining in a positive light what it means to be of Indigenous origin. In this process, Indigenous communities reassert their ethnic identity, and by doing so, they also use a political platform to reclaim lost land and ensure the survival of Indigenous identities (Occhipinti, 2003; Oliveira, 1999).

As an illustration, Balaños (2010) investigated the basis with which the Arapium and the Jaraqui Indigenous populations, residing in the lower geographical region of the Amazon, reconstruct their ethnic narratives through activist, political groups such as the Indigenous Council Tapajós-Arapium (CITA). Founded in 2000, CITA has helped both groups gain political recognition and reclaim lost land. Through the use of focus groups and observational studies, Balaños established six themes associated with regaining ethnic pride among the Arapium and Jaraqui populations: a sense of rootedness, historical memory, historical transformation, consciousness, social exclusion, and identity politics. The author argued that the catalyst for ethnic reconstruction stems from reclaiming land rights.

It is vital to highlight the importance of historical memory as one of the themes Balaños (2010) identified as necessary in reestablishing ethnic pride. In his study, Balaños referred to historical memory as the memory of cultural traditions and as the basis for how people interpret significant life events. Further, historical memory helps people understand time lapses between the present, past, and future. However, this is a complicated process, especially given that much of the historical record of encounters with Indigenous populations has been omitted or the interpretations of those events have been vastly morphed by privileged groups (Balaños, 2010).

By default, one must lose historical memory to regain it. This concept was explored by Magdola and Torres (2004), who conducted a longitudinal study with Mestizo women enrolled in college. Their primary aim was to understand the course of events related to how negative

thoughts associated with their ethnicity were changed and then constructed in a new positive manner. The authors argued that cognitive dissonance, or the emotional instability experienced when a person holds multiple beliefs, values, or attitudes (Festinger, 1957), is the catalyst for change in social knowledge and ultimately reshapes the interpretation of ethnic identity in a beneficial manner. In the study, many participants described holding inconsistent beliefs about their Mexican-origin ethnicity, such as those found between stereotypes and positive experiences affiliated with their ethnic background (Magdola & Torres, 2004). Although this study highlights the importance of cognitive dissonance as the catalyst to ethnic identity development progression, it does not paint a cohesive picture that illustrates historical markers known to influence psychological health. Specifically, Magdola and Torres (2004) captured the narratives of students during college and did not infer other ecological systems, such as those found in political agendas.

The results of these limited studies support that daily negative messages received from the dominant society weaken a sense of ethnic pride and add obstacles to the progression of ethnic identity development. As an example, political agendas, such as those illustrated in the media, have been shown to play a role in how the dominant society perceives the value of the group being portrayed. These beliefs later manifest as internalized oppression, or the tendency for minority individuals to adopt these negative beliefs about their ethnic group membership as their own (Duran & Duran, 1995). Studies, such as the one conducted by Weaver and Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1999), with a focus on Native populations' ethnic identities point to ways governmental policies restrict Native cultural expression, which interferes with formulating a positive sense of ethnic identity. In addition, cumulative intergenerational hardships endured during episodes of historical trauma contribute to the complexity of ethnic identity. It is essential

to note that although historical trauma holds common traits across populations, it is imperative to consider between-group heterogeneity.

Theoretical Paradigm

Trauma and the Continuity of Self: Multidimensional Multidisciplinary Integrative Framework

Danieli's (1998) TCMI Framework was one framework used in the current study to examine the relevance of historical trauma on ethnic identity development among Mestizo participants. Danieli argued that to understand the complexity and magnitude of trauma outcomes, an integrative approach is needed to analyze multiple spheres or systems of the self alongside identity constructs (e.g., race, sexual orientation, SES, etc.). TCMI points to specific spheres or systems (e.g., biology and intrapsychic; interpersonal-familial, social, and communal; ethical, ethnic cultural, spiritual, religious, and natural; educational/occupational; and legal, international, political, and environmental) as crucial pieces needed to conceptualize identity. These spheres interact with salient identity constructs, and together, they make up a mosaic of the self. In the absence of trauma, individuals move freely within each sphere and access various identity domains that make up the self.

In contrast, the introduction of trauma, such as that related to immigration, may aggravate the free flow of systems at play and cause a rupture within the spheres' network. As access to identity facets becomes disrupted and disoriented, the individual is said to become "stuck," a term Danieli (1998) referred to as "fixity." Consequently, trauma interferes with self-conceptualization and how it relates to the world, including an individual's perception of the interplay within spheres. Danieli highlighted that all spheres are interconnected, so disruption in one sphere is the catalyst for disruption in the whole system. However, factors like assigned

meaning, severity, exposure time, and coping strategies contribute to the degree to which the entire system is disorganized and ruptured (Danieli et al., 2016).

The term *conspiracy of silence* is used in TCMI to describe the exacerbated effects of attempting to resolve trauma when an attitude of indifference is taken by the majority population (Danieli, 1998). Applied initially to Holocaust survivors, the conspiracy of silence renders the effects of trauma even more damaging. Societal indifference is internalized by the survivor and further isolates the individual from society by creating a barrier to trusting outsiders. Without proper treatments, survivors transmit the effects of trauma onto subsequent generations and the trauma thus continues to affect community members (Danieli et al., 2016). As summarized by Danieli (2006):

> Rupture repair may be needed in all systems of the survivor, in his or her community and nation, and in their place in the international community. To fulfill the reparative and preventive goals of trauma recovery, perspective and integration through awareness and containment must be established so that one's sense of continuity and belongingness is restored. To be healing and even self-actualizing, the integration of traumatic experiences must be examined from the perspective of the totality of the trauma survivors' family and community members' lives. (pp. 47-48)

This theoretical approach was used to inform the applicability of historical trauma in the ethnic identity development among Mestizo participants in the current study.

Nigrescence Model

Cross (1971) formulated one of the first African American ethnic identity development models. The original version comprised five stages, but was later evaluated and adjusted by Cross to contain four: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization (Cross, 1991). It is important to note that each stage does not directly match one particular identity; instead, it pertains to generalized themes evident in each stage (Vandiver et al., 2002). Cross's ethnic identity model has been applied to other minority populations, including those of Mexican origin.

The model starts with the pre-encounter stage, which is further divided into two components designed to conceptualize the severity of internalized oppression. These subcategories are assimilation and anti-Black (Vandiver et al., 2002). Pre-encounter assimilation is characterized as a strong preference for the dominant society. For instance, individuals in this phase are not cognizant about race, but rather identify as American. Anti-Black identity is described as internalizing self-hatred, and individuals who fall under this category are vulnerable to miseducation (Vandiver, 2001). Cross (1991) described miseducation as the tendency of minorities to internalize stereotypes leading to a degraded value of their ethnicity (e.g., Mexicans are lazy) and creating negative feelings associated with their ethnic group membership (Vandiver et al., 2002).

The second stage in Cross's (1991) model, encounter, describes how life experiences affect the progression of ethnic identity development. In other words, oppressive behaviors, such as those enshrined by Proposition 187, which legitimized the use of racial profiling to initiate law enforcement contact (Aguirre, 2004), elicit a higher level of ethnic awareness. New awareness provokes the individual to recalibrate what it means to belong to an ethnic group, such that individuals may choose to strongly identify with, or alienate themselves from, their ethnic group membership. Passage to the immersion-emersion stage can only be obtained if enough emotional distress is felt as an outcome of an encounter experience (Vandiver et al., 2002).

The third stage, referred to as immersion-emersion, splits into intense Black involvement and anti-White sentiment. Individuals who fall under intense Black involvement are compelled to immerse themselves in exploring and obtaining knowledge about their ethnic identity. Anti-White identity comprises strong negative feelings toward White culture. This stage also elicits remorse for not embracing one's own ethnic identity (Cokley, 2002; Vandiver, 2001).

The final stage is internalization and includes Black Nationalist, biculturalist, and multiculturalist. All three embrace ethnic identity; however, the importance of race and the number of identities salient to individuals may differ. Individuals identifying as Black Nationalists harbor advocacy and empowerment for their community; biculturalists embrace their ethnic identity alongside their American identity; and multiculturalists focus on a multitude of identities, such as sexual orientation, religion, or gender (Vandiver et al., 2002). In the current study, the Nigrescence ethnic identity model was used to aid in conceptualizing Mestizo identity development in conjunction with the TCMI Framework to operationalize the applicability of Mestizo historical trauma on ethnic identity.

Summary

Within the trajectory of the colonization of Latin America emerged the creation of the minor caste system, which degraded any degree of affiliation to Indigenous populations. The minor caste system also gave rise to a Mestizo identity and, with it, the assigned sociopolitical criteria established to benefit the Spanish elite. Traces of its impact may continue to influence ethnic identity formation among modern Mestizos.

This chapter included a conceptualization of the colonization of the Mestizo population as historical trauma. It highlighted empirical literature pointing to the propensity for historical trauma responses to affect future generations, as past generations can also contribute to modern-day Mestizo ethnic identity formation. Within the sphere of historical trauma, immigration was discussed as a series of contemporary traumatic events. This is precisely the result of the disturbing narratives of Mestizo immigrants as they reached obstructed passages to the United States. At the hands of border patrol, they must internalize and process what it means to be of Mestizo identity, a prevalent struggle as they navigate new social settings in their new home.

Other contemporary hostile climates, such as the omission of the Mestizo label in the U.S. census, may also impose unwanted labels on Mestizo people. A hostile political climate in conjunction with past historical trauma may also contribute to a Mestizo individual's overall sense of group belongingness, and simultaneously threaten a positive sense of self.

The last portion of the literature review focused on studies that explored the applicability of historical trauma to ethnic identity development among other populations (specifically Native Americans and Iranians) that, like the Mestizo people, faced a series of political upheavals. Studies targeting this concept are scarce and, for the most part, only mention historical trauma's applicability as a small discussion piece to the primary purpose of the study. This presents a fundamental gap in the literature as research on ethnic identity formation primarily pairs a few constructs and tests their association to ethnic identity. Further research is needed to include TCMI as a framework that operationalizes historical trauma experiences among the Mestizo population and their applicability to ethnic identity development to provide a holistic approach with which to understand the formation of ethnic identity.

There are presently no published studies that were explicitly designed to understand the relevance of historical trauma in ethnic identity as it pertains solely to the Mestizo population. This is critical because populations of Mexican-origin individuals continue to grow at a rapid rate. The relevant literature demonstrates the importance of strong ethnic identity as a preventative buffer to common mental health disorders. Although colonization experiences are evident among other marginalized populations, each experience is unique and cannot be generalized to the Mestizo population.

Furthermore, past researchers gathered data from one or two community agencies and focused on specific age groups, limiting the generalizability of their results. Congruent with the

historical trauma construct, additional research on this topic needs to include an assortment of community agencies and age groups. In this manner, a broader picture of historical implications, rather than a snapshot, can be established.

As previously stated, ethnic identity is exceptionally complex and continues to develop with the passage of time and changes in life circumstances. The concept of ethnic identity has been studied extensively concerning Mexican-origin individuals; however, past researchers used the term *Latino* to conceptualize ethnic character. The use of this terminology neglects to pay tribute to the historical traumatic events experienced by those who share a lineage with the Indigenous People of Mexico. Conversely and unique to this study is the specific investigation of the Mestizo community, which acknowledges Indigenous ancestry and honors possible historical trauma applications that may influence ethnic identity development and, therefore, how ethnic identity is understood.

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the possible presence of historical trauma and its applicability to ethnic identity development among the Mestizo population. In particular, this study involved an examination of the applicability of the TCMI Framework (Danieli, 1998) within the Mestizo population. Cross's Nigrescence model (Cross, 1991) concerning ethnic identity development was examined for its usefulness with this population and focus area. This study was designed to address the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the Mestizo population as they come to adopt a Mestizo ethnic identity?
2. What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to previous aims, if at all?

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study was guided by the extended case method (ECM) qualitative approach to address the primary aims.

Extended Case Method

Crucial to this study was a methodological paradigm that could be used to analyze the complex interplay between the lived experiences of Mestizos and the impact of historical trauma on their ethnic identity development. In response to the inherent social-political networks that inevitably interact with one another, the present study called for a qualitative approach that recognizes the interactions between hierarchical political systems and the self. Burawoy (1991) illustrated this concept by stating "power and resistance play themselves out in social situations that are invaded by economic and political systems" (p. 1). The ECM can be used to address these socio-political concerns.

The EMC emerged from social anthropology (Van Velsen, 1967) and was later applied to the field of sociology by Burawoy (1991). The ECM is said to include a multi-systemic approach to conceptualize individuals at both the micro level and their existence placed at varying ecological levels (Samuels, 2009). Burawoy (1991) stated,

> it seeks to uncover the macro foundations of micro sociology. It takes the social situation as the point of empirical examination and works with given general concepts and laws about states, economics, legal orders and the like to understand how those micro situations are shaped by wider structures. (p. 282)

The ECM positions a specific case within a broader theoretical perspective to better understand the individual within their social-political context. Thus, findings help to amend preexisting theories or expand on theoretical paradigms. Subsequently, this methodological perspective combines deductive and inductive reasoning to analyze data. In this manner, researchers are not

limited to the development of theories, but instead strive to reinforce or draw conclusions that depart from existing theories (Burawoy, 1991). Burawoy (2009) explained ECM as follows:

> The answer lies with the extended case method, defined by its four extensions: the extension of observer into the lives of participants under study, the extension of observations over time and space; the extension from microprocesses to macroforces; and, finally, and most important, the extension of theory. Each extension involves a dialogue: between participant and observer, between successive events in the field, between micro and macro, and between successive reconstructions of theory. These dialogues orbit around each other, each in the gravitation field of the others. (p. xv)

Because of its multi-systemic approach to data analysis, the ECM has been applied to several multicultural social advocacy research endeavors (e.g., Eliasoph & Lichterman, 1999; Hines et al., 2005; G. E. Miranda, 2004; Rouse Arndt & Davis, 2011). It can be applied as a means to unfold the influence of social, cultural, and contextual information at the macro level as they mirror the individual ecological sphere (Burawoy, 1991). This framework can also be used to examine how individuals and communities experience and influence the environments with which they interact (Hines et al., 2005; G. M. Miranda, 2002; Sullivan, 2002).

In addition, researchers are encouraged to use various data collection methods and theoretical frameworks congruent with the target population's worldviews. In other words, this research methodology does not ascribe to a rigid protocol but instead encourages researcher to use culturally adaptive ways of gathering data specific to the population in mind (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 1999; Samuels, 2009). In this manner, data are gathered through various facets that allow for contemporary issues and historical implications to broaden the theoretical approach's perspective. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used in the current study to evaluate the impact of historical trauma on ethnic identity development among the Mestizo population.

Unlike traditional research, Burawoy (2009) encouraged the comparison of naturally occurring dichotomies in both research and the natural world, such as those found in observer

versus participant, micro versus macroecological systems, and between inductive versus deductive reasoning as a means to formulate new knowledge used to reconstruct preexisting theoretical compounds. Burawoy also denounced the traditional research mindset that works toward the separation of researcher and participant. Burawoy noted too much emphasis is placed on preventive tactics controlling for biases. These modes of methodological research distance themselves from the reality of naturally occurring dichotomies. According to Burawoy (1991), researchers cannot separate themselves from the world they study, nor can researchers excessively immerse themselves in speaking for their target population (Kanuha, 2000). Both hold the potential to interfere with data interpretation.

Subsequently, the researcher is said to interact with all ecological spheres present in the study. The interactions between and within ecologies specifically pertain to the socio-political context, the investigator's interpretations, and data gathering. In light of this study's interconnectedness, where situations and constructs cannot be separated from the context in which they exist (Yin, 1989), such as those found in ethnic identity development, ECM was deemed the most appropriate mechanism for the present study.

This aim is accomplished by identifying the researcher as an insider-participant-expert while simultaneously acknowledging the role of participant-observer as comprising a developed lens created through biased educational experiences and training (Burawoy, 1991; Rouse Arndt & Davis, 2011). Within the ECM theoretical framework, researchers are recognized as inherently political; therefore, its development gives room for researchers to reflect on their own biases that may interact with the structure and interpretation of data findings. Specifically, ECM involves the use of self-reflection in the reflexive process as an ongoing dialogue to augment the data analysis. The reflexive process or continuous self-reflection is used as an instrument to modify

existing theoretical approaches. Burawoy (1991) stated valuable data are gathered in instants of surprise between preconceived notions, founded on a preexisting theoretical frame, and what the investigator is readily presented with. According to Burawoy (1998), four main principles guide the reflexive method: (a) intervene in the lives of those we study, (b) analyze social interaction, (c) identify those local processes that are in mutual determination with external social forces, and (d) reconstruct theories based on what we have learned in dialogue with those involved in our research study (p. 378).

Primary Investigator's Bias

One of the primary tenets in ECM is the idea that the researcher's biases should remain in check throughout the study. As such, the primary investigator acknowledges that she brought her own Mestizo ethnic identity and insider status into the present study. The primary investigator was born in Mexico. At a young age, she relocated to the United States along with her family. Her experience as a Mestiza woman living in the Midwest region needed to be acknowledged. She was raised in a lower-income household and navigated a bicultural world. Based on the nature of this study, the primary investigator identified her role as an insider-expert. First, her membership and involvement in the Mexican-origin community and her family roots gave rise to an insider role. Second, the primary investigator inferred her role as an expert bearing in mind her counseling psychology doctoral training.

