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Tejanos in College: How Texas Born Mexican-American Students Navigate Ethnoracial Identity

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TEJANOS IN COLLEGE: HOW TEXAS BORN MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS
NAVIGATE ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY

A Dissertation Presented

by

Tomás Sanchez Jr.

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of

The University of Vermont

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ABSTRACT

For Latin@s in the United States, navigating the spectrum of racial and ethnic identities can be complicated. This same complication has the potential to affect one of the largest groups of Latin@s in the nation: Mexican-Americans living in Texas or Tejanos. Through qualitative analyses of interviews and surveys and the use of an ecological framework on identity development theories for Latin@s, Native Americans, Multiracial peoples and those in the Mexican diaspora, this study examines various factors that influences the ethnoracial identity choice of Tejano college students.

Findings revealed that there were several common themes across all the participants, even those who did not identify as Tejano. Geographical origin of parents and family and community influence emerged as a noticeable reason as to why students identified as Tejano. A connection to generations of family in the United States and Mexico also impacted how strongly students identified ethnoracially as Tejano. In addition, experiences of “not being enough” galvanized some students to a stronger Tejano identity. Other themes included the impact of physical appearance, growing up with Spanish in their household, and Tejano representation in media.

Recommendations are targeted to staff and faculty who work with Latin@ students, especially Mexican-Americans in Texas, to provide opportunities to explore and support a more complex ethnoracial identity including connection with their cultural traditions, education on Latin@ history, an examination on the impact of language on identity, and consideration of ethnoracial affinity group work.

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CHAPTER 1: WEAVING A PATH

I was born into a working class family and grew up surrounded by my two parents, a younger sister and a bevy of aunts, uncles and cousins in a small, rural town in South Texas. In Texas, the old adage is that everything is bigger. I think that particularly applies when it comes to Texas history. Most folks know that the state was its own republic before ultimately joining the United States and then soon afterwards seceding to become part of the Confederacy. There is some irony in the fact that the only other state I have lived in, Vermont, was also once a republic. The other sometimes disturbing similarity is their status as border states, albeit on opposite ends of the country. In both these instances, that status has resulted in a unique history that only comes from touching two (or three or four or more) cultures together. As Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) introduced in her work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, places like this are full of contradictions and uncomfortable to live in but ultimately allow for an evolution of consciousness. This place of borderlands, la frontera is my home.

As the first in my family to graduate from college, complete a master's degree and now pursuing a doctorate, my last ten years in Vermont have allowed me to work in a department that has developed exponentially my views on social justice, diversity, and especially identity. My ethnoracial background, my most salient identity as I have moved from across the country, is based on historically changing borders that revolve around the geography, politics, and culture of being born in Texas with a Mexican/Mexican-American identity and ancestry. My experience of growing up in a border state resulted in conflicts that were not only about citizenship or national status, but racial and ethnic ones as well. These conflicts fostered in me, and I am sure for others, contradictions,

struggles and pain around who I was, who I am, and who I will be able to become.

Those are the big questions that I have found myself asking more in Vermont than back in Texas.

When I am asked how I identify in terms of my race and ethnicity, my answer tends to be that I identify as Latin@, Chicano, Mexicano, and Tejano. The term that might be most familiar is Latino/as or in this case Latin@s as a way to refer across the gender spectrum as opposed to the binary. Latin@s became the largest minority population in the country in 2003 (Schmidt, 2003) and in 2010 accounted for over half of the total U.S. population increase (Enis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). In 2050, the Latin@ population will make up nearly a quarter of the country's population (Cresce, Schmidley, & Ramirez, 2004). Over half of the Latin@ population resides in just three states: California, Texas and Florida. California and Texas contain more than half of the Latin@ population that is Mexican in origin. Texas also became a majority-minority state, where over half of the population is minority. Of that minority-majority, over half are Mexican in origin, which then made the Texas population nearly a third of Mexican origin (Enis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011; Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011).