Research Team General Characteristics

A research team was organized to aid in the process of data coding and analysis. The team consisted of six graduate students from counseling psychology or related fields. Each student was trained in relevant research considerations, which included the following: multicultural issues pertinent to working with Mexican-origin individuals, ECM, TCMI, Cross's

ethnic identity model, and qualitative coding. Research meetings included time to engage in the reflective and reflexive process. General characteristics of the team encompassed the following:

- The first team member identified as a Latinx female and was enrolled in a master's level clinical mental health counseling program.
- The second team member identified as a Latino male and was enrolled in a master's level clinical mental health counseling program.
- The third team member identified as a White female and was enrolled in a master's level clinical mental health counseling program.
- The fourth team member identified as a White male and was enrolled in a master's level school counseling program.
- The fifth team member identified as Asian American and held a master's level degree in clinical mental health.
- The sixth team member identified as biracial (White and American Indian) and was enrolled in a master's level clinical mental health counseling program.

Participants and Sample Characteristics

Participants were nine individuals recruited from state universities in the Midwest region of the United States. The inclusion criteria used to recruit individuals required participants to be 18 years or older, self-identify as Mestizo, and consent to complete all steps necessary for data collection.

Instruments

The primary investigator used two methods to gather data that pertained to historical trauma and the development of a Mestizo ethnic identity: The Comprehensive History Questionnaire (CHQ) and semi-structured interviews.

Comprehensive History Questionnaire

The Comprehensive History Questionnaire (CHQ) is known to align with risk factors related to historical trauma (Baker & Gippenreiter, 1998; Rouse Arndt & Davis, 2011). The CHQ was revised from a prior study of intergenerational trauma and coping among grandchildren of Stalin's purge in Russia (Baker & Gippenreiter, 1998). Since then, the CHQ has been adapted and used in several studies to conceptualize historical trauma symptoms among various marginalized populations (e.g., Rouse Arndt & Davis, 2011; Xiong, 2015). Specifically, Rouse and Davis (2011) used this tool to collect historical trauma symptoms related to soul wound among American Indian non-tribal law enforcement officers. Following efforts to culturally adapt the CHQ to its target population, the primary investigator in the present study tailored this instrument to include culturally relevant information pertinent to Mexican-origin populations' ethnic identity and historical trauma experiences. Culturally congruent adaptations found in the CHQ specific to the Mestizo population included the inclusion of culture-bound syndromes (i.e., *nervous*, *ataque de nervios*, *susto*) found in the *DSM–5* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). To evaluate the presence of Mexican Indigenous customs existent among participants' cultural practices, the primary investigator included questions relevant to Mexican Indigenous customs. Other culturally congruent questions included questions focused on various experiences related to relocation, ethnic identity exploration, ethno-racial trauma, internalized oppression, and cultural survival strategies. It is pertinent to mention that this author's original version of the CHQ included designated spaces for participants to answer question that specifically asked about yourself, siblings, parents, grandparents, and other significant family. Due to IRB HIPAA compliance concerns, this researcher changed labels to include yourself, first degree relatives, second degree relatives, third degree relatives, and other significant family.

Interview Protocol

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview format. The interview questions were developed after a comprehensive literature review focusing on historical trauma constructs and ethnic identity development among the Mestizo population. The semi-structured interview questions were used to address the following research aims:

1. What are the experiences of the Mestizo population as they come to adopt a Mestizo ethnic identity?
2. What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to previous aims, if at all?

Table 1 summarizes the semi-structured interview questions along with their respective aims.

Table 1

Research Questions and Associated Aims

Research aims/Probe		Aim 1	Aim 2
1.	In your experience, what does it mean to be of Mestizo/a identity?	X	X
2.	People belonging to other ethnic groups often view historical events as influential in their present life experiences. For instance, African Americans point to the effects of slavery and American Indians report colonization. What are your thoughts on this comment as it relates to the Mestizo community and their Indigenous roots?		X
3.	What has been your experience with political systems in shaping your Mestizo/a identity, if at all?	X	X
4.	Describe your experience learning about Mestizo/a community in your education? In media outlets? With your peers? With your family?	X	X
5.	What has your experience been like with Mexican Indigenous cultural traditions, if any?	X	X
6.	How would you describe your relationship with the Mestizo community? With the mainstream community in Mexico, the U.S.?	X	
7.	How has the experience of immigration shaped your Mestizo identity?	X	X

Procedures

The following is a chronological description of the procedures used to gather data for this study.

1. Participant recruitment occurred at Midwest universities. The primary investigator connected with different university organizations to discuss the potential for their involvement in the present study. Within this discussion, the primary investigator disseminated information about the study, including topics such as confidentiality, the purpose of the study, benefits, and risks. The agency representatives then had room to ask any questions that pertained to their involvement in the recruitment process.
2. Once representatives of the universities agreed to participate in the recruitment process, the primary investigator forwarded a recruitment flyer to their administration, and then the administration personnel dispersed it to their student body. The flyers included inclusion criteria targeting individuals who self-identified as Mestizo and were willing to share their stories about their ethnic identity formation. *Personalismo*, or an individual's ability to exhibit good intentions, is congruent with Mexican-origin cultural norms (Ramirez, 1990). Therefore, a more personable avenue, such as word-of-mouth, was also used to recruit participants.
3. Once the primary investigator received notification of participants' interest via e-mail or phone, she then reiterated important information regarding the study's purpose, the structure of the study, confidentiality, duration of the in-person interview, and risks and benefits related to participating in the study.
4. Participants received a copy of the CHQ and a consent form via U.S. Postal Service or by e-mail.
5. Semi-structured interviews, facilitated by the primary investigator, lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours. To ensure confidentiality, the interviews took place at the participant's recruitment location. The primary investigator ensured the setting

provided privacy and emotional ease for the participants. The primary investigator read the consent form to the participant with ample room to answer any questions—the consent form was then signed by both the primary investigator and the participant. Attention was brought to the consent to audio-record interviews by emphasizing that participants had the option not to be audio recorded at any given time during the interview. The primary investigator reviewed the CHQ to elaborate on any commentary made by participants. The semi-structured questionnaires were then given.

6. Once the data were gathered and transcribed, the primary investigator contacted participants via phone to engage in member checking. As previously stated, this process involves reiterating the information given by the participant during data collection and checking for its accuracy to ensure credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each participant had the opportunity to give additional feedback not otherwise given during the initial interview as well as comment on the transcript's degree of accuracy.
7. Participant debriefing was conducted after data collection. The debriefing protocol consisted of asking participants for any feedback they wished to share about their experience participating in the study.

Data Analysis

The audio recordings were transcribed independently by the primary investigator and other research team members. All transcripts were reviewed for verification. Creswell (1998) stated transcripts need to be read in their entirety to get a feel for the data at hand and to establish a sound initial coding process. Once the initial transcription was completed, the primary

investigator made reflective comments about themes, reactions, and any information pertaining to the questions posed by the study.

The coding process included within-case analysis as well as across-case analysis. Coding was facilitated with Microsoft Excel. The primary investigator coded each transcript and then the transcripts were given to another team member. Large codes were extrapolated using preexisting deductive domains present in previously mentioned theoretical frameworks. Once the overarching deductive codes were established, the second coding process filtered emerging inductive thematic code patterns. Inductive analysis aids in establishing the essence of ECM by augmenting, disputing, or reinforcing preexisting theoretical frameworks (Burawoy, 1991). Finally, domains extended the creation of themes and subthemes by using both inductive analyses in conjunction with the deductive analytical process. ECM draws attention to outlier data rendered through the inductive analytical process as facilitating further understanding of constructs.

Trustworthiness

Creswell (1998) stated trustworthiness is an ongoing process by which researchers create an accurate interpretation of findings. The primary investigator in the present study used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) techniques to uphold the importance and foundational ideologies associated with trustworthiness. The first strategy was triangulation. Data were gathered using multiple forms of data collection to develop understanding of the findings.

Second, as previously stated, the reflective and reflexive process is used in an attempt to bring a researcher's biases to conscious awareness. As such, the primary investigator used the reflective and reflexive process during research team meetings. This strategy upheld the value of identifying biases that had the potential to interfere with the present study's credibility.

Third, to combat concerns associated with thematic coding reliability and consistency, the primary investigator incorporated intercoder agreement. Fine et al. (2000) encouraged qualitative researchers to use intercoder agreement to review data and simultaneously unfold layers from findings to understand the present study better. Congruent with this statement, the primary investigator collaborated with other research team members to cross-reference the accuracy of the data coding and analysis. The use of triangulation ensured the study's findings captured the experiences of the participants.

The primary investigator coded each interview transcript independently. A different research member then completed a second round of coding. The research team came together to extrapolate significant themes derived from a complete list of codes.

Finally, the primary investigator incorporated member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This technique is also known as respondent validation or participant validation and describes the process of returning the transcript to the participants to verify accuracy (Birt et al., 2016).

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter contains the findings of this qualitative research project. As mentioned in previous chapters, the goal of this project was to examine the applicability of historical trauma to ethnic identity development among the Mestizo population. The two theoretical frameworks used to explore this paradigm were Danieli's (1998) TCMI Framework and the Nigrescence ethnic identity model (Cross, 1971). Both frameworks were used to explore the following two research aims:

1. What are the experiences of the Mestizo population as they come to adopt a Mestizo ethnic identity?
2. What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to previous aims, if at all?

The chapter begins by noting the demographic make-up of the participants. The chapter then addresses each research question: Question 1 pertained to experiences associated with Mestizo ethnic identity development and Question 2 pertained to concerns associated with historical trauma as ethnic identity develops. Findings from this project are first organized into domains and then each domain is further divided into themes. Finally, themes are sorted into subthemes. The codes used to develop categorical structures (domains, themes, subthemes) may overlap and interact with one another.

Demographics

Demographic information was collected using the CHQ. The mean age of participants was 31 years old. The youngest participant was 20 years old and the oldest was 65 years old. The gender of participants included four males, four females, and one participant who identified as non-binary. During the recruitment process, all participants endorsed a Mestizo ethnic identity. Casey-Cannon et al. (2011) noted the prolonged history within the United States of positioning

racial groups into hierarchical structures over time created an overlap between how race and ethnicity are understood. This idea follows the participants' responses on the CHQ as most used their race, ethnicity, and nationality interchangeably. Ethnic categories included Mexicano; Mexican, African American; Indigenous, Mixed, Xicana, Mestizo; Hispanic; Mexican; Latino; Hispanic, Mestizo; and Mexican American. Racial categories included Chicano; Multiracial (Black/Mexican or Afro-Latina); Mixed, Brown, Latinx, Indigenous; Latino, Hispanic; Latino, Hispanic, American; Latino; Latina; and Hispanic, Latino. Seven of the nine (78%) participants were born in the United States and two (22%) were born in Mexico. Eight of the nine (89%) participants noted at least one member of their nuclear family was born in Mexico. Table 2 presents descriptive demographics. To maintain confidentiality, descriptive characteristics are kept to a minimum and pseudonyms were used.

Table 2

Participant Characteristics

Participant	Partner status	Place of birth	Highest level of education
Augustin	Single	United States	Bachelor's
Lucia	Married	United States	Master's
Ximena	Married	United States	Bachelor's
Renata	Married	United States	Bachelor's
Florencia	Divorced	Mexico	Some college
Luis	Single	United States	Some college
Mateo	Single	United States	Some college
Sofia	Widowed	Mexico	Master's
Rodrigo	Single	United States	Some college

Note. All names are pseudonyms

Participant Demographic Summaries

This section summarizes the demographic backgrounds are pertinent to each participant's experiences related to ethnic identity development. Data gathered for this section were based on the CHQ as well as semi-structured interviews. A summative narrative of each participant's background is evaluated to provide contextualized data to better conceptualize the ethnic narrative of each participant and in doing so provide a blueprint for understanding both inductive and deductive domains, themes, and subthemes.

Augustin. Agustin is in his mid-20 and identifies as male. He has obtained a bachelor's degree and was born in the United States. His family primarily resides in the United States and Mexico. Augustin feels relocating to the United States is a "double edged sword." His family members thought it is a sacrifice made to gain opportunities. Agustin stated his family members have experienced trauma while relocating to the United States (e.g., family separation). He disclosed experiences that related to exposure to trauma.

He attributes gained ethnic knowledge to his older sister, Chicano culture, and ethnic affirming college courses/organizations as primary vessels that helped him gain ethnic insight. He sees discriminatory societal behavior as a byproduct of external systemic oppressive systems instead of internalizing negative messages as his deficits. Finally, Augustin paid particular attention to the importance of social advocacy to provide equity for future generations.

Lucia. Lucia is in her late 20 and identifies as a female. She holds a master's degree. Most of her family, including herself, have spent their time between the United States and Mexico. Although Lucia was born in the United States, she expressed a deep connection to Mexico. Her family, as well as herself, views both the United States and Mexico in a positive light. Her family experienced emotional distress when they relocated to the United States as they

had to separate from their loved ones who remained in Mexico. Lucia disclosed experiences related to exposure to trauma.

She recalled the presence of derogatory language toward the Mexican-origin population more extensively during high school. Lucia's ethnic identity narrative differed from those of the rest of the participants as she expressed her concerns related to the erasure of African lineage. The elimination of the African ancestry within the greater Mestizo narrative is gravely vital to her as she identifies with both her African roots and her Mestiza heritage. She emphasized that being African and Mestiza are not mutually exclusive.

Ximena. Ximena is in their late 20 and identifies as non-binary. They obtained a bachelor's degree. Their family resides in both the United States and Mexico. They view their family's relocation to the United States as "problematic." On the other hand, their family members view their life in the United States as better educational opportunities, whereas others perceive it as unnecessary. Ximena expressed concerns related to growing up separated from family members who resided in Mexico. They highlighted that their father has had a difficult time remaining in Mexico during their development in the United States.

Ximena also recalled not fitting in through childhood and viewed their exclusion from greater society as linked to the government's unwillingness to recognize their multiple identities. Their Mayan ancestry is pivotal to their ethnic narrative. Unlike other participants, Ximena had access to community members who introduced them to Indigenous ceremonies. They were appreciative of being invited to participate in ceremony as they often felt as if they were searching for something to connect with their Indigenous roots but could not find how to connect. Ximena emphasized the importance of participating in ceremony and partaking in developing organizations that were motivated to reclaim and restore Indigenous roots.

Renata. Renata is in her mid-30 and identifies as female. She obtained a bachelor's degree. She was born in the United States and views relocating to the United States as a "blessing." She disclosed traumatic events related to exposure to trauma. She views her occupation working with children as a window into how internalized oppressive messages resonate among the youth with whom she works. She explicitly considers the retention of Spanish fluency as a vital factor to preserve and cultivate Mexican culture.

Florencia. Florencia is in her late 20 and identifies as a female. She has some college education. At the time of recruitment, she was working toward her bachelor's degree. Florencia was born in Mexico and provided insight into her experience as a first-generation newcomer. Her relatives reside both in Mexico and the United States. They view relocating to the United States as "improved quality of life." Although she does not recall traumatic experiences while migrating to the United States, her family members do endorse traumatic encounters while resettling. Florencia did disclose experiences related to exposure to trauma.

Throughout her time in the United States, she experienced vast discrimination, mostly while she retained an undocumented status. Due to her personal experience, she is passionate about social advocacy movements that seek equity for all who are motivated to make the United States their home.

Luis. Luis is in his early 20s and identifies as a male. He was born in the United States; however, his family is dispersed both in Mexico and the United States. At the time of recruitment, Luis was in the process of obtaining his bachelor's degree. He views the process of relocating to the United States as "a result of systemic inequality." He noted that his family considers their decision to live in the United States "as a necessity to ensure a better life for me and my siblings." The relocation process brought emotional distress to his family as they

experienced the emotional turmoil of being separated from loved ones. Luis also disclosed traumatic events congruent with exposure to trauma.

Luis emphasized his participation in ethnic identity exploration discussions with peers beginning in middle school. He also noted he became familiar with social activism organizations from an early age as his parents often took him along to social advocacy events.

Mateo. Mateo is in his early 20s and identifies as a male. He was born in the United States, and much of his family resides in the United States. At the time of his recruitment for this study, he worked toward receiving his bachelor's degree. He expressed that he does not have any personal ties to the process of relocating to the United States; however, he believed his relatives view it "positively." Mateo endorsed traumatic events that align with exposure to trauma.

Mateo recalled his grandparents experienced extensive discrimination for their Mexican origins. Consequently, they decided to suppress their Mexican cultural traits to protect future generations from being discriminated against. Mateo differed from other participants as he was not taught Spanish and felt he must make an active effort to reclaim his Mexican heritage without the aid of family members.

Sofia. Sofia self-identifies as a 65-year-old female who was born in Mexico. At the time of recruitment, she worked on obtaining her master's degree. Her family resides in both Mexico and the United States. She found relocating to the United States as "sad because I had to leave many family and friends." Her family viewed relocation as a "necessity." While relocating to the United States, she experienced intense fear of being sent back to Mexico. Her family experienced extreme emotional distress as they had to leave many of their friends and family. Sofia endorsed situations congruent with exposure to trauma.

Sofia was the eldest of all participants; therefore, she witnessed a range of changes related to the presence of systems of oppression in the United States. Also, Sofia had rich knowledge as it pertained to her Indigenous, Kickapoo heritage. She noted the use of oral history in her family helped to preserve indigenous teachings.

Rodrigo. Rodrigo identifies as a 20-year-old male. He was born in the United States and noted he has family both in the United States and Mexico. He indicated relocating to the United States provided "opportunities for a better life than in Mexico." His family echoed his sentiments as they viewed resettling to the United States as "a better future for their family." Rodrigo recalled not having a personal experience with the relocation process; however, he expressed concerns over his parents' travels to the United States as dangerous because of their undocumented status at the time. Rodrigo's testimony did not disclose any events related to exposure to trauma.

Rodrigo was the youngest participant and noted he was motivated to explore his ethnic identity further; however, he had not had ample opportunities. He stated his attendance at a leadership conference focused on inviting Latin American populations heightened his interest in discovering platforms that support ethnic identity exploration.

Question 1 Results: Experiences Associated With Mestizo Ethnic Identity Development

The following sections present the findings specific to the first question, which was: What are the experiences of the Mestizo population as they come to adopt a Mestizo ethnic identity? Participants described myriad experiences related to their ethnic identity integration process. Ethnic identity integration, or the process of integrating ethnic identity into other ecological spheres, surfaced as the primary domain and is labeled as ethnic identity integration. Two themes emerged from this domain: disrupted ethnic identity and integrated ethnic identity.

These themes were then sorted into various subthemes. Table 3 provides an overview of the results for Question 1.

Table 3

Question 1 Results: Experiences Associated With Mestizo Ethnic Identity Development

Domain	Theme	Subtheme
Ethnic identity integration (9/9)	Disrupted ethnic identity (9/9)	Navigating identity confusion (8/9)
		Outsider (9/9)
	Integrated ethnic identity (9/9)	Ethnic affirming college courses/Organization (5/9)
		Community support (6/9)
		Family (5/9)
		Pride (5/9)
		Forms of resistance (7/9)
		Indigeneity (8/9)

Ethnic Identity Integration

The ethnic identity integration domain refers to the process of integrating identity spheres. Findings indicate this experience existed within a spectrum ranging from integrated to disintegrated identity. Optimally, an integrated ethnic identity gives way to a synchronized relationship among structures, promoting unity among spheres while simultaneously giving rise to a cohesive sense of identity (Danieli, 1998). For instance, Sofia commented, “Just the language and knowing the culture, and being able to identify as a unique individual.” Sofia emphasized the importance of merging different identity facets (i.e., language and culture) into how she understood her ethnic identity. Conversely, the presence of a rupture, such as those found in historical trauma, can lead to disjointedness and, therefore, limit access to other identity spheres (Danieli, 1998). As an illustration, Lucia explained:

> I think that's directly related to the colonization and you know just getting in good with the Spanish people. Those identity politics during that time still affects people today. And I think that it's something that I see in my own family.

Lucia highlighted that disruption in one sphere, such as politics, may interfere with other spheres, such as family. Results from the qualitative analysis indicated all nine participants articulated experiences that nurtured the progression of integration and that gravely disrupted their ability to integrate their ethnic identity.

Disrupted Ethnic Identity. All nine participants described experiences or variables that disrupted their ethnic identity. Participants reported these experiences created a disconnect in how they understood their ethnic identity in relation to other ecological spheres. To illustrate, Florencia stated:

> Like, when I was talking about how in Mexico you don't want to be Indian because you don't want to be rejected. Now we're teaching kids you don't want to try to act Mexican. If you speak Spanish they're going to pick on you. They're starting to slowly forget about their roots, so they fit in with society here.

Florencia stressed that assaults on ethnic identity traits are cyclical among the Mexican-origin population's history both in Mexico ("Indian" identity) and the United States ("Mexican" identity). She also emphasized the disconnect among spheres that occurred after a disruption in one sphere ensued. The trajectory of this rupture is essential to understand. As Danieli (1998) stated, ecological spheres co-exist on a time continuum—a rupture in prior generations may cumulatively continue to its descendants. This notion follows Florencia's illustration of a disrupted sense of self that originated during the colonization era, which now morphed into modern day ethno-racial discrimination. Emergent themes derived from this domain included navigating identity confusion and feeling like an outsider.

Navigating Identity Confusion. Eight of the nine (89%) participants described navigating identity confusion or the process of engaging in renegotiating their ethnic identity after they

encountered a disruption in how they previously interpreted their ethnic identity. First, participants described engaging in a process in which they sorted out the meaning behind opposing power differentials found in their mixed racial lineages—the conqueror and the colonized (White vs. marginalized groups). Second, participants described situations in which others ascribed ethnic labels for them, which further disrupted their ethnic identity understanding. Their attempts to make sense of opposing ethno-racial heritage in conjunction with the tendency of others to ascribe ethnic labels disintegrated their understanding of their ethnic identity. For example, Agustin described his experience as follows:

> So, kind of of like "ni de aqui, ni de alla" [not from here, nor there] kind of mentality where it's kind of like you're a mixture, right. Something that comes to mind is "I am Joaquin" poem, where it's kind of like you've got Indigenous blood in you, but you also have that European blood flow. So, to me it means trying to navigate that gray area.

In this passage, Agustin described his lived experience as suspended between racial and cultural mixedness. Augustin referenced the poem "I am Joaquin" by Rodolfo Corky Gonzalez and reflected on the author's ability to bring to life what it is like to exist in a state of cultural heterogeneity. He then connected Gonzalez's writing to the racial-cultural collide between European and Indigenous mixed lineages. The aftermath of this ancestral collision, in his words, was "trying to navigate the gray area." It was in this clouded medium—"gray; not from here, nor there"—that he attempted to make sense of his ethnic identity.

Ximena also referenced literature from ethnic studies to articulate their experience with their ethnic identity development. They reflected on a passage written by the late Gloria Anzaldúa on the topic of *mestisaje*:

> I feel like when they made mention of how hard it is to exist when you have lineages that fought one another. One was inflicting violence on the other and what that means to carry that in your blood . . . I remember the word blood as being a big part of what I was reading too. Just about that complexity.

In this quote, they described the discrepancy between varying levels of privilege and power found within the history of their mixed racial lineages. They highlighted that this power differential, often expressed through historical atrocities, made it difficult to negotiate or make sense of their ethnic identity. Ximena went on to state:

> What is American Indian or non? And how do you separate these things out? I've had conversations with many people. There is this imposed border—the U.S., so North of that are the American Indians and South of that are the Indigenous Mexicans. What is that? What about all the way South? What about above the U.S. like Canadians? The border of Mexico over time has moved to where it is now. What about those groups who live in the Southwest? Those Indigenous cultures are very similar to those on the other side of this imaginary border and who may be very distinct from Wisconsin Indigenous groups.
>
> Well, it makes it harder to articulate your identity to outsiders, I guess. To those who don't share that very unique identity. What are those implications when it's challenging to articulate who you are? Then others put labels on you. That can be a whole mess. And then when you are living in a city with so many people of different identities. It is important to be seen and it's important to acknowledge humans.

In this statement, they described the U.S.–Mexican border as a tangible divide between two countries that continues to separate and distort what defines U.S. Indigenous populations from those Indigenous groups that reside in Mexico. In turn, Ximena conveyed that the lack of Mexican Indigenous recognition as part of U.S. Indigenous groups complicated their ability to express their ethnic identity to others.

Societal imposed ethnic labels also fueled identity confusion. Five of the nine (56%) participants described occurrences related to the tendency of others to prescribe ethnic categories, which often clouded how they understood their ethnic identity. For instance, Ximena stated, "It has definitely played into my identity development. For instance, what identities are acknowledged by the government." They went on to discuss that the government's categorization of Mexican-origin peoples did not fit how they perceived their ethnic identity—"I actually don't really like Latino, Latinx. I like the x better, but I still don't really like the Latin part because that doesn't make sense either. That doesn't acknowledge everything. Those words

don't necessarily acknowledge indigeneity." In this statement, they highlighted that the U.S. government dramatically influenced ethnic group categorization, especially Indigenous group classification. Consequently, incongruence found between the government's ethno-racial categorization and how they perceived their ethnicity as partly Indigenous disoriented their understanding of ethnic group membership. As such, the omission of Mexican Indigenous recognition invalidated their Indigenous ethnic group affiliation.

This lack of validation was echoed by Lucia, who identified strongly with her Afro-Latinx identity. She stated:

> Umm to . . . to fill out things when you know racially it says you can identify as Black, but then it has your ethnicity and it's like non-White Hispanic and it's kind of like okay . . . and there's a box for multiracial, but there's really no room to elaborate on that so it's kind of like . . . I think in terms of putting me into boxes there is really not a lot of room for people who have more than one identity.
>
> I felt like if you had to identify as non-White I felt like people saw . . . maybe it's just my opinion or just the way I saw things I thought that people might feel that that was kind of putting them below White people. I'm non-White Hispanic so it's just kind of like . . . I think Hispanic people already deal with that enough as it is and then to put that on a form and make people choose . . . are you White or non-White Hispanic? I felt like it was unnecessary.

Lucia explained that demographic forms restricted her ability to embrace multiple ethno-racial group memberships. She highlighted that the use of non-White nomenclature insinuated a lesser than status or a sense of ethno-racial inferiority for those of Mexican origin.

Outsider. All participants noted anti-Mexican sentiments hindered their ability to feel a sense of belonging when interacting with dominant group members. A majority of the participants described this as othering or feeling as though they were treated differently because of their group identity. As this dissertation was being composed, this notion was even more salient than in other modern historical moments as the current government had implemented a slew of immigration policies that dehumanized those of Mexican-origin heritage. These results

are noted later in this chapter when the second research question's findings are delivered. However, their implications are worth noting in this section, as many participants pointed to a hostile political climate fueling their outsider experience.

Augustin illustrated this notion by stating, "Especially in the U.S., a lot of times we'll have to assimilate or die." In this passage, he pointed to the high pressure felt by many Mexican-origin individuals to relinquish their Mexican heritage and surrender to dominant cultural standards, a concept congruent with the pre-encounter assimilation stage (Cross, 1971). He went on to describe his educational experience as going from a predominantly Mexican-origin student body in middle school to a predominantly White high school. He explained:

> Once you get to high school that's not there no more. And I think that's where the identity thing comes in because I was in the school with all brown ass little boys. Then we go to these schools and were looked at weird. So, it's kind of like . . . Oh shit, was what I was doing not reasonable to be doing? That's when like that comes into question.

His feelings as an outsider corresponded with the dominant culture's tendency to invalidate Mexican-origin cultural norms, cultural norms he embraced prior to his high school attendance. Florencia also articulated her experience by stating, "I felt like ashamed of myself for being here where I'm not supposed to." In her experience, anti-Mexican sentiments elicited shame and alienation from the dominant group. Cross (1971) noted that during the pre-encounter (assimilation) stage individuals embody the American identity, which upholds the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity and devalues any other ethno-racial identity. Cross highlighted the paradox that becoming "a good American" simultaneously rejects other characteristics associated with marginalized group affiliation.

Integrated Ethnic Identity. Although all participants gave testimonies related to ethnic identity disruption, all participants also elaborated on experiences that facilitated an integrated ethnic identity. In turn, an integrated ethnic identity cultivated an environment in which access to

other ecological spheres promoted a cohesive sense of self. Research on ethnic identity attests to the importance of integrating pluralistic facets of one's identity into a coherent ethnic narrative (Phinney, 1990). Participants pointed to ethnic affirming college courses/organizations, community, family, pride, forms of resistance, and indigeneity as experiences that promoted integration.

Ethnic Affirming College Courses/Organizations. Higher education institutions are often described "as a consciousness-raising experience"—a place where individuals expand their social networks, enroll in high-interest classes, and encounter situations that motivate ethnic identity exploration (Azmitia et al., 2008, p. 11). Five of the nine (56%) participants reclaimed and strengthened their understanding of their ethnic identity through their enrollment in culturally validating curricula, along with their participation in social justice-based organizations. Participants discussed ways in which their attendance in ethnic affirming college courses and organizations served as a protective buffer against miseducation, often retained in Eurocentric K–12 educational programming. This corrective experience promoted advances in ethnic identity integration.

For instance, Augustin noted one of the most critical factors in raising his ethnic awareness was through intentionally engaging in his ethnic affirming courses. He stated, "And I think it's the same with our history . . . you don't know about history unless someone explicitly says—Yo, check this out, this is what your ancestors did or whatever." Similarly, Ximena stated, "In college, it was definitely my awareness being constructed on a whole different level. A lot of growth of taking in information about identity and just becoming more aware about a lot of things." Both participants stated ethnic validating courses provided a new ethnic affirming narrative.

Ximena went on to illustrate what access to the term Mestizx had done for her ethnic identity:

> My identity and the words that I've had access to have developed since I've been very young . . . My awareness of that term came during college and like through reading you know like Gloria Anzaldúa and, um, and other like Chicana feminists . . . It felt like a word that I could finally in some way maybe not all the way but could finally speak to my existence . . . I feel like it named many of us. How we got here and how we exist.
>
> Yeah, it describes me. It describes more accurately how I acknowledge my existence than Hispanic or Latinx could at all. They don't really hold anything for me. And then Hispanic includes even more colonizers. Those words don't necessarily acknowledge indigeneity.

They highlighted that educational resources, such as their participation in ethnic affirming courses, gave them access to previously unknown ethnic labels. New ethnic nomenclature provided historical contextual information that validated their ethnic narrative. Lucia echoed similar sentiments as Ximena by noting her participation in MEChA provided an opportunity to evaluate why imposed ethnic nomenclature may not be congruent with how an individual perceives their ethnic identity. She stated, "I kind of understand why some people want to separate themselves from being called Hispanic or being called Latino, or why some people identify as Chicano or Chicana. Or you know, especially in college and seeing people in MEChA."

Lucia also went on to detail ways in which attending ethnic affirming courses helped her cope with the current hostile political climate:

> I think, you know, what I know now helped me to be able to just take everything at face value. Um . . . and it helps me to understand how the current administration is evoking this kind of climate and fear and what that could do to people, but it also helps me just realize that not to internalize that. It's like we're not the problem, you know. The problem is like what you're doing and what you're tapping into this fear that people have . . . I think that the sad part about it, you know, is that it's a privilege to have this education. It's a privilege, I realize that some people didn't have access to.

Lucia explained that her past enrollment in ethnic validating courses helped buffer against internalizing political messages that dehumanized members of her community. These courses allotted her the opportunity to understand how governmental administrations use systems of oppression to achieve political gains. She highlighted that attendance in ethnic affirming classes was a privilege denied to many with similar ethnic backgrounds. Enrollment in ethnic affirming courses and organizations is congruent with Cross's (1971) immersion-emersion stage, which describes the evolution of ethnic pride following a series of gained insight from impactful events.

Community Support. Umaña-Taylor et al. (2008) argued that a healthy identity is cultivated through shared experiences among community members. Six participants (67%) discussed how a sense of community encouraged a sense of belongingness, reciprocal care for one another, shared experiences, and solidarity in each other's needs. All these community-based elements fostered ethnic identity integration. Lucia spoke to this experience by stating:

> It's like sharing that shared household type identities or going to someone's house and knowing what their parents are talking about.
>
> Once we do know each other and stuff it is the shared experience and stuff you know and the overprotective parents sometimes, you know the lawn parties and stuff. All those cultural things we share. We understand about one another.

She stated common values and shared experiences helped cultivate a sense of belongingness. Following the same notion, Florencia described community as, "I feel like we love each other, we care for each other just because we're the same ethnic groups." In this statement, she explained that community members mattered to each other. The reciprocal concern for one another promoted group unity. Agustin described what unity in community could do during challenging times:

> I think our people do a pretty good job of taking a lot of bad and turning it into good. I think our people do a really good job of taking pain and suffering and turning it into motivation. I don't know how some people that I know do it, or have done it?

In his perspective, when the Mexican community experienced adverse events, solidarity transformed into community resilience.

Family. Five participants (56%) described ways in which their family provided positive ethnic identity learning opportunities. These findings echoed results from previous studies that showed family or *familismo* to be a means to immerse in Mexican-origin cultural norms (G. P. Knight et al., 1993). Continuous engagement with their family members provided positive ethnic identity learning opportunities. Lucia articulated ways in which her family helped her stay connected and learn about her ethnic identity:

> Being connected to my family and not rejecting those you know not rejecting what they're trying to teach me about my culture and our experience. And how we've grown up is the most importantly way for me to stay connected to who I am.
>
> All of those things it's like cooking, you know while my mom and aunt are telling us . . . I was the one in the fields with your grandpa, and your tia [aunt] was helping with the kids, and she did this and that . . . A lot of it has to do with storytelling and being intentional about building a connection to where we're from.
>
> My family is kind of a lot of traditions that they link back to Mexico, you know. I think that it's just throughout. A lot of it is through the stories that they share.

Lucia's family used storytelling to teach family members about their culture. In turn, these moments created opportunities to deepen her willingness to embrace and develop a relationship with her family's ethnic narrative. In doing so, she gained a sense of interconnectivity to family and cultural traditions. Likewise, when asked about family experiences learning about his ethnic identity, Mateo stated:

> I feel that they definitely embraced it more and made me aware of my ethnicity and background.
>
> Our experience of learning about our culture or history was mostly through like just sort of antidotal stories of families, and you know things like that.

Mateo reiterated that family was an important tool that provided ample opportunities to embrace his ethnicity. Like Lucia's family, Mateo's family welcomed dialogue related to cultural practices and historical collective group experiences. These open dialogues about culture were crucial to promoting healthy ethnic identity formation. Cross (1991) emphasized the positive impact of family instilling cultural values that develop into coping mechanisms.

Pride. Five of the nine (56%) participants described pride as a positive feeling associated with being a member of their ethnic group. Specifically, four participants illustrated ways in which pride in their ethnicity served as a buffer against widespread social distain for the Mexican-origin population. Florencia embodied this notion by stating:

> I think it makes it stronger it makes me feel more proud of where I come from. Like knowing that, yeah like I come from Indigenous roots in Mexico, and I'm here now, and I know that I will be successful even if they don't want me here.