As seen from how I identify, within the Latin@ group are many smaller groups that vary according to ethnicity, skin color, race, nationality and culture. For instance, when I am around other Latin@s, I use Chicano and when I am around Mexican-Americans, I often use Tejano and/or Chicano. I have met students who identify as Puerto Rican, Nuyorican, Puerto Dominican, and a whole host of intersected ethnoracial identities. Given the complexity of the growing field of research around Latin@s as a whole, I believe identity research can also be more specific to the various subgroups

within and how they develop their various ethnoracial identities. While research has been conducted on the identity development of Latin@s at the K-12, college and adult level, little has been mentioned of Tejanos (R.G. Gonzalez, 2010, 2013; Rivas-Drake, 2008, 2011; Torres, 2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007; Torres et al., 2012).

2012 Pilot Study

Prior to the 2012 pilot study, I had identified as Tejano for about four years. Why I identified as Tejano related back to my experience as a “minority” at the University of Vermont. Whether I identified myself as a person of color, Latin@, Chicano, or Mexican-American, I was one of the few of those particular identities. I would sometimes find myself as “the only one.” The times in which I was not “the only” was during social settings that involved majority people of color, in my involvement with Alianza Latina (a student group for Latino students), or during racial affinity groups as part of my job.

As I made intentional efforts to socialize with people of color and particularly other Latin@s, I was fortunate enough to become closer to the graduate students in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program. Several of those graduate students also identified as Latin@s, Chicanos, and/or Mexican-American. In spite of similar experiences at UVM, I found myself feeling as if their experience as a Mexican-American was different from mine in a way that I had a hard a time naming but that still had tangible examples. For instance when it came to food, one of the items I make often is a chalupa. This is flat, deep fried or baked corn tortilla topped with refried beans, lettuce, diced tomato, and cheese. Other Mexican-Americans that I described this to often called it a tostada. Another way that I felt different from my Mexican-American

peers was in my connection to my small hometown, rural upbringing, and exposure to farms, ranches, and dry, desert lands. My peers instead often spoke of living in large cities, an urban and often ethnoracially diverse upbringing, and an exposure to mountains and orchards. After some careful thought, I came to realize that almost all of the Mexican-Americans that I had known at UVM had been born and raised in California. I began to wonder how that upbringing in different geographical locations made our experiences different in a Predominantly White setting. This is when I first started to identify as Tejano. The saliency of this identity was strengthened as I read Gloria Anzaldúa's (1999) *Borderlands/La Frontera* after a 4-day social justice retreat. In the years after that I also came to know two other Mexican-Americans from Texas who shared similar feelings on their experience with other Mexican-Americans from different parts of the United States.

The foundation for my pilot study was based on my time at UVM with the suspicion that there was a unique experience and identity for Tejanos. The intent of the pilot study was to determine how Tejanos in college perceived concepts of race and ethnicity as it applies to them. In addition, I wanted to explore the roles, if any, of geography, education level, immigration status, skin color and other factors that might influence how Tejanos identify. I wanted to explore this with current undergraduate students who were possibly in the process of still forming their ethnoracial identity. My Tejano identity formation was as a young professional who had the opportunity to reflect back on my overall development. College students still in the midst of their ethnoracial identity development offered an exciting and unique opportunity. My conversations had all been with graduate students and professionals.

My pilot study was conducted at Lone Star University (a pseudonym) in the Fall of 2012. Lone Star University (LStU) is a midsized 4-year public university in Texas that had recently become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Of the 28,959 LStU undergraduate students enrolled as of the Fall 2012 academic semester, 8,024 identified as Hispanic, 17,096 as White (non-Hispanic), 1,950 as Black, 568 as Asian/Pacific Islander, 379 as multiracial (non-Hispanic/non-Black), 131 as American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 153 as non-Resident International. Specifically, that means 38% of the undergraduate population is a racial/ethnic minority with nearly 28% of that being Hispanic. Of the 19,935 undergraduate students of the ages of 18-22, just over 28% or 5,633 identified as Hispanic. Of that same 5,633 students all but 21 of them identify as being from Texas and none of them identified as being from the country of Mexico (“Census Day Enrollment –Headcount,” 2012). This institution reflected in many ways, but especially in its Mexican-American population, demographics similar to the state of Texas as a whole.