She emphasized that pride in her Indigenous Mexican heritage evoked protection against internalizing disparaging messages that denounced the inclusion of Mexican-origin individuals into U.S. society.

Forms of Resistance. Seven (78%) participants described their engagement in actions that combat systems of oppression as means to further their ethnic identity integration process. Two of the seven individuals described defying ethno-racial classification on demographic forms by crossing out imposed ethno-racial labels and inputting their self-identified terms. Ximena shared their thoughts on this matter by stating, "It's like my way of also resisting is to identify on my own terms." Five participants (56%) discussed passing down Spanish fluency to their children as a mechanism to foster ethnic pride. Spanish fluency also served as a mechanism by which cultural practices were passed to future generations. For example, Renata reflected:

> I'm more into wanting to keep the Spanish, you know. I don't have any kids, but I know one of the big things is that I want my child to be able to speak Spanish, to keep that part of the culture. . . . I would like them to speak Spanish because I wouldn't want them to lose their identity.

Renata saw retaining Spanish fluency as a way to mitigate the loss of cultural practices for future generations. Renata elaborated on what speaking Spanish meant to her. She stated, "I don't just speak English. I speak Spanish too. And that's something that no one is ever going to take away

from me." Her ability to speak Spanish was perceived as having autonomy from the oppressor, an ability of which she had sole ownership.

Most participants (56%) also perceived social activism involvement as a critical part to their ethnic identity integration. Luis described his engagement in social activism as a direct response to political attacks on Mexican-origin populations. He commented:

> I think about it as giving me a responsibility to myself and to family, to all immigrants, whether from Latin American countries or not.
>
> It gave me a channel through which I could express my Mestizo identity. It is mostly a Latinx group, and so together we're all able to celebrate our heritage . . . it was great for me because I had a lot of pent up thoughts and feelings about everything. Just looking at how my parents were breaking their backs day in and day out for me and my siblings.
>
> I've broadened my understanding of different kinds of struggles. Or now I have a new position on all different sorts of forms of oppression across the globe.

Luis described his involvement in social activism as a responsibility to his community as well as other oppressed communities. This platform created a safe space where he authentically and safely shared his experiences with inequality. Social activism platforms provided social support that validated and normalized his marginalized experiences.

Correspondingly, Augustin recounted his participation in social justice groups as a mechanism to establish equity and justice, he commented:

> You know the whole autonomy like wanting back land, wanting back rights, wanting back . . . having our way not imposed. . . . it's kind of like important connecting with people when it comes to like actual liberation, when it comes to forming spaces like for our babies.

Like Luis, Augustin emphasized that it was essential to stand in solidarity when faced with challenging oppressive ideology. He mentioned that it is through this unity that future generations may potentially exist within a welcoming space.

Indigeneity. All but one (89%) participant articulated a strong desire to connect with their ancestors' Indigenous way of life, despite only two participants (22%) knowing their specific Indigenous group membership. Participants found interest in reconnecting with Indigenous knowledge as a positive experience for their ethnic identity formation. Many discussed feeling a sense of emptiness without proactively attempting to reconnect with their Indigenous ancestry. Participants perceived the process to reconnect with Indigenous ways as a means to fill in gaps present within their identity narrative. Ximena described their experience reconnecting with Indigenous ceremonial practices:

> Three years ago, I started attending this ceremony . . . it's a Meshika tradition, but also some people use different terms. So, some people say Aztec and some people say Meshika. This friend who is learning with a teacher . . . an elder . . . recently told me that he prefers to use Nahuatl to refer to the peoples of that lineage. So, she'll say in the Nahuatl tradition.
>
> Attending that ceremony has been really important for my immediate family . . . That has really been a part of my journey of my spiritual development–identity development–reconnecting with cultural traditions.
>
> It affirms how much I deeply desire to exist. To live that out for a week, it contributes to my health—spiritually and mentally and physically and generationally too. I am also on the drums signing. That experience too has been impactful to use my voice to sing these songs, which some are in Nahuatl and then . . . a lot . . . are in Spanish and some in English.
>
> It's affirming to sing these . . . to hold these sacred spaces. It feels . . . ahh . . . They are old ways, and we need to continue them. It feels affirming because I am participating . . . in that they are continuing into the future. Impacted my health and contributed to my journey of identity development and just like my path in life.

In this statement, Ximena described attending Moon Dance ceremonies as a mechanism that served to enhance their physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. They also discussed how attending these ceremonies created a space where they generated a relationship with ancestral Indigenous practices. This ethnic identity affirming process entwined family, culture,

community, and individual identity into a conglomeration used to increase awareness related to their ethnic identity. Ximena went on to state:

> And the other thing I was going to add was that . . .the person who invited me actually was an elder . . . and she was trying to invite in her words Latina women, so we could reconnect with our Indigenous roots at the circle.

In this statement, they highlighted an elder's attempt to reawaken Indigenous traditions by recruiting other women in the Latinx community. When asked what their life would be like without participation in ceremonies, they stated, "I think I would still be looking for them. Because I need them, if it wasn't the Moon Dance, I would still be feeling like I'm looking for something, and I can't find it." They stated participation in ceremony fulfilled their desire to connect with ancestral practices.

For participants, connection with ancestral practice came in different ways. For instance, Luis spoke about his visit to a museum that housed artifacts from Indigenous populations in Mexico. While reflecting on his experience he noted:

> I went to a museum . . . I found a room, and it must have been there since forever . . .It shows parts of northern Mexico.
>
> It was really interesting for me to be able to see the map they had, and they had artifacts . . . so that was really cool. I figure that even if those artifacts weren't exactly from the same tribes or people that my roots are in like they're probably going to be a bit similar since they all lived in same general area. That was pretty cool for me.
>
> There was a sense of pride there and just I was standing there in front of the display case.
>
> It was really like a "me" moment standing in front of that display case. It was good. I took it in. I stood there for a little bit and read all the little cards they have out explaining what things were. So, it was good for me. It made me feel good, you know . . . I was looking back to things I was seeing in Mexico, like at my family's towns.
>
> I just remember thinking that the pot was distinct for sure. It was markedly different from other things from different regions. That was cool for me to see too. It was distinct. It had its own cultural value. Its own cultural place and time in history.

His encounter with tangible Indigenous objects served to honor and acknowledge the historical cultural presence associated with his Indigenous ancestry. When asked to clarify the most intriguing part of his experience, he stated, "I know that the Aztec identity that's over in Mexico isn't necessarily like my identity. So being able to learn about, if not my exact identity, you know groups that were probably more culturally unified like in that region." Although Luis understood his genetic make-up as part Indigenous, he could not trace back his specific tribal group, a sentiment echoed by most participants. He noted Indigenous mass groupings, most notably the homogenous Aztec Indigenous group, acted to deny other Mexican Indigenous groups their unique cultural attributes. Therefore, coming across Indigenous artifacts found in the area of his family's origin permitted a connection to his distinct Indigenous ancestors. Renata also reflected on the importance of actively regaining Indigenous cultural knowledge as an avenue to reconnect with Indigenous practices. She noted, "I think it's just been trying to in a way decolonize myself."

In conclusion, findings showed all participants pointed to experiences that helped them integrate their ethnic identity into a cohesive narrative while also experiencing occurrences that disrupted their ethnic identity development. Two factors, navigating identity confusion and feeling like an outsider, were described as components known to infringe upon participants' ethnic identity development. Enrollment in ethnic affirming classes, community support, positive family involvement, pride in one's ethnicity, engagement in forms of resistance, and reconnecting to Indigenous heritage were salient variables essential to advancing their ethnic identity integration.

Question 2 Results: Concerns Associated With Historical Trauma as Ethnic Identity Develops

This project's second question was: What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to previous aims, if at all? Results showed that as participants developed their ethnic identity, historical trauma related constructs were present. Collective data gathered from the in-person interviews and the CHQ responses materialized into four domains: historical loss thoughts, the transmission of identity disruption, exposure to trauma, and generational health information. Themes and subthemes emerged from these domains. Table 4 summarizes the results related to Question 2.

Table 4

Question 2 Results: Concerns Associated With Historical Trauma as Ethnic Identity Develops

Domain	Theme	Subtheme
Historical loss thoughts (7/9)	Loss of indigenous knowledge and traditional practices (7/9)	Loss of indigenous language (4/9)
Transmission of identity disruption (9/9)	Disenfranchised grief (4/9)	Eurocentric education (9/9)
	Governmental policies (9/9)	Psychological consequences (8/9)
	Internalized colonialism (9/9)	Familial internalized oppression (9/9)
		Spanish suppression (5/9)
Exposure to trauma (8/9)	Direct (5/9) Indirect (7/9)	
Generational health information (9/9)	Physical health (9/9)	
	Psychological health (9/9)	

Historical Loss Thoughts

Seven participants (78%) brought up thoughts about the loss of Indigenous traditional practices, knowledge, and language. Sofia, a descendant of Kickapoo peoples, noted her grandfather held Christianity responsible for Indigenous eradication. Through her grandfather's

oral history, she communicated, “To my grandfather it meant extermination of his beliefs.” She noted her grandfather was the last to carry her family’s Indigenous ways of knowing. She compared his vast Indigenous knowledge to that of her grandchildren, who retained minimal Kickapoo beliefs. Following this notion, Augustin stated, “Well I wouldn’t even know if they were Indigenous or not.” Indeed, it was challenging for a majority of the participants to articulate specific Indigenous customs within Mexican cultural norms. Of these seven participants, four (44%) connected historical loss to colonization, an era plagued with overt racism, displacement, and exploitative practices (Gibson, 1964). Results from the CHQ indicated most participants traced their ancestral lineages to primarily Indigenous and European ancestry; however, only two individuals were able to trace their heritage to a specific tribal group.

Loss of Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Practices. Participants expressed having little knowledge related to Indigenous cultural norms (78%). Three participants (43%) used the term “lost” to describe their relationship with Indigenous knowledge and practices. Renata described this sense of loss as “Indigenous roots are lost. There was no documentation, and so that’s something that I know I’ve been wanting to look at. Just the roots on where we came from as a whole.” Renata noted the lack of documentation severed a historical connection to her specific tribal group affiliation. Despite this, she was motivated to rediscover this portion of her identity.

When asked about their knowledge related to specific Indigenous practices, 44% of the participants indicated feeling a sense of confusion as to what constituted Indigenous practices in Mexican culture. Some questioned whether *El Día de los Muertos* (The Day of the Dead) originated from Indigenous rituals. Florencia described this experience as:

> They would set up the altar with their pictures . . . At my grandma’s house they would make a path, with the flowers we would put them with our family members that passed

> away. We would put their food. I remember that we wouldn't eat the food, we would throw it away because the dead touched them already. But it was something that we did every year for them. But it was just, it was just something that we did. But I don't know if that really comes from indigenous or if that's something that was just made up? I don't know.

The Day of the Dead is a Mexican holiday that blends Mesoamerican practices and Spanish culture to celebrate those who have passed on. On this holiday, Mexican-origin populations believe that for a brief intermission, family members reunite with loved ones who have passed on from this realm. Although Renata eloquently illustrated what these celebratory practices looked like, she was hesitant to link these practices to Indigenous traditions. Historical records trace the origins of this holiday to the pre-Columbian Mesoamerica era. To help their loved ones advance through the land of the dead and into their final resting place, the Nahua (Aztec) people placed offerings for their deceased loved ones to help in their spiritual voyage (Gibson, 1964). Similarly, with a sense of uncertainty, other participants identified *posadas* and *curanderismo* as practices possibly rooted in Mesoamerican rituals; however, participants struggled to directly link these practices to Indigenous traditions.

Loss of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices experiences was also shared by Sofia, who learned about her great-grandfather's struggles as the Christian church attempted to silence his Kickapoo beliefs. In this passage, she described her great-grandfather's efforts to seek advice from the community priest. In doing so, he hoped the priest could provide spiritual guidance to improve his agricultural difficulties. She stated:

> He didn't believe in saints, but he remembers that they were given by the priest some saints or something. My grandfather said—"Well, in order for them to work, we have to bury them to make sure that he knows that we want good crops." My great-grandfather remembers being slapped by the priest because he even suggested this—"So what do I do with this saint? You gave me this saint. Can I bury him to tell him that I want good crops." The priest, even though the man was older than the priest, he got a couple of slaps because of even thinking of doing that. My ancestors didn't feel like it was enough to put them near the crops because if the wind came or the rain, they could topple them. What good would that do?

Sofia's great-grandfather, following his Indigenous traditional beliefs, sought to immerse the saint beneath the soil in the hopes that the direct connection between the saint and Earth would result in ample crop production. As Sofia's great-grandfather challenged Christian beliefs, he was met with corporal punishment used as a means to silence his Indigenous cultural expression. Sofia went on to state, "My grandfather didn't like the church. He said that the church had killed his family." She shared the extent to which Christianity not only caused him to grieve the loss of cultural ideology but also the loss of family members' lives.

Loss of Indigenous Language. Participants (44%) described the absence of Indigenous languages as a sense of loss. Renata encapsulated this notion by stating:

> I don't know the language, and I know language has a lot to do with culture. If the language is lost, the culture is usually lost as well. We speak Spanish because of colonization. So, I don't know what original language, what the Indigenous language was that my family came from when it comes to that aspect of you know when it comes to that portion of my identity. I don't know the origin; I know that my mother told me that my grandfather was partly Aztec, but I'm pretty sure he didn't speak, you know, any Indigenous language as well, and so we don't really know how to find out.

She depicted language as an essential instrument used to perpetuate the survival of cultural attributes. To exemplify how language influences culture, Augustin explained:

> Language too because if you think about language. If a word does not exist in your language, then it doesn't exist in your reality. You're passed down certain words, you're passed down certain phrases, and it literally builds your view of the world and yourself . . . So, I feel like language is huge, like huge, you know what I'm saying?

Agustin emphasized that language is a mechanism used to shape one's thoughts and, thus, create one's reality. Consequently, he illustrated that the loss of Indigenous languages can change how people interpret themselves and their worlds. This comment supports that an individual's ability to perceive the world and themselves within a cultural lens, in this case, an Indigenous cultural backdrop, is one of the consequences to losing Indigenous languages.

Transmission of Identity Disruption

All nine participants described experiences indicative of the intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity disruption. In a broader lens, historical trauma's intergenerational transmission is complex and exists within a multimodal ecological system (Kirmayer et al., 2014). Therefore, a goal of this project was to evaluate the level of applicability of the historical trauma construct on ethnic identity development. Augustin exemplified the ripple effect of historical disruption on intergenerational levels, stating, "Yeah, I'd like to place importance on stuff because like you can't really . . . it might seem small now, but 10 years from now that little thing might have set off." A majority of the participants discussed characteristics indicative of the pre-encounter miseducation stage (Cross, 1971). For instance, individuals referenced distorted ideas and skewed information that served to internalize damaging stereotypes about their group membership. Overall, testimonies from participants showed the transmission of ethnic identity disruption continued generationally through disenfranchised grief, governmental policies, and internalized colonialism.

Disenfranchised Grief. Four participants (44%) spoke about the lack of public acknowledgment related to historical losses associated with the colonization of Mexico. Doka (1989) stated the dominant societal tendency to invalidate historical atrocious against Indigenous populations is fundamental to understanding why community members cannot adequately mourn what is lost. Following this notion, Mateo described his views on dominant society's denial of Mexico's colonization:

> I feel like it's sort of denial where there is no, um. I'm not going to say forgotten but sort of more emphasis is put on other ethnicities like the Holocaust for Jews or slavery for African Americans, um, even for Asian Americans you can talk about internment camps and things like that. I feel like that there isn't anything like that that's widely discussed for people of Mestizo heritage.

Mateo felt that society had, to some extent, acknowledged various marginalized populations' collective group trauma experiences. However, the same level of acknowledgment had not occurred for Mexican-origin populations despite their extensive history of colonization.

Similarly, Renata drew a parallel between Mexican-origin populations' tendency to deny the presence of African roots as part of the Mexican identity. She commented, "I guess to me it's just close to my heart the absence of African people from the narrative in Mexico. And the historical, I guess, blindness or like not willing to accept African people into that conversation." Danieli (1998) noted that the conspiracy of silence, or the tendency for society to dismiss or not acknowledge a community's traumatic experiences, often perpetuates the transmission of trauma on all ecological spheres.

Eurocentric Education. All participants described their education related to Indigenous history as Eurocentric and solely written from a victor's perspective. Mateo described learning about Mexican Indigenous groups in school as:

> I feel like when the topic of Latin American history is discussed it's usually in the sense of conquest and how America conquered. They kicked the Spaniards out of the west and all that kind of stuff, but the focus always being on what America did. Like I said about conquering, but never really about what those people were . . . um . . . Never about the people they conquered.

Mateo emphasized that the traditional school system upholds a colonial framework where knowledge related to ethnic history is denied. For many participants, the lack of Indigenous education prompted their efforts to seek out college courses that focused on Latin American ethnic studies, a topic discussed in previous sections. Eurocentrism is not a new concept, as Quijano (2000) described Eurocentrism as founded on two false notions: (a) Europe is at the center of human civilization, and (b) variances between Europeans and other groups are inherent rather than a result of hierarchical systems of power.

Three participants noted Indigenous mass groupings mainly composed of Incas, Aztec, and Mayan as the standardized way they were taught about native populations in Mexico. Sofia commented on this matter by stating:

> I mean, there are a whole bunch of tribes in Mexico! They can't do that . . . They just concentrated on the Aztecs. My background is Kickapoo. They never discussed Kickapoo. The Kickapoo came from the Midwest. They immigrated to Canada, and they immigrated to Mexico. Nothing.