The methodology I employed for the pilot study was comprised of a questionnaire and online interviews. Students were identified by their multicultural student affairs office and given a questionnaire form. Once they completed the form, it was mailed to me in order to adjust the interview questions. I conducted a 30-45 minute interview with each of the two participants separately. I followed a semi-structured interview protocol and asked questions about where they were from, how they responded when asked about their race ethnicity and nationality, differences between race and ethnicity, and what it meant to be their particular race and/or ethnic identity. I also asked them about symbols, physical attributes, and media related to their race or ethnic identity.

The results of this study provided a few findings that warranted more research. First, the two participants identified geography such as where they were from, the land, home, etc, as important. Secondly, the participants often switched between the use of race and ethnicity, exemplifying that for them the two social constructs were one and the same. When given the opportunity, both of the participants used multiple ethnic and racial identities. Finally, one of the participants confirmed that “[Being Tejano is] a completely different culture, like being Tejano is so different from being a Mexican in California or in New Mexico or in Arizona or even the Cubans in Florida or Puerto Rico or anything like that.” The process of this pilot also allowed me to examine ways in which I could conduct my current research more effectively. I decided that I should conduct a larger and varied literature review. I needed to expand and changed the types of questions I asked. I needed to be more explicit about seeking Tejano-identified college students as opposed to Mexican-Americans born in Texas.

Purpose and Research Questions

The pilot study whetted my interest in this topic as well as a passion to learn more about the development and influence of a Tejanos identity. Thus, my goal for this dissertation study was to understand how college students who are Tejanos, Texans of Mexican descent and one of the largest Latin@ subgroups in the nation, developed their ethnoracial identity given factors that may have included geographic location, educational level, immigration status, exposure to racial and ethnic diversity, skin color, language skills and accent, mass media exposure/influence, and existing social networks. In this study I addressed the following research questions:

- What is a Tejano identity?

- What ecological factors emerge as significant in the ethnoracial identity development of the Tejanos interviewed?
- How do these ecological factors emerge as significant in the ethnoracial identity development of Tejanos?
- As identified by Tejanos in college, what Tejano-sensitive practices might faculty and staff adopt in their work with this particular population?

Tejano

Tejano is a term that has been used to describe the colonial settlers of Texas, most often Spanish and Mexicans (Benavides, 2010; Tijerina, 1998). More recently, the term has also been used to describe the descendants of colonial settlers as well as descendants of migrants to Texas from around the time of the Mexican Revolution. Buitron (2004) explains that the historical identity of Tejano is distinct from other identities in the Southwest United States. Whereas other immigrants had a metaphorical and sometimes literal “break” from their homeland, “Mexicans did not have this same sense of departing time and space” and “issues of citizenship and identity were far more problematic” (p. 26) including subsequent reoccurring waves of Mexican immigrants. As Anglos, especially those from the Southern United States, entered Texas in the 19th century, “they excluded [Tejanos] from political power, segregated their children out of Anglo public schools, and consigned the entire race to the lowest rungs of the Texas economy and society” (p. 35). Racism was used as a “psychological device designed to protect the self-esteem of socially mobile and insecure Anglos in an economically volatile society” (p. 13). This change in access to civil rights created a variety of responses within the Tejano population over time and shaped the Tejano identity. Mexican-Americans in

California associated with left leaning political groups that worked with labor movements, lower social classes, and women but lacked historical connections to major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles. In contrast, Mexican-Americans leaders in Texas, with a strong metropolitan base in San Antonio, identified as predominantly “male, politically moderate, middle-class, based on history, and integrationist” (p. 53). Though the late 19th and early 20th century Tejanos relied on mutual aid societies and appeals to Mexican consulates for civil rights protection. After World War I, middle class Tejanos formed the Order Sons of America (OSA) and similar groups, which were modeled after groups that worked with recent European immigrants. These groups were more aimed at “Americanizing” Mexican immigrants while also presenting Tejanos in a positive light. It wasn’t until after World War II, as Mexican-American soldiers returned from the front as the proportionately largest decorated ethnic group, that “intellectuals and activists assumed that Tejanos were American and that the cause of their backwardness was Anglo oppression, not flaws in Mexican character” (p. 56).