Unlike most participants, Sofia had knowledge about her specific tribal affiliation (Kickapoo). The omission of the Kickapoo people in Mexico's historical narrative was felt as a dismissal of her cultural lineage.

Governmental Policies. All participants described ways in which oppressive policies implemented by the U.S. government further marginalized the ethnic identity of Mexican-origin populations. Scholarly literature on the 2016 U.S. Republican primaries has shed light on the pronounced adverse effects these oppressive policies have had on the mental well-being of Mexican-origin populations (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017). As the eldest of all participants, Sofia had lived through varying degrees of anti-Mexican sentiments and experienced the effects of policies developed from these eras. Sofia recalled her personal experience as a child living in Texas in a time during which Jim Crow laws were intact:

> I remember my dad with me in his arms, and I must have been about 3, and I remember trying to get into the movie theatre. I wanted to sit on that side, and he said, "No that's the side for the White people. This is our side. Here or on the second floor. This is our side." Our side was very little and narrow. Over there they had big seats and air conditioner came through there, so the very little we got was coming from that side. People were drinking soda and eating popcorn and all this. And you as a Mexican could get into the theatre, but you had to bring your own food. They didn't sell you anything. They didn't even sell you soda or popcorn. You had to bring your own food or try to sneak something from somebody that was your friend that was White and was going to buy it for you.

Sofia reflected on policies enforced during her childhood that encouraged businesses to racially segregate Whites and those of darker complexions, including Mexican-origin populations. Likewise, Mateo commented on this matter by stating:

> A lot people will complain that there's an influx of people coming to the States, specifically south of the border. For example, certain policies that are in place will force this migration. So, it's kind of like to me a new age of colonization in the sense of them meddling in certain policies or initiatives or things like that that force folks . . . like, for example, subsidized corn.
>
> Then you got the whole Aztlan thing, that whole territory was Mexico. So, it's kind of like a whole group of people, or peoples who were living there . . . Umm . . . a lot of that was erased. Obviously, you know, like with a lot of colonization with a lot of our texts were erased. A lot of the grupos [groups] before pre-Columbian history a lot of those texts, a lot of those histories and things and archives are destroyed.

Mateo described U.S. policies as gravely deteriorating economic stability for the Mexican populations. Over time, economic decline necessitated forceful migration to the United States. He also noted governmental policies had stripped Mexican people from their land, particularly in the Southwest region of the United States, which contributed to the erasure of Indigenous cultural ways of life.

Psychological Consequences. Cross's ethnic identity model (1991) pays tribute to the importance of social context as a variable that may pull individuals toward ethnic affiliation or distance themselves from ethnic group membership. Scholars who have explored ethnic identity development would agree that social context plays a crucial role in ethnic identity development (Vandiver et al., 2002). Participants discussed how the current hostile political climate had become part of their lived experiences. Eight participants (89%) noted the Trump administration's overt oppressive messages targeting Mexican-origin populations led to distressful emotions such as helplessness, fear, sorrow, survivor's guilt, and anger.

Internalized Colonialism. A prominent imprint from colonization is a sense of ethnic inferiority felt by colonized populations. These internalized negative beliefs that originate from

colonizers' ideology place their racial and ethnic attributes as superior to those of colonized groups. Internalized oppression leaves behind a trail of cultural rejection that transcends generations (David, 2008). The pre-encounter self-hatred stage consists of negative feelings toward one's ethno-racial group, which are known to have consequential psychological dysfunctions (Cross, 1971). All nine participants discussed aspects of this stage that influenced their ethnic identity development. Mateo summarized how he viewed colonization:

> Even in the way we view ourselves, um, even the way we view beauty, even the way we interpret being Mestizo. I think that's all connected to colonization. Our historical events and how that's tied into how we see ourselves and our space in the world.

In this passage, Mateo emphasized the connection between the effects of colonization and the way modern Mestizos internalize hierarchical structures set up to position them in a lesser than status.

Lucia paralleled Mateo's perspective on internalized colonialism by stating, "People have a racialized view of what's better what's worse, you know. And like people thinking that Indigenous People or darker-skinned people are kind of more ignorant and not really viewing them as important to society." Lucia highlighted that the use of ethno-racial hierarchical structures placed individuals with light complexions at the top and devalued individuals with darker complexions. Like Lucia, Florencia shared similar sentiments, "Pretty much from when you're little you're raised to push away the Indian." She highlighted that the process of internalized oppression begins in early childhood. Two subthemes of familial internalized oppression and Spanish suppression emerged from the internalized colonialism theme.

Familial Internalized Oppression. All nine participants discussed receiving internalized oppressive messages from their family members about their Mexican origins. These messages often mirrored the colonial mentality found in Anglo cultural norms that depict Whites as superior to those populations with darker complexions. For instance, Mateo explained:

> You have to understand when my grandparents grew up, being Mexican was a bad thing. They would be beaten up for it. They would be harassed. So, when they had kids, they sort of denied them a lot of that culture because they thought they were doing them a favor if they didn't teach them Spanish. If they didn't openly embrace that culture, then maybe their kids wouldn't be made fun of like they were.
>
> So, then myself and my sister got you know sort of the domino effect from that . . . where . . . because it wasn't taught by our grandparents, then it couldn't really be taught to us.

Mateo explained that his grandparents raised his father during a time in U.S. history when anti-Mexican sentiments were particularly dangerous to Mexican-origin populations. In turn, his grandparents chose to refrain from passing down cultural traits associated with their Mexican lineage to protect against discriminatory acts. Similarly, Lucia commented on how she felt about her family's tendency to favor dominant group traits. She stated, "I don't want to be someone who rejects who I am because you pass that to your kids." Lucia concluded future generations would learn from the current generation to reject their Mexican attributes unless Mestizos distanced themselves from the tendency to reject their ethnic traits. Danieli (1998) stated mass traumas distort the reality of several generations. The transmission of distorted reality is at times conducted unconsciously by parents and internalized by the next generation.

Spanish Suppression. Five participants (56%) expressed feeling discriminated against when speaking Spanish in public spaces. Consequently, participants ceased or limited their Spanish use outside their homes. Two of these five participants also remarked that apart from Spanish, prior generations also refrained from speaking their Indigenous languages in public areas. All participants identified as having Indigenous lineage; however, not a single participant was fluent in their Indigenous language. Florencia elaborated on this intergenerational pattern known to sever the continuation of language fluency:

> When I was talking about how in Mexico, you don't want to be Indian because you don't want to be rejected. Now they're teaching their kids not to act Mexican. Now you don't speak Spanish because if you speak Spanish, they're going to pick on you.

> I do see it it's like a cycle, it's like it's happening again. Now that we are relocating, we are teaching our kids to forget about that.

Florencia highlighted that historically Mexican-origin populations learned to reject their Indigenous heritage to prevent rejection from the dominant society. She fast forwarded to modern day and drew a parallel between the severing of Indigenous cultural norms and the present-day tendency for Mexican-origin individuals to discontinue passing down Mexican cultural attributes, including Spanish fluency, to their children. Danieli (1985) made note that often individuals or communities may adapt survival strategies, such as rejecting oppressed identities, to survive or defend against abusive powers. Mateo, like Florencia, echoed the importance of acknowledging anti-Mexican sentiments as part of the historical context that contributed to the discontinuation of passing down Spanish fluency to the next generation. He stated, "No one is really acknowledging the history that led up to them, you know led up to now!" According to Danieli (1998), acknowledging community trauma helps to alleviate the cumulative multigenerational perpetuation of trauma.

Exposure to Trauma

Eight participants (89%) indicated having personal or family history associated with indirect and direct trauma. Experiences related to psychological trauma encompassed different types of abuse salient in the trauma literature (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional). For instance, Ximena recounted, "I witnessed domestic abuse of my mom by boyfriend." Luis also recalled his father having discriminatory charged "run in with the cops." Participants also described bearing witness to and experiencing collective racial group trauma as well as enduring hardships specifically associated with the immigration process (e.g., family separation and threat of harm while relocating to the United States).

Direct. Five of these eight participants (56%) disclosed directly experiencing or witnessing traumatic occurrences. Data gathered from the CHQ indicated two (22%) participants witnessed domestic violence; two (22%) participants experienced sexual abuse as children; two (22%) participants noted extreme psychological distress as they relocated to the United States, specifically related to family separation; and one (11%) participant experienced physical assault because of their ethnicity. Sofia recalled her experience as a young activist protesting institutionalized racism: "The marches started, we would cross the bridge, and we couldn't get across because the chief would beat us up every time we tried to cross the bridge."

Indirect. Data from the CHQ indicated seven individuals (78%) endorsed attributes associated with indirect exposure to trauma where a parent or a sibling directly lived through or observed a traumatic event. Five (56%) participants noted their family members experienced domestic abuse, four (44%) disclosed listening to their parents' traumatic family separation experiences (during relocation), three (33%) participants disclosed information about their family members' sexual abuse experience, and one (11%) participant endorsed a family history of harassment and abuse because of their ethnicity.

Generational Health Information

Historical trauma theory indicates populations that endure chronic collective group trauma experienced several generations past tend to inherit disproportionate rates of physical and psychological ailments (Sotero, 2006). The CHQ was used to evaluate pertinent psychological and physiological concerns associated with historical trauma. All participants disclosed information related to their families (i.e., first-degree relatives, second-degree relatives, third-degree relatives, and other significant family) and physical and mental health concerns. Table 5 illustrates the physical and psychological concerns asked in the CHQ.

Physical Health. Participants reported physical ailments including cancer, diabetes, intestinal disorder, serious injury, serious accident, coronary/heart disease, hypertension, asthma, kidney disease, liver disease, and pulmonary disease.

Psychological Health. Related to mental health concerns, participants reported alcohol abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, drug abuse, psychological/emotional problems, sleep disturbance, *nervios*, *susto*, and *ataque de nervios*. Nogueira et al. (2015) described these terms as the following: *nervios* as frequent bouts of intense sadness or anxiety that are usually accompanied by somatic symptomatology; *susto*, or soul loss, is experienced after an extreme fear response; and *ataque de nervios* is the psychological distress associated with experiencing profound stressful situation (e.g., losing a loved one).

Table 5

Family Medical and Psychiatric History

Participant	Medical problems	Psychiatric problems
Mateo	• Cancer: first, second • Diabetes: second • Intestinal disorder: first, second • Serious injury: self, first, second	• Alcohol abuse: second • Posttraumatic stress disorder: second
Rodrigo	• Serious accident: first, second	• Alcohol abuse: second • Anxiety: self, first • Depression: second • Drug abuse: first • Psychological/Emotional problems: second • Nervios: first, second
Ximena	• Cancer: second • Coronary/Heart disease: second • Diabetes: second • Hypertension: second	• Alcohol abuse: first • Anxiety: self • Depression: self • Drug abuse: first, second • Posttraumatic stress disorder: self • Psychological/Emotional problems: self • Ataque de nervios: self

Participant	Medical problems	Psychiatric problems
Renata	• Asthma: first • Cancer: second • Coronary/Heart disease: second • Diabetes: first, second	• Alcohol abuse: first, second • Drug abuse: first
Florencia	• Asthma: other significant family member • Cancer: second, other significant family member • Coronary/Heart disease: second, other significant family member • Diabetes: second, other significant family member • Hypertension: second, other significant family member • Kidney disease: second • Liver disease: second • Serious accident: first, other significant family member • Serious injury: first	• Alcohol abuse: other significant family member • Anxiety: self, first, second, other significant family member • Depression: self, first, second, other significant family member • Drug abuse: second, other significant family member • Posttraumatic stress disorder: self, first • Psychological/Emotional problems: self, first, second • Sleep disturbance: self, first, second • Ataque de nervious: first, second, other significant family member • Nervios: self, first, second, other significant family member • Susto: first, other significant family member
Lucia	• Cancer: first, other significant family member • Coronary/Heart disease: first, second, other significant family member • Diabetes: first, second, other significant family member • Hypertension: first • Intestinal disorder: first • Kidney disease: other significant family member • Liver disease: first, other significant family member • Pulmonary disease: first • Serious injury: first, second	• Alcohol abuse: first, second, other significant family member • Anxiety: self, first, second, other significant family member • Depression: self, first, second, other significant family member • Drug abuse: first, second, other significant family member • Psychological/Emotional problems: self, first, second, other significant family member • Sleep disturbance: first, second • Ataque de nervious: first, second • Nervios: self, first, second • Susto: first, second

Participant	Medical problems	Psychiatric problems
Augustin	• Asthma: self, second • Cancer: first • Diabetes: first, second • Hypertension: first, second • Kidney disease: first • Liver disease: second	• Alcohol abuse: first, second, other significant family member • Anxiety: self, first, second, other significant family member • Depression: self, first, second, other significant family member • Drug abuse: first, second, other significant family member • Posttraumatic stress disorder: self, first, second • Sleep disturbance: self • Ataque de nervious: other significant family member • Nervios: self
Sofia	• Cancer: second, third, other significant family member • Coronary/Heart disease: second, other significant family member • Diabetes: self, second, third, other significant family member • Hypertension: first, second, third, other significant family member • Serious accident: second, third • Serious injury: first, second, third	• Alcohol abuse: other significant family member • Anxiety: other significant family member • Depression: self • Posttraumatic stress Disorder: self, first, second • Sleep disturbance: self, first, second • Nervios: self, first • Susto: first, second, third, other significant family member
Luis	• Cancer: second • Coronary/Heart disease: first • Diabetes: first, second • Hypertension: first • Serious accident: self, first • Serious injury: self, first, second	• Alcohol abuse: second • Anxiety: self, first • Depression: first • Psychological/Emotional Problems: second • Sleep disturbance: first • Ataque de nervious: self • Nervios: self, first

Note. First-degree relatives include parents, siblings, or children. Second-degree relatives include grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces. Third-degree relatives include first cousins, great-grandparents, or great grandchildren.

Summary

In summary, all nine participants described concerns associated with historical trauma constructs as they came to develop their ethnic identity. Specifically, participants noted historical loss thoughts, transmission of ethnic identity disruption, exposure to trauma, and generational health information as influencing their ethnic identity development.

Chapter Five: Discussion

To address the purpose of this project, this chapter begins with a summary of the findings and a detailed discussion of the results associated with each research question. The chapter then moves to the implications of the research inquiry and concludes with limitations and suggestions for future scholarly endeavors.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this project was to explore the experiences related to ethnic identity development among the Mestizo population and to examine the applicability of historical trauma to its formation. Two theoretical frameworks were used in this project: TCMI (Danieli, 1998) and the model of Nigrescence (Cross, 1971). The researcher evaluated the usefulness of both paradigms to address this project's research questions. Nine participants successfully completed an in-person interview along with the CHQ. The following questions were used to support the purpose of this study:

1. What are the experiences of the Mestizo population as they come to adopt a Mestizo ethnic identity?
2. What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to previous aims, if at all?

The results indicate participants (a) experienced different situations that either promoted the ethnic integration process or disrupted their ethnic integration process, and (b) concerns associated with historical trauma were evident in participants' ethnic identity development experiences. Results associated with each research question are further summarized and discussed.

Question 1 Results: Experiences Associated With Mestizo Ethnic Identity Development

Ethnic Identity Integration

Researchers have attempted to conceptualize ethnic identity development through the lived experiences of people of different populations. To illustrate the complex process known to exist during the identity integration process, Xiong (2015) categorized Hmong participants' identities into integrated or disintegrated identity structures. The current project's findings are congruent with previous research (Danieli, 1998; Xiong, 2015) that distinguished between integrated and disintegrated identity. However, this research inquiry differs from previous scholarship as the focus was on Mestizo ethnic identity using a historical trauma paradigm.

All participants described experiences aligned with ethnic identity integration, which refers to integrating one's ethnic identity with other identity spheres (e.g., biological, social, communal, spiritual, religious, cultural, etc.). Ultimately, integration gives rise to a strong sense of ethnic identity. Additionally, testimonies from the participants included experiences that were disruptive to their ethnic identity. Findings from this project support that what constitutes ethnic group membership is embedded in a time continuum that began in early colonialism and continues to change with current sociopolitical times. From this backdrop, participants attempted to negotiate, reinvent, and reorganize their ethnic identity conceptualization.

Disrupted Ethnic Identity. Participants described navigating identity confusion and feeling like an outsider as disruptive to their ethnic identity integration. Navigating identity confusion was defined as the need to renegotiate one's understanding of their ethnic affiliation after experiencing situations that obscured how they previously conceptualized their ethnicity. Cross's (1991) ethnic identity model's encounter stage emphasizes the effects of each ethno-racial experience on an individual's tendency to either identify with their ethnic group or reject

ethnic affiliation. However, amid an ethno-racial encounter, participants described a state of confusion not fully captured by Cross's model. Cross also did not address factors that may contribute to feeling confused about one's ethnicity. Other ethnic identity models (e.g., Helms, 1995) describe the dissonance stage as characterized as a state of confusion regarding one's ethnicity. However, in their ethnic identity models, Cross (1971) and Helms (1995) did not elaborate on factors that contribute to feeling confused about one's ethnic affiliation. Findings from this project support that the opposing power differential inherent among Mestizo ethnic heritage contributed to participants' tendency to feel confused about their ethnicity. Turner (2014) cited Linda Alcoff, who described this process as follows: "Mestizo consciousness is a double vision, a conscious articulation of mixed identity, allegiance, and traditions that posits liminality, mobility, and ambiguity as being the Mestizo's sense of place" (p. 136). Anzaldúa described the development of Mestizo identity as anchored on unstable grounds filled with ambiguity and contradictions—a constant pull and tug suspended between two worlds.

Experiences associated with navigating identity confusion also included society's tendency to ascribe and define ethnic affiliation for the participants. Ascribed ethnic labels for the Mestizo community are rooted in colonialism as evidenced by the rise of the caste system. Additionally, during the colonization era, Mestizo people were more likely than not mixed racial byproducts of forced sexual brutality. Therefore, the compilation of historical dehumanizing practices inflicted on the Mestizo population resulted in the lack of Mestizos' recognition as full members of an ethnic group (Gibson, 1964). Participants in the current study described the term Hispanic as a reductionist ethnic label that confines individuals from various Latin American countries to a homogeneous ethnic category despite each country's diverse set of cultural characteristics. To break free from these practices and pivotal to nourishing a strong ethnic

identity, participants discussed identifying with ethnic nomenclature that was congruent with how they conceptualized their ethnicity. In turn, a congruent ethnic classification provided a sense of ethnic autonomy away from socially ascribed ethnic labels that disoriented how they understood their ethnicity and its position in society. Self-identified ethnic nomenclature provided a way for participants to express their ethnicity to others and themselves. This notion is congruent with Danieli's (1998) framework, which highlights the notion that as one structure is repaired, accessibility among other spheres is experienced. In this case, finding congruent ethnic nomenclature mends one's understanding of the self and in doing so gives a higher understanding of their position with others.

The process of finding a congruent ethnic label was often met with challenges. For instance, the ethno-racial labels (e.g., Hispanic) used in demographic forms often reinforce monolithic ethnic labeling. The term non-White in the current study was also found to perpetuate the notion of otherness among non-White communities. The common practice used to simplify ethnicity is incongruent with the ethnic make-up of the Mestizo population as this population is known to be a conglomeration of ethno-racial groups (i.e., African, Asian, Indigenous, Middle Eastern).

Participants described the process of finding ethnic labels that fit with how they perceived their ethnicity as decolonizing work that sought to reclaim and acknowledge historical context into their ethnic identity narrative. In doing so, this process provided validation for their lived experiences. Self-identifying as Mestizo also allotted cultural plurality while simultaneously challenging exclusionary ethnic labels that uphold modern ethno-racial hierarchies. The impact of self-defined ethnic nomenclature on ethnic identity development is not fully addressed in Cross's (1991) ethnic identity model.

Participants also highlighted that imposed ethnic labels lack Indigenous recognition. In turn, the exclusion of indigeneity in ethnic labels dampened participants' ability to link Indigenous cultural norms to their contemporary Mexican cultural traditions. These findings did not come as a surprise as the history of Indigenous groups is saturated in ethno-racial erasure enforced through legislation. For instance, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, placed a border between Mexico and the United States and in doing so separated members of federal tribes such as Kumeyaay, Pai, Cocopah, O'odham, Yaqui, Apache, and Kickapoo. This is in addition to the Mexican government's inability to recognize Indigenous Peoples as belonging to these tribal groups (Leza, 2019). Ethnicity is reinvented through the lens of others (Phinney, 1990). As such, the erasure of the tribal affiliations of Indigenous communities on both sides of the border resulted in a cultural rupture among their constituents—"a wound where the third world grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3). The lack of Mexican Indigenous recognition as part of American Indigenous populations further disintegrated participants' understanding of their own ethnic identity. In addition to Indigenous erasure, one participant highlighted that the omission of African populations from the Mexican identity amplified their difficulties navigating identity confusion.

Cross's (1991) model does not conceptualize ethnic identity development within the historical trajectory of social and political variables. However, findings from this project indicate historically traumatic experiences negatively influence ethnic identity development.

Outsider. Feeling like an outsider, or a lack of belongingness when interacting with the dominant group, is congruent with the ethnic identity model's encounter stage (Cross, 1991). Participants described high levels of distress after experiencing discriminatory acts that served to either motivate ethnic exploration or prompted them to distance themselves from their ethnicity.

Feeling like an outsider encompassed experiences at both the individual and group levels. For instance, ethno-racial othering was experienced at the individual level whereas current governmental disdain targeting Mexican origin communities was experienced at the collective level. These findings diverge from Cross's model in that he mainly conceptualized ethnic identity development from an individualistic perspective rather than aggregating collective group and individual experiences. For instance, the immersion-emersion stage is described as an ethnic conscious raising awareness phase centered on the self (Cross, 1991); however, the Mestizo identity is embedded in a cultural collectivistic medium where the self is positioned within the context of multilevel social memberships that include community and family.

Integrated Ethnic Identity. Though participants gave testimonies that reflected a disrupted ethnic identity, they also discussed elements that contributed to a healthy ethnic identity integration process. For this project's purpose, integrated ethnic identity was defined as a cohesive synchronized system that allows for all spheres that influence ethnicity to coexist in a state of balance. Participants' sense of an integrated ethnic identity was cultivated by experiences that included engagement in ethnic affirming college courses and organizations, community, family, pride, indigeneity, and forms of resistance. This project's findings echo previous scholarship (Bush et al., 2005; Calderón, 2014; Comas-Díaz, 2006; L. Miranda, 2011) in the recognition of elements related to ethnic affirming college courses and organizations, family, ethnic pride, and community solidarity as buffers against disrupted ethnic identity. However, less is known about the impact of indigeneity and forms of resistance on cultivating an integrated ethnic identity. Findings from this study show that for participants, both Indigeneity and forms of resistance served as mechanisms to help reclaim ethnic autonomy from historically oppressive ethnic narratives.

Integrated ethnic identity elements create a basis on which to build a sense of belonging that morphs into community solidarity and affirms ethnic group membership. For instance, those participants who engaged in indigeneity felt as though they reconnected with ancestral knowledge and, in doing so, felt a sense of belongingness to their ethnic history that, for centuries, was denied to their constituents. For participants, both indigeneity or actively seeking to reconnect with marginalized lineages (Indigenous and African) and forms of resistance or behaviors people engage in (speaking Spanish and engagement in social activism) to combat oppression served as mechanisms to help reclaim ethnic autonomy from systemic systems of oppression.

Danieli (1998) noted the self is a conglomeration of ecological spheres; however, trauma disrupts the fluidity among these interrelated spheres. Only when trauma integrates within the system can healing occur. Although the concept of mending trauma ruptures is included in TCMI, this model does not address how healing occurs nor does it indicate the importance of specific ecological spheres over others when an individual attempts to remedy a wounded system. Findings from this project indicate that among the Mestizo population, elements related to integrated ethnic identity, such as attending ethnic affirming college courses and organizations, family, community, pride, and forms of resistance, aid in mending a disrupted sense of self. With this said, TCMI does not adequately contextualize how resiliency may mitigate the effects of historical trauma.

Question 2 Results: Concerns Associated With Historical Trauma as Ethnic Identity Develops

The second question addressed in this study was: What concerns associated with historical trauma apply to the previous aim, if at all? Findings support that historical trauma

related constructs influenced participants' ethnic identity development. Historical trauma related concepts include historical loss thoughts, the transmission of identity disruption, exposure to trauma, and generational health information. The process of reconceptualizing ethnic identity development with the inclusion of historical trauma concerns provides contextual information that merges social and political paradigms into how the Mestizo narrative is understood.

Historical Loss Thoughts

Historical loss thoughts, a term coined by Whitbeck et al. (2004), categorizes thoughts associated with the losses related to ethnic eradication, oppression, and colonization experienced by American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. These scholars went on to note that historical loss encompasses "daily reminders of loss: reservation living, encroachment of Europeans on reservation lands, loss of language, confusion regarding traditional practices, loss of traditional family systems, and loss of traditional healing practices" (Whitbeck et al., 2004, p. 121). In previous chapters, the researcher drew a parallel between the colonization of Mexican origin populations and the AI/AN people. For the purpose of this project, historical loss thoughts encompassed the loss of Indigenous related cultural norms. The domain of historical loss thoughts was divided into loss of Mestizo Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices. The loss of Indigenous language subtheme emerged from the loss of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices theme.

Historical loss thoughts added a new dimension to understanding ethnic identity development. That is, for those participants who understood historical loss thoughts as influencing their ethnic identity, many did not have the resources to reestablish a connection between their ancestral culture and themselves. Historical loss thoughts were expressed as a

chronic void in participants' ethnic narratives, which made it difficult for them to fully embrace their pluricultural ethnic composition.

Loss of Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Practices. Traditional Indigenous knowledge among the AI/AN populations is "a network of knowledge, beliefs, and traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture and landscape over time" (Bruchac, 2014, p. 3814). Loss of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices was evident as most participants were not aware of their tribal affiliation, despite all participants endorsing Indigenous ancestry when recruited for this study.

For most participants, the loss of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices was articulated as a disconnect between current Mexican cultural practices and those rooted in Indigenous knowledge, loss of Indigenous language, and lack of tribal group affiliation. Although the majority of the participants understood their ethnic identity based on contemporary Mexican cultural norms, a substantial portion of the participants were conscious of the historical impact of colonization on their ethnic identity development, especially as it pertained to the loss of Indigenous practices.

Loss of Indigenous Language. The importance of language in ethnic identity development research was discussed by Ting-Toomey (2005), who argued that ethnic identity is developed and maintained through a shared language. Language is believed to cultivate a sense of belongingness within an ethnic group with language operationalized as "the means with which ethnic groups communicate, develop feelings of solidarity, and preserve their groups' histories" (García Bedolla, 2003, p. 265). Therefore, the development of ethnic group membership is linked to an individual's ability to communicate with members of the same ethnic group. In fact,

Negrón (2014) highlighted that group membership is challenged when a lack of language fluency is noted.

Not one participant in this study knew their Indigenous language. This is imperative when attempting to conceptualize participants' inability to access their Indigenous ancestral culture. Once language ties are severed, so is the knowledge that informs how an individual interprets the world around them and their existence within social cultural milieu.

Transmission of Identity Disruption

A fundamental element that defines historical trauma is the emotional and psychological wounding that transcends generations (Duran & Duran, 1995). The findings from this project follow this notion in that participants overwhelmingly described inheriting a ruptured ethnic identity from prior generations. Many participants took an active approach to mend wounds inflicted on their ethnicity by engaging in elements detailed under the integrated ethnic identity domain. Within the transmission of identity disruption domain, three subthemes emerged: disenfranchised grief, governmental policies, and internalized colonialism.

Disenfranchised Grief. Within the historical trauma literature, disenfranchised grief is described as the public's inability to acknowledge the numerous losses experienced from colonization among AI/AN populations (Yellow Horse Braveheart, 2000). Specific to this project, disenfranchised grief represents the public's dismissal or denial of historical losses connected to the colonization of Indigenous communities in the territory now known as Mexico.

***Eurocentric Education*.** Eurocentric education emerged from the disenfranchised grief theme. Ladson-Billings (1998) stated these curricula "legitimize white, upper-class males as the standard knowledge students need to know" (p. 59). All participants discussed ways in which the educational system taught Mexican historical accounts from a Eurocentric perspective rather

than elevating narratives from the colonized group's perspective. This included learning about Indigenous history through Indigenous mass groupings, which further disconnected them or obscured how they perceived their Indigenous ethnicity. Mass grouping is a common practice known to sustain Indigenous populations in a subordinate racial order and discard their unique group identity (Quijano, 2000). Participants felt Indigenous mass groupings denied them group agency tied to unique Indigenous cultural attributes and instead reduced their Indigenous traditions into a homogenous group. These findings support that Eurocentric education perpetuated the denial of ethnic history and, in doing so, transmitted distorted historical narratives for generations to come.

Governmental Policies. The origins of U.S. policy legislation are rooted in colonialism, which encouraged economic downfall and oppressive actions against colonized groups (Zentella, 2014). Participants attested to U.S. historical colonial legacy as reinforcing current nationwide anti-Mexican sentiments that continue to discriminate against the Mestizo community. In fact, participants overwhelmingly stated oppressive policies, especially those that pertain to immigration, normalize the Mestizo community's dehumanization. The current administration has gone to the extent of developing a zero-tolerance policy, which separates asylum-seeking families into detention centers. In the process, children of these families endure trauma that may have lifelong consequences. As a result of these policies, many participants noted anti-Mexican sentiments led to silencing cultural traits associated with their ethnicity. Mexican cultural suppression was also identified among prior generations as elders chose to discontinue passing on cultural knowledge associated with their Mexican identity to protect family members from being harassed because of their ethnicity.

Psychological Consequences. The psychological consequences subtheme emerged from the governmental policies domain. Indeed, oppressive governmental policies evoked emotions such as fear, survivor's guilt, sorrow, helplessness, and anger. Often, participants engaged in forms of resistance and community engagement to protect against the effects of oppressive governmental ideologies.

Internalized Colonialism. Historical trauma theory describes internalized oppression as traumatized individuals' tendency to internalize messages from the oppressor. In turn, internalized oppression preserves a pattern of hatred for the self and others belonging to the same ethno-racial group (Duran, 2006). Within this project, internalized colonialism was defined as a belief that an individual's ethno-racial attributes are inferior to those of their White counterparts. Data from this project indicate participants internalized colonialism at the individual and group levels. Internalized colonialism was present among all participants. This theme was further divided into two subthemes: familial internalized oppression and Spanish suppression.

Familial Internalized Oppression. All participants noted the family unit they grew up in reinforced ethno-racial hierarchy by placing lineages with darker complexions as inferior to those of fair phenotypes. Passing down these messages sustained the transmission of intrafamilial internalized oppression, which provided a vessel to maintain the colonial mentality. All participants discussed learning about their darker-skinned lineages (Indigenous and African) within an oppressive framework. These findings are congruent with historical trauma research and TCMI that position family as an integral mechanism that transmits internalized oppressive messages among future generations.

Spanish Suppression. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) stated, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language. I cannot take pride

in myself" (p. 81). Language and culture form a reciprocal relationship. Participants discussed being met with disapproval by others when they spoke Spanish in public. To regain a sense of belongingness, participants chose to refrain from communicating in Spanish. The ripple effect of suppressing Spanish disrupted other aspects of their ethnicity. For instance, Spanish suppression made it easier to discontinue passing on cultural traditions.

It is important to note that although participants, at times, felt apprehensive when speaking Spanish, many perceived their language ability as a protective buffer against anti-Mexican sentiments. Some participants viewed Spanish fluency as a vehicle to carry on the succession of cultural attributes.

Exposure to Trauma

To contextualize types of historical trauma experiences, Xiong (2015) divided historical trauma related exposure into direct and indirect categories. Following the same framework, the researcher in this project organized the exposure to trauma domain into direct and indirect subthemes. Overwhelmingly, all but one participant indicated having a personal or family history associated with indirect and direct trauma. More participants endorsed attributes associated with indirect trauma than did direct trauma. Experiencing or having a relative who experienced domestic violence was prevalent among participants' trauma narratives. In addition, participants discussed experiencing vicarious trauma as their family members shared their U.S. relocation traumatic experiences, which included topics such as family separation, physical trauma, and psychological trauma. Finally, most participants disclosed indirect or direct exposure to ethno-racial trauma. One participant explicitly was a victim of a physical attack because of her ethnicity while participating in a social advocacy protest.

Kirmayer et al. (2014) argued that the understanding of current historical trauma among AI/AN needs to deepen social and political oppressive constructs to encompass ways they are expressed in the current zeitgeist. In other words, systemic marginalization may swiftly change face from generation to generation (Kirmayer et al., 2014). No matter what face oppressive forces morph into, the negative impacts persist. This concept also stands true for Mexican origin populations who often face daily challenges brought forth from oppressive systemic sociopolitical systems. The social context related to historical trauma is crucial when exploring ethnic identity as this construct, as previously stated, is known to develop within the social milieu. Scholarship on ethnic identity highlights that as discrimination increases, ethnic identity weakens, leaving marginalized populations susceptible to a distorted understanding of their ethnic identity (Torres & Ong, 2010). Findings from this project parallel this notion.

Ethno-racial trauma requires explicit attention as many Mexican origin populations face aspects of this construct on a daily basis. Chavez-Dueñas et al. (2019) defined ethno-racial trauma as "the individual and/or collective psychological distress and fear of danger that results from experiencing or witnessing discrimination, threats of harm, violence, and intimidation directed at ethno-racial minority groups" (p. 50). Participants indicated the aftermath of these experiences resulted in repressed ethnic attributes such as choosing not to speak Spanish in public; however, participants also regained strength in their ethnic background by engaging in elements noted in the integrated ethnic identity domain. For instance, family and ethnic affirming education experiences were indicative of reparative measures or buffers against the effects of ethno-racial trauma on ethnic identity.

Both historical trauma theory and TCMI do not adequately address the impact of contemporary ethno-racial trauma on one's identity. Moreover, ethnic identity models do not

sufficiently address the generational cumulative impact of ethnic identity ruptures on the individual or community level. This concept is essential as ethnicity is known to evolve within the intersectionality of social, historical, and political contexts (C. Taylor, 1994). For instance, the legacy of *mestizaje* in Mexico was developed using the caste system, which allotted governmental systems to define and drastically restrict the way individuals identify as Indigenous or non-Indigenous (Urrieta, 2017). The success of colonization is rooted in the use of ethno-racial trauma to sustain ethnic groups as an inferior categorical group status. Fast forward to modern day, it is a frequent tendency for Mestizos to reject their Indigenous ancestry and to embrace their European lineages. This may be noted as a cultural survival strategy passed down from generation to generation to protect loved ones from experiencing similar ethno-racial trauma (Danieli, 1985). However, this disconnect between Indigenous lineages brought forth a longing to reconnect with ancestral cultural knowledge among the participants recruited for this project.