Between the 1950s and today, the defining civil rights movement around Latin@ identity was predominantly about Chicanos. Buitro’s description of Mexican-Americans from California viewed as outsiders makes the Chicano movement that much more palpable. Somewhere in that movement though, and perhaps because of the moderate political origins of Tejanos, the Tejano identity seemed to have been less acknowledged and devalued, even by other Latin@s. For instance, Torres (2003) cited one Latin@ student who described Tejanos as “like you are Mexican, and you’re born and raised in Texas, and you have loyalties to the Mexican people” (p. 540). The student further described Mexicans as from “the ghettos” or “bad parts” of a city (p. 540). Writing with a

historical lens, De Leon (2003) has suggested that Tejanismo incorporates a diverse range of Texas-Mexican's experiences which range across country of origin, rural and urban upbringing, education levels, language proficiencies, and religious beliefs. A connection to a Texas home identity, even after people have left for other parts of the United States, seems to me to be a unique cultural experience (Rodriguez, 2011).

The examination of this cultural group warrants, in my opinion, an ethnographic approach as there would seem to be space to examine and interpret how this culture-sharing group makes meaning about their identities. Keeping with more current ethnographic research, my own identity as a Tejano breaks the paradigm of research that came from what Glesne (2011) describes as having “historical associations with colonialism” (p. 19). In other words, my identity as a Tejano presents some opportunities for interactions that folks of other identities, even other Mexican-Americans, might not be able to engage in or observe. As someone who identifies as Tejano, I am familiar with the day-to-day lives of the group and can immerse myself with the group in order to observe behaviors, language and interactions. In addition, theory and research that has been conducted with Latin@s, Mexicans/Mexican-Americans and other ethnoracial identity groups focused my attention when conducting my ethnography (Creswell, 2013). I believe my perspective and method provided a picture that helped to understand concepts of race and ethnicity amongst one of the largest populations of Latin@s and with information that may be useful to higher education processes, census information, job searches and affirmative hiring processes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A Portrait of Latin@s

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand how college students who identify as Tejanos (Texans of Mexican/Mexican-American descent), develop and come to understand their ethnoracial identity given ecological influences that may have included geographic location, educational level, immigration status, exposure to racial and ethnic diversity, skin color, language skills and accent, mass media exposure/influence, and existing social networks (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1993; Horse, 2012; Renn, 2003; Root, 2003, Wijeyesinghe, 2012).

To understand the subgroup of Tejanos, I will describe a portrait that covers the larger Latin@ ethnoracial spectrum. As of 2010, Latin@s in the United States made up 16.3% of the population, having grown by 43% in just ten years and accounted for more than half of the total growth of the United States population. No less than 20 different geographical origins constitute the Latin@ population including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Salvadoran, Venezuelan, and Paraguayan. In addition, of the over 50 million people who identified as Hispanic or Latin@, just over half identified as white, another 18+ million identified as “some other race” and the third largest group identified as two or more races (Enis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). In speaking of Texan land, Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) iterated that it was “Mexican once, was Indian always and is” (p. 25). Similarly in my opinion, Latin@s, the oldest multiethnoracial group in the Americas, were Indigenous once and presently vary greatly in their ethnoracial identity. In the future, this ethnoracial group may be much more diverse (Laversuch, 2007; Pimental & Balzhiser, 2012; Solorzano, 2010; Vaquera & Kao, 2006). As of 2010, the

largest segment of Latin@s are people who are of Mexican origin and make up 63% of the Latin@ population. In combination with two other states, the Texas population contains half of the Latino population. The Texas population itself is itself nearly a third of Mexican origin (Enis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011; Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011).

Ethnoracial Identity Development Models

Gallegos and Ferdman (2012) presented an ethnoracial identity model that took into consideration the complexity of Latin@s and looks beyond simple categorizations. These authors took into consideration the intersection of other social identities and acknowledged “the adaptive functions of various Latina and Latino identity orientations...as fluid, situational, and affected by a wide range of variables” (p. 55). To this end, Gallegos and Ferdman postulated six identity orientations which include White-Identified, Undifferentiated/Denial, Latino as Other, Subgroup Identified, Latino Identified, and Latino Integrated. These orientations were proposed without rank, each with “value...at meeting particular *environmental demands*” (p. 55) [emphasis added].

Root (2003) in her *Ecological Framework for Understanding Racial Identity* also names various identities that are adaptive based on a number of different factors. This framework “provides an affirmation of the real *environments* that shape multiracial identity” (p. 39) [emphasis added]. Similar to Gallegos and Ferdman, Root took into account environmental variables in her definition of identity that are different given their multiracial context and include: hypodescent, Monoracial fit/self-assignment, blended identity, Bi- or multiracial, and White with symbolic identity. I noticed that Root’s model, given the choice of identity types, presents the possibility of using the lens of multiracial developmental models to also view Latin@ identity development. In

addition, Root names the specific environmental factors that impact racial identity development such as geography, generation, sexual orientation, and family functioning.

Using the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1993), Renn worked on understanding identities of multiracial students by taking into account a variety of other environmental factors. These factors operated in an ecological model of different nested systems. To begin with, Microsystems, which include face-to-face settings with students, help form Mesosystems, which occur when two or more of the microsystems interact. Exosystems are settings in which individuals are not explicitly included but yet may influence their developmental possibilities, such as faculty decisions on curriculum, policy, or family workplace decisions. Macrosystems encompass and are influenced by the multiple cross interactions of all previously mentioned systems and are “dependent on time, space and culture” (Renn, 2003, p. 390). For example, decisions made dozens of years ago about allocation of funds based on Census information about race manifest locally only now around school resources, parent’s influence on racial identity, and residential zoning.

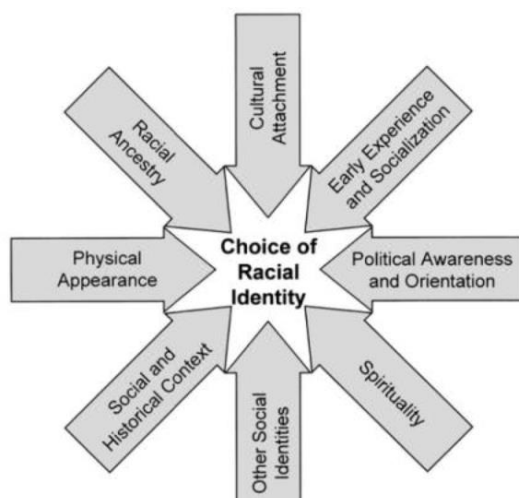


Figure 1. Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (Wijeyesinghe, 2012)

Roots’ and Renn’s models served as predecessors for the *Intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity* as developed by Wijeyesinghe. Wijeyesinghe (2012) who also took into consideration a number of factors that influence the social identities of race and ethnicity, and the way these same factors may also influence other social factors. According

to her, “identity is a sense of self that evolves and changes, based on the interaction and

changing level of salience of numerous factors” (p. 86). These factors in Wijeyesinghe’s original model (The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity, see Figure 1) included racial ancestry, early experiences and socialization, cultural attachment, physical appearance, social and historical context, political awareness and orientations, spirituality, and other social identities. The most recent iteration of her model, the Intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity, also included the factors of geographical/regional environment, situation differences, global influences, and generation. Finally, Wijeyesinghe framed racial and ethnic identity as *choice* and the ability to have a choice thus creating an *empowering effect* on individuals.

One other model that is important to consider is that of *Native American Consciousness* as developed by Horse (2012). Horse’s narrative approach to an Indian Identity model included four orientations that contributed to Native American consciousness. These orientations included an orientation to race consciousness and thinking about the concept of race as it applies historically and now; an orientation towards political consciousness including the legal status of Tribes as nations; an orientation towards linguistic consciousness where native language is “perhaps *the most potent aspect of one’s tribal identity*” (p. 114); and an orientation towards cultural consciousness, such as the reclaiming of tribe-specific names and maintaining cultural practices.