Generational Health Information

All participants endorsed medical as well as psychiatric concerns either for themselves or other family members. Participants noted the following medical concerns: cancer, diabetes, intestinal disorder, serious injury, serious accident, coronary/heart disease, hypertension, asthma, kidney disease, liver disease, and pulmonary disease. In addition, participants identified the following mental health concerns: alcohol abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, drug abuse, psychological/emotional problems, sleep disturbance, and *nervios*, *susto*, and *ataque de nervios*. The last three mental health ailments included in the CHQ are cultural bound syndromes found in the *DSM–5* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) that are relevant mental health experiences among Mexican origin populations.

These findings are congruent with other research, such as the Indigenist Stress-Coping Model, which links historical trauma as a contributing factor in the current psychological and medical health disparities found among colonized groups (Walters et al., 2002). Already chronic attacks on one's ethnic identity manifest as lower self-esteem and higher rates of both depression and anxiety (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). In turn, mental health concerns may contribute to physiological health related ailments such as cardiovascular diseases and poor health outcomes (Luo et al., 2011; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

Implications

This project's findings provide insight into Mestizo mental health, counseling related concerns among Mestizos, and social advocacy for the Mestizo community. First, Mestizo ethnic identity development is known as a fundamental pillar to mental health wellness. The importance of a strong sense of ethnic identity is evident as the Mestizo population endured a history saturated in systemic oppressive forces that continue to threaten the development of a healthy sense of self. These historical events are marked by mass group trauma, including that of colonization, forced relocation, and dehumanizing governmental policies. Consequently, it is imperative to consider how historical trauma may manifest within the mental health realm. This notion was exemplified by a statement made by Ximena, who shared that the complexity of Mestizo ethnicity is an area in her life she wanted to process with a mental health clinician; however, she stated, "I need a therapist and I haven't found one. But I also need a therapist who can understand all these things. Or maybe not understand, but hold it and not be like—What do I do with you?" This comment supports that it is of utmost importance to train multiculturally competent clinicians, especially as clients attempt to unpack the impact of historical trauma on their mental health.

Second, data from this study may broaden the scope of multicultural tailored counseling interventions and treatment approaches. Findings from this project represent both disruptions and protective factors related to Mestizo ethnic identity development. For instance, findings support that ethnic identity disruption was transmitted through internalization; a byproduct of colonization transmitted intergenerationally. This is an essential piece to consider when developing culturally adaptive interventions as current mental health providers often disregard historical markers that distort social, economic, political, and cultural balance to their clients' disposition. Consequently, this omission of sociohistorical context reinforces internalized oppression as a problem of the self rather than externalizing these issues as part of the greater system. This notion parallels the multicultural counseling methods that are designed to address oppressive social political structures that perpetuate an oppressive climate for marginalized communities. Importance is placed on evaluating the systemic challenges rather than solely focusing on the client's personal experiences. This framework also follows the tenets of liberation psychology, which focuses on the progressive transformation that ensues when an individual deconstructs collective group oppressive experiences and instead summons empowerment through their ancestral heritage (Duran, 2006).

Interventions related to ethnic identity concerns may include a process of deconstructing ethnic related constructs that are known to disrupt healthy ethnic identity development. These targets may include findings from this project such as the transmission of ethnic identity disruption (governmental policies, internalized colonialism, Spanish suppression), navigating identity confusion, feeling like an outsider, exposure to trauma (e.g., ethno-racial trauma), and generational health information. Additionally, this project's findings shed light on the importance of resiliency factors that help individuals navigate ethnic identity development.

These variables, such as ethnic affirming courses and organizations, community, family, pride, forms of resistance, and indigeneity, not only served to buffer against a distorted ethnic identity, but also guided participants toward a healthy integrated ethnic identity. The process of integrating these variables may provide a medium with which to challenge distorted ethnic identity narratives. Additionally, the inclusion of crucial culturally adaptive components, including welcoming family into treatment, options to deliver information in Spanish, and tailoring interventions in a narrative or storytelling manner, may promote a more inclusive and culturally congruent treatment approach.

Third, the findings provide contextual information for social justice related agendas at varying ecological levels. For instance, results can influence the development of psychoeducational programs that foster a positive sense of ethnic identity for youth. This differs from contemporary educational endeavors as they are known to sustain a colonial mentality through the framing of information from a settler's perspective rooted in Eurocentric experience as the norm against which all others are compared (Calderón, 2014). Public education from the colonizer's perspective historically served to perpetuate the erasure of many communities of color such as those of Indigenous histories. Scholars argue that contemporary forms of colonization are disguised in the refusal to connect individuals with their ethnic histories (Memmi, 1965). Therefore, the deprivation of one's history or the approach of teaching one's history from the colonizer's perspective perpetuates internalized oppressive views that maintain the presence of ethnic rupture. A caveat to this experience is that participants most important engagement in ethnic affirming opportunities did not occur until their college years. Therefore, these findings echo the need for public education reform to focus on educational opportunities that may buffer against internalized oppression earlier in students' educational development.

The implementation of curricula founded on ethnic empowerment, such as those found in college ethnic affirming opportunities (courses and organizations), can provide corrective experiences that may help individuals reorganize their ethnic identity into a healthier perception of who they are as well establish a sense of pride in their community. With this as the backdrop, preventative measures may encompass early educational opportunities using culturally responsive teaching. This may call upon liberation psychology with its emphasis on critical consciousness, or the ability to position one's current ethno-racial disposition as a result of sociohistorical factors that sustain oppression and dehumanization. This notion was evident within the Tucson school district in Arizona, which provided students the opportunity to take Mexican American studies. In turn, those students who attended these courses had an increased probability of graduating from high school (Dee & Penner, 2017). The process of deconstructing internalized beliefs and attitudes and instead embracing marginalized heritage paves the way to other forms of reform (Freire, 1972).

Finally, abundantly clear was that attention needs to be given to the health disparities found collectively among the participants' CHQ responses. The historical trauma construct offers a contextualized approach to further conceptualize health disparities among Mexican origin communities. For instance, the prevalence and chronic presence of ethno-racial trauma can further inform medical health providers about factors that may contribute to health-related disparities such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Limitations and Future Directions

This section highlights limitations and future research directions pertinent to this project. First, the degree of generalizability to Mexican origin populations comes into question. For instance, all participants had some degree of college education and were highly assimilated into

the dominant culture. A portion of the participants attributed affirming their Mestizo ethnic identification to having access to ethnic affirming courses and engagement in social justice organizations. These settings provided access to congruent ethnic nomenclature and fostered safe opportunities to explore ways in which historical events such as those found in colonization era affected their sense of self. However, these conscious raising environments may not be accessible to Mexican populations on a larger scale. In addition, it is imperative to consider generational differences as the eldest participant in this study noted a substantial portion of her ethnic knowledge was passed down through storytelling. This differed from the other participants, as she had access to Indigenous knowledge via familial ties. In contrast, most of the participants spoke about their family's severed Indigenous customs that prevented them from having adequate access to their Indigenous roots. As such, the inclusion of more elders as participants may reveal Mexican Indigenous teachings to be more prevalent among those who have access to family members who continue to practice their Indigenous tribal customs. Additionally, individuals who are far removed from familial Indigenous teachings and do not have access to ethnic affirming platforms may reveal that Mexican origin people continue to conceptualize their ethnicity based on ascribed ethnic labels.

Additionally, participants' phenotype did not include White passing Mestizos. Phenotype variability is an area of importance based on the overlap among ethnicity, culture, and race that contextualizes an individual's lived experience (Cross & Cross, 2008). The implication would be that White passing Mestizos benefit from White privilege. Therefore, unlike darker-skinned individuals, the option to disregard sociopolitical factors that contribute to ethnicity conceptualization may be an option for this subgroup. Therefore, future research can be conducted to explore the ways in which White privilege influences the Mestizo ethnicity.

Based on this project's findings, further exploration is needed to assess the degree to which historical trauma influences ethnic identity among the Mexican origin population. For instance, the Historical Loss Scale and Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004), which are designed to assess the presence and impact of historical loss, can be adapted to include historical loss among the Mestizo population. In turn, this information may widen the scope of mental health concerns related to Mexican origin populations.

Although the racial makeup of Mestizos includes more than Indigenous and European ancestry, only one participant voiced concern regarding the lack of acknowledgment of African populations in the Mestizo ethnic identity composition. It is important to note that although this project focused on historical trauma as it relates to Mexican Indigenous populations, other marginalized lineages such as African populations are also a part of the Mestizo ethnic narrative (Cervantes, 2010). As such, future scholarly endeavors may include this ethno-racial dimension to the Mestizo narrative.

Finally, to increase the generalizability of the results, future scholarship may include a more inclusive representative sample to include characteristics such as varying degrees of acculturation, generational status in the United States, sexual minorities, varying educational levels, and SES.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to explore the experiences of ethnic identity development among the Mestizo people and to identify historical trauma related constructs embedded within this developmental process. The researcher in this project attempted to explain the evolution of the Mestizo ethnic narrative by capturing historical and culturally congruent experiences that influenced how the participants conceptualized their Mestizo ethnicity. Findings from this

project provide a contextualized framework to understand how particular elements mitigate ethnic identity development. As such, this project offers insight into how historical trauma disrupts ethnic development among the Mestizo population and reveals culturally adaptive elements to decolonize the Mestizo identity from wounds inflicted by hegemonic ideology.

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Appendix A: Comprehensive History Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in this project. To begin your participation, please complete the enclosed packet containing a survey and a consent form. The survey includes questions regarding your family medical background. These questions are often asked during a standard medical consultation. However, the survey also includes questions that are personal in nature and may evoke emotional responses. Keep in mind, that all information will remain confidential. Please note that you are not required to seek out information from family members to complete this survey. Each question should be completed to the best of your ability and grounded on information you are aware of up to this current day. Once both consent forms and the survey are completed please ensure confidentiality by placing both forms in the enclosed envelope. Packets will be returned to the primary investigator during the in-person interview. Any questions pertaining to both forms should be directed to the primary investigator.

Esmeralda Gill, MS

Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Age: _____ DOB: _____ Gender: M F (circle)

Martial Status: Single Engaged Married Separated

Divorced Widowed (circle)

For the purpose of this study, where would you prefer to be contacted? Please indicate all that apply and include the complete address, zip code, and phone number with area code.

Home Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please note that for purposes of this study: First Degree Relatives is defined as mother, father, brothers, and sisters. Second Degree Relatives is defined as grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, and aunts. Third Degree Relatives is defined as great-grandmothers, great-grandfathers, great-aunts, and great-uncles.

FAMILIAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY:

What is the year and place of birth for the following people in your family [indicate cause of death if deceased]:

Yourself _____

Siblings: **# of Brothers** _____ **Brothers' Ages** _____

# of Sisters _____ **Sisters' Ages**

First Degree Relatives _____ **Deceased/Cause of Death** _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Second Degree Relatives _____ **Deceased/Cause of Death** _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Third Degree Relatives _____ **Deceased/Cause of Death** _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Other Significant Family_____ **Deceased/Cause of Death** _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Where did the following people in your family spend most of their childhood years?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

What is the highest level of education achieved by the following people in your family:

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

How do you and your family view resettling in the United States?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have you or your family experienced trauma coming to the United States? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have any of the following people in your family have ever had serious legal problems (e.g., criminal conviction)?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have any of the following people in your family ever been a victim of a homicide or attempted homicide [please indicate which]

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Has anyone in your family attempted or completed suicide [please indicate completed suicides]?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have any of the following people in your family ever been involved in domestic violence [victim, aggressor, or witness]? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have any of the following members of your family ever been physically assaulted? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have any of the following members of your family ever been sexually assaulted as a child or an adult [if so, please indicate whether as a child or as an adult]? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Has anyone in your family ever experienced racial/ethnic discrimination due to his/her Mestizo heritage? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Has anyone in your family ever been a victim of a crime due to his/her Mestizo heritage? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

List the number of marriages and divorces for each of the following people in your family.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

How many times have the following people in your family been widowed?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

ETHNIC/CULTURAL INFORMATION:

How do the following people in your family racially identify [Latino/Hispanic, White non-Latino/Hispanic, American Indian]? If Bi or Multi Racial please specify.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Please list the tribal affiliation(s) [if any] of the following people in your family.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Have you or your family ever tried passing as a different ethnicity? Please detail.

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

What does the word Indio mean to you and your family?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

What does being White mean to your and your family?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

What does *curandismo* (healing) practices mean to you and your family?

Yourself _____

First Degree Relatives _____

Second Degree Relatives _____

Third Degree Relatives _____

Other Significant Family _____

Do you know anything about your Mestizo heritage from generations prior to your grandparents?

Yes No (circle, if 'Yes' please outline briefly below)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are you familiar with Mestizo history?

Yes No (circle, if 'Yes' outline briefly below)

_____

_____

_____

_____

When did you know you were Mestizo/a?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe a moment that identifying as Mestizo/a was important to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do others assign an ethnic category to you? If so, what message do you derive?

Yes No (circle, if 'Yes' outline briefly below)

_____

_____

_____

MEDICAL HISTORY:

Please indicate whether any of the below listed members of your family have suffered from any of the following conditions:

Conditions	Yourself	First Degree Relative	Second Degree Relatives	Third Degree Relatives	Other Significant Family
Alcohol Abuse					
Anxiety					
Asthma					
Cancer					
Coronary/Heart Disease					
Depression					
Diabetes					
Drug Abuse (includes alcohol and nicotine)					
HIV/AIDS					
Hypertension					
Intestinal Disorder					
Kidney Disease					
Liver Disease					
Posttraumatic Stress Syndrome					
Psychological/Emotional Problems					
Pulmonary Disease					
Serious Accident					
Serious Injury					

Sleep Disturbance					
Tuberculosis					
Ataque de nervios					
Nervios					
Susto					

Appendix B: Recruitment E-Mail

Dear,

¡Que placer en conocerlos! I am a Counseling Psychology doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Currently I am working on a study examining the applicability of historical trauma on ethnic identity development among Mestizo identified persons originating from Mexico. This study will help to better understand the needs of Mestizo population as they relate to mental health services. In order to complete the study, I am in need of participants and would greatly appreciate your agency forwarding this information to possible candidates.

Participation in the study will include completing a consent form and survey as well as an in-person interview. Tentatively the in-person interview will last between one to two hours. The completion of the survey and consent form will be done prior to meeting. I am hoping to conduct the in-person interview at your agency. This can take place in a private office where confidentiality will be sustained. All information obtained from participants will remain confidential. Their participation will be voluntary through out the duration of their involvement. If your agency would like to participate or have other questions, please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Con Agredecimento,
Esmeralda Leon-Gill, MS
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Department of Educational Psychology University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
emleon@uwm.edu
920-268-2223

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

The Mestizo Experience

We need your voice!

University of Wisconsin Milwaukee doctoral student is looking for volunteers to share their stories about their Mestizo identity.

Eligibility:

- English speaking Mestizo-identified persons who are able to trace their heritage to Mexico
- Ages 18 and up

What will you be asked to do?

- Participate in one to two hour in person interview

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study please contact: Esmeralda Gill at emleon@uwm.edu

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

1. In your experience what does it mean to be of Mestizo/a identity?
2. People belonging to other ethnic groups often view historical events as influential in their present life experiences. For instance, African Americans point to the effects of slavery and American Indians report colonization. What are your thoughts on this comment as it relates to the Mestizo community and their Indigenous roots?
3. What has been your experience with political systems in shaping your Mestizo/a identity, if at all?
4. Describe your experience learning about Mestizo/a community in your education? In media outlets? With your peers? With your family?
5. What has your experience been like with Mexican Indigenous cultural traditions, if any?
6. How would you describe your relationship with the Mestizo community? With the main stream community in Mexico, the U.S.?
7. How has the experience of immigration shaped your Mestizo identity?

Appendix E: Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE
Department of University Safety & Assurances

Melissa Spadanuda
IRB Manager
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
(414) 229-3173 *phone*
(414) 229-6729 *fax*

http://www.irb.uwm.edu
spadanud@uwm.edu

New Study - Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

Date: May 18, 2018

To: Marty Sapp, PhD
Dept: Education

Cc: Esmerelda Gill

IRB#: 18.238
Title: Straddling a Cultural Doctrine: The Experiences of Historical Trauma and Ethnic Identity Among Mestizo People

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has been approved as minimal risk Expedited under Category 6 and 7 as governed by 45 CFR 46.110.

This protocol has been approved on May 18, 2018 for one year. IRB approval will expire on May 17, 2019. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, a continuation for IRB approval must be filed by the submission deadline. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, please notify the IRB by completing and submitting the Continuing Review form found in IRBManager.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintain proper documentation of study records and promptly report to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,
Melissa C Spadanuda
Melissa C. Spadanuda
IRB Manager

Appendix F: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

Informed Consent for Research Participation
IRB #: 18.238
IRB Approval Date: 05/18/18

Project title	Straddling a Cultural Doctrine: The Experiences of Historical Trauma and Ethnic Identity Among Mestizo People
Researcher[s]	Esmeralda Gill, M.S. (Student Primary Investigator) & Marty Sapp, Ed.D. (Primary Investigator) School of Education

We're inviting you to participate in a research project. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now, you can always change your mind later. There are no negative consequences, whatever you decide.

What is the purpose of this project?

The purpose of this project is to examine the experiences of Mestizo-identified people as they develop their ethnic identity. The Mestizo population continues to grow in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) and so should mental health providers' understanding on how ethnic identity development impacts mental health concerns (Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, & Organista, 2013). This is important because mental health research and clinical practice indicate that the Mestizo population grossly under-utilizes mental health services for a number of different reasons including: language barriers, lack of sufficient transportation or access to agencies, and low health insurance coverage to name a few (Cabassa, Zayas & Hansen, 2006; Kouyoumdjian, Zamboanga & Hansen, 2003). Adding to this list is the lack of multicultural awareness regarding ethnic identity development among the Mestizo. In order to shorten this gap, this project hopes to broaden and deepen the understanding of Mestizo people's experiences associated with ethnic identity development. In the future this information may help advocate for culturally competent mental health services for the Mestizo community.

What will I do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to call the Student Primary Investigator (SPI), Mrs. Esmeralda Leon-Gill to learn more details about the project. You will be asked to complete a survey that can be completed on your own. If you choose to complete the survey on your own, I ask that you place the survey in a sealed envelope to help maintain your confidentiality. The Student Primary Investigator and you will schedule an in-person interview at a location where you feel comfortable and also ensures confidentiality.
To help ensure accuracy, the information you share will be audio-recorded with your consent. Depending on how much you wish to share, the in-person interview is expected to last about one to two hours. Note that you will be asked for both personal information as well as information about your family members. This includes information regarding violence, abuse, ethnic/cultural experiences, and medical history. You have the option to refuse to answer any questions given. During the interview process, you will be given the opportunity to take multiple breaks. You may also end your participation its entirety at any time.

To accurately represent your responses, interviews will be audio-recorded then transcribed. Please notify the Student Primary Investigator if you do not want your responses to be audio-recorded. If you choose not to be audio recorded, the interviewer will use handwritten notes as a substitute. Any documents or audio recording gathered for the purpose of this project will remain locked during transportation and stored in a password protected computer and/or a locked cabinet that the Student Primary and her clinically trained faculty supervisor will only have access to.

After all data are analyzed you will be contacted to discuss the results and given the chance to review your responses. This step of the project is referred to as member checking, which is a process used to help ensure accuracy. However, you are not required to partake in this step of the project. If we cannot contact you from the information given this step will not be an option (e.g., if you change your phone number).

Participants in this project must be 18 years or older, English speaking, and identify as a Mestizo person who can trace his/her heritage to the territory now known as Mexico.

Risks

Possible risks	How we're minimizing these risks
To some people questions asked may evoke emotional discomfort.	• The Student Primary Investigator, Esmeralda Gill is formally trained in counseling psychology (holds a Licensed Professional Counselor-in Training in the State of Wisconsin) and has several years of work experience working with members of the Mestizo community. Therefore, the Student Primary Investigator can help normalize, validate, and provide resources as needed. • In addition, the Primary Investigator, Dr. Marty Sapp, is a licensed psychologist, and if need be, will be available as a resource. • If further mental health care is needed the Student Primary Investigator will provide you with resources available in your community.
Breach of confidentiality (your data being seen by someone who shouldn't have access to it)	• Identifying information is removed and replaced with a project ID. • We'll store all electronic data on a password-protected computer. • All audiotapes will have information about you removed when written out so no one will know it is you. • We'll store all paper data in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. • We'll keep your identifying information separate from your research data, but we'll be able to link it to you by using a project ID. We will destroy this link after we finish collecting and analyzing the data.

There may be risks we don't know about yet. Throughout the project, we'll tell you if we learn anything that might affect your decision to participate.

Other Project Information

Possible benefits	• Sharing your story to deepen and broaden research in understanding Mestizo identity. In the future, this may provide better mental health services to those who identify as Mestizo persons.
Estimated number of participants	Between 8-12 Mestizo-identified persons from various demographics will be recruited to participate in this project.
How long will it take?	One to two hours for the interview and an additional 30-60 minutes if you participate in member checking.

Costs	Participants will be responsible for all costs associated with travel to/from meeting location.
Compensation	As an incentive, you will receive $30 cash gift card for your time and effort.
Future research	De-identified (all identifying information removed) data may be shared with other researchers. To better understand research on the experience of the Mestizo people we anticipate developing a manuscript for publication; however, all data will be de-identified prior to our submission.
Audio Recordings	I will audio record you. The audio-recording will be used in an attempt to accurately represent information shared during the interview. The recording is optional. If you choose to opt out of audio-recording de-identified hand written notes will be used as a substitute to the recorded audio.

What if I am harmed because I was in this project?

If you're harmed from this project, let us know. If it's an emergency, get help from 911 or your doctor right away and tell us afterward. We can help you find resources if you need psychological help. You or your insurance will have to pay for all costs of any treatment you need including mental health services that are obtained through our referral hand out.

Confidentiality and Data Security

We'll collect the following identifying information for the research: your name, email address, and home address (if you wish to share). This information is necessary so I can contact you to further discuss the project and set up a time to complete the interview.

Where will data be stored?	Any documents and encrypted audio-recording gathered for the purpose of this project will remain in a locked carrier during transportation and will later be stored in a password safe computer and a locked cabinet that the Student Primary Investigator and her clinically trained faculty supervisor will only have access to.
How long will it be kept?	All the information collected for this project will be destroyed (deleted from electronic device) when the project is complete (about one year).

Who can see my data?	Why?	Type of data
The researchers	To analyze the data and conduct the project	Coded (names removed and labeled with a project ID)
The IRB (Institutional Review Board) at UWM	To ensure we're following laws and ethical guidelines	Coded (names removed and labeled with a project ID)

The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) or other federal agencies		
Anyone (public)	If we share our findings in publications or presentations	• Aggregate (grouped) data • De-identified (no names, birthdate, address, etc.) • If we quote you, we'll use a pseudonym (fake name)

Mandated Reporting

We are mandated reporters. This means that if we learn or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, or if you are in imminent risk of suicide or homicide we're required to report this to the authorities.

Contact information:

For questions about the research	Esmeralda Gill, M.S. Marty Sapp. Ed.D.	emleon@uwm.edu sapp@uwm.edu
For questions about your rights as a research participant	IRB (Institutional Review Board; provides ethics oversight)	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu
For complaints or problems	Esmeralda Gill, M.S. Marty Sapp. Ed.D.	emleon@uwm.edu sapp@uwm.edu
	IRB	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu

Signatures

If you have had all your questions answered and would like to participate in this project, sign on the lines below. Remember, your participation is completely voluntary, and you're free to withdraw from the project at any time.

_____
Name of Participant (print)

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Appendix G: Modification/Amendment - IRB Expedited Approval

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE
Department of University Safety & Assurances

Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
(414) 229-7455 *phone*
(414) 229-6729 *fax*

http://www.irb.uwm.edu
lstoiber@uwm.edu

Modification/Amendment - IRB Expedited Approval

Date: June 4, 2018

To: Marty Sapp, PhD
Dept: School of Education

CC: Esmeralda Gill

IRB#: 18.238
Title: Straddling a Cultural Doctrine: The Experiences of Historical Trauma and Ethnic Identity Among Mestizo People

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has received modification/amendment approval for:

- Expanding recruitment to UW-Oshkosh.

IRB approval will expire on **May 17, 2019**. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, a Continuation for IRB Approval must be filed by the submission deadline. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, please notify the IRB by completing and submitting the Continuing Review form in IRBManager.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. The principal investigator is responsible for adhering to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintaining proper documentation of study records and promptly reporting to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is also your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation, and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,
Leah Stoiber

Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator

Appendix H: Continuing Review - Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

Department of University Safety & Assurances

Melody Harries
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
(414) 229-3182 *phone*
(414) 229-6729 *fax*

uwm.edu/irb
harries@uwm.edu

Continuing Review - Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

Date: May 15, 2019

To: Marty Sapp
Dept: School of Education

CC: Esmeralda Gill

IRB #: 18.238
Title: Straddling a Cultural Doctrine: The Experiences of Historical Trauma and Ethnic Identity Among Mestizo People

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has received continuing approval as minimal risk Expedited under Category 6 & 7 as governed by 45 CFR 46.110.

This protocol has been approved on **May 15, 2019** for one year. IRB approval will expire on **May 14, 2020**. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, a Continuation for IRB Approval must be filed by the submission deadline. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, please notify the IRB by completing and submitting the Continuing Review form found in IRBManager.

This study may be selected for a post-approval review by the IRB. The review will include an in-person meeting with members of the IRB to verify that study activities are consistent with the approved protocol and to review signed consent forms and other study-related records.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. The principal investigator is responsible for adhering to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintaining proper documentation of study records, and promptly reporting to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The Principal Investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is also your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation, and best wishes for a successful project!

Respectfully,

Melody Harries

Curriculum Vita

ESMERALDA MILAGROS GILL, M.S.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate, Counseling Psychology — Fall 2013-Present
The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

Master of Science, Counseling — Fall 2011-Spring 2013
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology — Fall 2005-Spring 2010
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI

HONORS AND AWARDS

Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee Scholarship Recipient (2012-2013)
University of Wisconsin-Fox-Valley Foundation Scholarship Recipient (Undergraduate Studies)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Latino Psychological Association – Member (2012-Present)
American Psychological Association – Member (2012-Present)

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

Straddling a Cultural Doctrine: The Experiences of Historical Trauma and Ethnic Identity Among Mestizo People. Graduate advisor: Marty Sapp, Ed.D.

OTHER SUPERVISION AND CONSULTATION EXPERIENCE

Supervisor and Consultant – Doctoral Student — 09/2014-12/2014
UW-Milwaukee Community Counseling Masters Program
Milwaukee, WI

Responsibilities: provided supervision to a trainee in community-agency counseling masters program. Emphasis was placed in practical and process issues. As a service-learning consultation project, developed a culturally tailored bilingual (Spanish/English) health and wellness assessment tool to a non-profit community agency.

PRESENTATIONS

Alomá, A., Lira, E. N., López Flores, M., **Gill, E.,** Salas-Pizaña, S., & Altamirano, L. (2014). Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Seeking Psychological Help in Latina/o Adults. NLPA Biennial Conference.

Chavez-Korell, S., López Flores, M., Reinders-Saeman, R., Kern, L., Lira, E. N., Alomá, A., **Gill, E.,** Lewis, A., Salas-Pizaña, S., & Altamirano, L. (2014). Examining Campus Climate, Microaggressions, Campus Connectedness, Ethnic Identity, and Stress Among College Students of Color. NLPA Biennial Conference.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE DURING DOCTORAL TRAINING

Predoctoral Internship – Doctoral Student 09/04/18-Present
Agnesian Healthcare
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: provide outpatient and inpatient services to adults with diverse backgrounds and diagnosis for approximately 40-45 hours per week. Developed process and psycho-educational groups in settings such as inpatient unit, addiction rehabilitation center, and domestic violence center. Provided differential diagnosis assessments; created and maintained measurable treatment plans; risk and crisis management; collaborated with staff during team consultation. Documented psychological mental health assessments and records of continuity of treatment. Provided community resources to clientele. Utilized evidenced based interventions unique to each Client. Attended weekly seminars focused on a variety of psychological topics pertinent to clients.

Practicum Counselor – Doctoral Student 06/2017-04/2018
Advanced Correctional Health Care
Montello, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: provide mental health screening of detainees referred by correctional staff. Conducted a variety of individual therapeutic services associated with a spectrum of mental health disorders (e.g., depression, personality disorders, anxiety disorders). Assist custody and medical staff in the monitoring of mental health for referred detainees. Coordinated mental health treatment with corrections staff. Monitored and provided support and augmented mental health services in the stabilization of at-risk detainees. Coordinated with county mental health services to encourage the continuity of treatment and discharge planning. Documented psychological mental health assessments and records of continuity of treatment. Facilitate corrections staff training on self-harm and suicide prevention.

Practicum Counselor – Doctoral Student 09/2016-05/2017
Sherman Counseling
Appleton, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: provide outpatient services to community members. Conducted intake evaluations, psychological testing, individual counseling. Clients range from a variety of presenting concerns: depression, anxiety, PTSD, mood related disorders, borderline personality,

and bipolar. Implemented CBT based interventions into treatment planning. Coordinated treatment plan with supervisor and outside agencies.

Practicum Counselor – Doctoral Student 09/2015-05/2016
Winnebago Mental Institute
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: work with civil and forensic populations admitted to inpatient hospitalization for treatment of acute mental health disorders. Conducted individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy (Yalom based groups), observed probable cause evaluations, and administered psychological assessments for approximately 16 hours per week. Weekly schedule included: varies individual therapy sessions, 2 hours of group therapy, 2 hours of didactics, 1.5 hours of supervision, and four hours of administrative work. Utilized psychological assessment to further evaluate treatment plan and clarification of diagnostics. Conducted and observed clinical psychological assessment (e.g., WISC-V, Jessness Inventory, Million Multiaxial Inventory, and St. Louis University Mental Status Examination).

Practicum Counselor – Doctoral Student 09/2014-05/2015
UW-Oshkosh Counseling Center
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: work with college students in individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy (Dialectical Behavior Therapy), career and academic counseling approximately 20 hours per week. Weekly schedule included: 8 individual therapy sessions, 3 hours of group therapy, 2 hours of didactics, 3.5 hours of supervision, and four hours of administrative work. Utilized biofeedback to teach and integrate into treatment planning. Conducted clinical and diagnostic assessment (e.g., BDI-II, BAI, EDI-3, PAI, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI-Career), and consulted with agency mental health professionals to coordinate treatment plan.

Practicum Counselor – Doctoral Student 09/2013-05/2014
Aurora Psychiatric Hospital: Adolescent and Child Day Treatment
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: work with children, adolescents, and adults in individual, group, and family counseling approximately 20 hours per week. Conducted counseling with a diverse group of clients (e.g., Latino, African-American, Bi-racial, of varying SES, from urban areas) who presented with an array of problems (e.g., domestic violence, survivors of childhood sexual abuse, abandonment and neglect, perfectionism, adjustment difficulties, depression, anxiety, racism and discrimination). Participated in weekly group and individual supervision. Conducted clinical and diagnostic assessment (e.g., PIC-2), and consulted with agency mental health professionals to coordinate treatment plan.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO DOCTORAL TRAINING

Counselor – Masters Level Intern 09/2012-05/2013
The Healing Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: work with clients in individual counseling (20hrs a week). Conducted counseling with sexual assault survivors who are underrepresented and uninsured. Utilized a team model, emphasizing advocacy and multicultural ideals. Committed to removing barriers that keep survivors from attending counseling services. Ensure clients receive awareness of cultural values, worldview, and culturally appropriate interventions.

Counselor – Masters Level Intern 09/2012-05/2013
UMOS Latina Resource Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: facilitate group and individual counseling. Provide comprehensive, culturally and linguistically services to adults, youth and children impacted by domestic violence, dating violence and sexual assault. Services are also founded on Latino community advocacy needs. Facilitate a women's sexual assault group focused on processing sexual trauma. Utilize Latina cultural values as the main components to group dynamics.

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Counselor – LPC-IT 07/2013-10/2015
Samaritan Counseling Center
Menasha, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: provide services to English and monolingual Spanish speakers interested in individual psychotherapy and couples counseling. Serve in crisis intervention and consultation, clinical and diagnostic assessment, consultation with community agencies to coordinate services for clients. Provided multicultural competency feedback for varies assessments.

Practicum Coordinator 08/2013-06/2015
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Responsibilities: complete administrative tasks (e.g., responding to student and supervisor inquires, keeping track of student records, updating practicum placement lists, collaborating with faculty and practicum instructors in enhancing practicum procedure, and maintain risk management documentation). Develop and instruct practicum informational meetings to inform students of the necessary steps needed to obtain a practicum placement.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant 09/2014-09/2015
Department of Educational Psychology, Community Counseling
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Worked on smoking cessation pilot study utilizing culturally-tailored hypnosis interventions for American Indian participant in the Milwaukee area. This pilot study provided the first data set to investigate hypnosis and smoking cessation amongst American Indian population and will be utilized to expand on previous culturally competent smoking cessation techniques. Dr. Marty Sapp and Dr. Leah Rouse are supporting research professors.

Research Assistant 01/2012-Present
Department of Educational Psychology, Community Counseling
(Re)search for Change
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Worked on Dr. Shannon Chavez-Korell's research team. Active research team member conducting research focused on Latino mental health and wellbeing, Latino ethnic identity development, and strategies used to cope with poverty related stressors. Participate in manuscript preparation, writing, and publishing. Participate in data entry and data analyses.

Research Assistant 09/2008-05/2010
Department of Psychology
University of Wisconsin Research on Autism
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, Wisconsin

Worked under Dr. H. Hill Goldsmith's and Dr. Morton Gernsbacher's research team. Examined behavioral features of autism, in twins. Recorded participants' behavioral evaluation during home visits. Obtained and coded medical history, administered parent telephone interviews, coded assessments and observations from video, and transcribed twin pregnancy and birth record information.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant 09/2015-12/2015
Planning Your Major and Career
Department of Educational Psychology

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

Taught freshmen concepts particular to the process of career planning and for making decisions about academic majors. In turn, this course taught students to transition to college life by learning more about study skills, career exploration, financial literacy, information literacy, and

pathways to success. Helped design course outline, prepared materials, executed lesson plans, graded assignments, and adhered to regular office hours to facilitate academic success.

Co-Instructor, Teaching Fellows Program 09/2009-05/2010
Introduction to Psychology
Introduction to Psychology (Discussion Section)
Department of Psychology

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

As an undergraduate, co-lead discussion sections as a piloted hybrid (including both face to face and online interactions) model for Introductory Psychology - freshman-only section. Enrolled in a graduate-level Teaching of Psychology course. Class participation was essential to the success of weekly class meetings. Worked on developing a training program for future Teaching Fellows.

SERVICE

Student Representative
Counseling Psychology Student Association Organization
Department of Educational Psychology
09/2013-Present