With those models in mind, or as frameworks for understanding, what does it mean to be of Mexican origin in a seemingly complicated diaspora that exists within the Latin@ identity? Rinderlee (2005) for example, examined that diaspora through five self-identified groups of Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano/a, Hispanic and Latin@. The

foundation for this diaspora is based on a “combination of alienation, hybridity, displacement, and yearning that ...form a collective identity defined largely by the relationship between homeland and hostland” (p. 300) i.e., Mexico and the United States. Someone who is Mexican was born in Mexico and is a national of that country despite their current location. Further acknowledgment of the complication of this identity is confirmed by Anzaldúa (1999) who says “by *mexicanos* we do not mean citizens of Mexico; we do not mean a national identity but a racial one” (p.84). Rinderlee (2005) defined Mexican Americans “as a U.S. American of Mexican descent, born and living in the United States” (p.303) acknowledging certain identifications with dominant cultural values. Rinderlee defined Chicanos/as as people of Mexican descent born and living in the U.S. who possess “a political consciousness of himself or herself as a member of a historically and structurally oppressed group” (p. 304). In that context, the “o/a” ending and an alternate spelling of Chicano with an X (Xicano/a) emphasized binary gender inclusivity and indigenous roots. Hispanic, which has its roots in the U.S. Federal government definitions, was meant to denote a person in the U.S “with origins or ancestry from Spanish-speaking countries” (p. 305). This categorization was regardless of race and can present potential problems by obscuring indigenous languages and identities. Finally, Rinderlee defined Latin@s as persons in the U.S. with origins or descent that are Latin American regardless of race, language, or culture. This definition takes into consideration the policies of the U.S. towards Latin America, potentially politicizing the identity.

Taking into account the varied population, Ojeda, Navarro, Meza, and Arbona (2012) discussed in a paper titled “Too Latino and Not Latino Enough,” the various

stressors Latin@s encounter as college students related to perceived ethnic discrimination, stereotype confirmation concerns, and pressures to ethnic group conformity. Their findings indicated that “Latino college students’ life satisfaction was negatively associated to pressures from their ethnic group to behave in ways that are deemed appropriate for Latinos and from the belief of being perceived as confirming a Latino stereotype” (p. 22). In other words, as the title of their piece suggests, students were either too Latin@ or not Latin@ enough. Similarly, Gonzalez (2009) discussed the impact of negative and positive ethnoracial encounters with Mexican-American high school students. Students who encountered positive experiences felt more committed to their ethnoracial identity when they participated in events that they perceived as dispelling stereotypes, were given the opportunity to express the significance of their ethnicity, and used Spanish as a sign of competence.

In bringing these concepts together and wanting to create my own concept map of how I understood all of these models and theories interacting, I started off with the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity. I selected Wijeyesinghe’s (2012) Intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity (IMMI) because the IMMI is very complex and uses a cluster of stars formed into a galaxy as its primary image. However, the image does not allow for a clear picture of an individual’s identity choice and the various factors that influence their decision making process. I also started off with the Ecological model provided by Renn (2003). Renn’s model, however, proved to be very rigid from a visual standpoint, creating clear boundaries between the systems and not allowing for any specific influence of ecological factors. Finally, the factors in my concept map have been expanded to include contexts from Gallegos and Ferdman (2012), Wijeyesinghe (2012), Root (2003),

Table 1. Factors in ethnoracial identity development models

Five Influences on Indian Consciousness; Eras of Change in Indian Consciousness (Horse, 2012)	Developmental Ecology Lens (Renn, 2003)	Ecological Framework for Understanding Multiracial Identity Development (Root, 2003)	Factor Model of Multiracial Identity Development; The Intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity (Wijeyesinghe, 2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native language and culture • Validity of genealogical heritage • Philosophy/Worldview that derives from Indian ways • One's own idea of self as an India person • Official recognition as member of Indian tribe by government of that tribe • Race consciousness • Political Consciousness • Linguistic consciousness • Cultural consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family background and parent's heritage • Degree of cultural knowledge • Prior experience with members of own and other cultural groups • Physical appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family socialization • Geography • Generation • Sexual orientation • Gender • Class • Family functioning • Family socialization • Traits and attitudes • Community socialization • Physical appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnoracial ancestry • Physical appearance • Skin color and tone • Hair color and texture • Eye color and shape • Facial shape and size • Body structure • Social and historical context • Spirituality • Political awareness and orientation • Early experience & socialization • Cultural attachment • Geographic/Regional environment • Situational differences • Global influences and generation • Other social identities

Renn (2003), and Horse (2012). These factors included can also been seen in

Table 1. In my concept map (Figure 2), the lines between each of the systems are less defined, allowing for fluid interactions between systems and for a greater sense of influence among each of the systems. In addition, factors of the identity models from Horse (2012), Renn (2003), Root (2003), and Wijeyesinghe (2012) intersect all of the systems, as their influence traverses short-time interactions all the way up to historical contexts. For instance, wearing a hoodie, the factor of physical appearance, might be acceptable in the microsystem of interacting with friends and going to classes. If one of

the exosystems were to create a dress code, perhaps banning hoodies at work, wearing one in that situation creates tension, drama, and the possibility of repercussions as an employee.

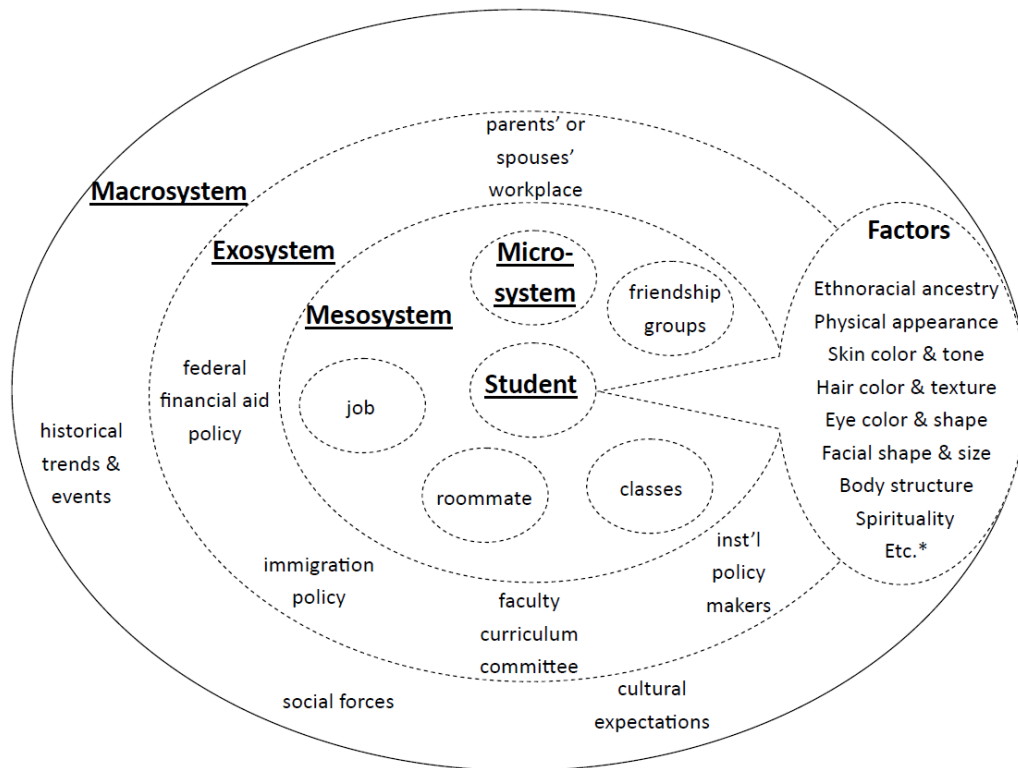


Figure 2. Concept Map of Ethnoracial Identity Development and Ecological Factors

The second concept map (Figure 3) incorporates Gallegos and Ferdman (2012), Root (2003), and Rinderlee (2005). This concept map shows the diaspora of ethnoracial identities that someone who could be Tejano might identify as: Chicano, Mexican-American, Hispanic, Latin@, and/or Mexicano, Multiple ethnoracial (meaning more than once ethnoracial identity), Extraethnoracial (“opting out” of an ethnoracial identity), White identified, and/or Tejano. Similar to the concept map of Ethnoracial Identity

Development and Ecological Factors, the lines between each of these identities allow for interactions and influence among them.

A review of these various models reveals complexity in the various ways we think about one specific ethnoracial identity not to mention race and ethnicity as a whole. In order to get a grasp of the factors that impact the ethnoracial identity of a Tejano, various

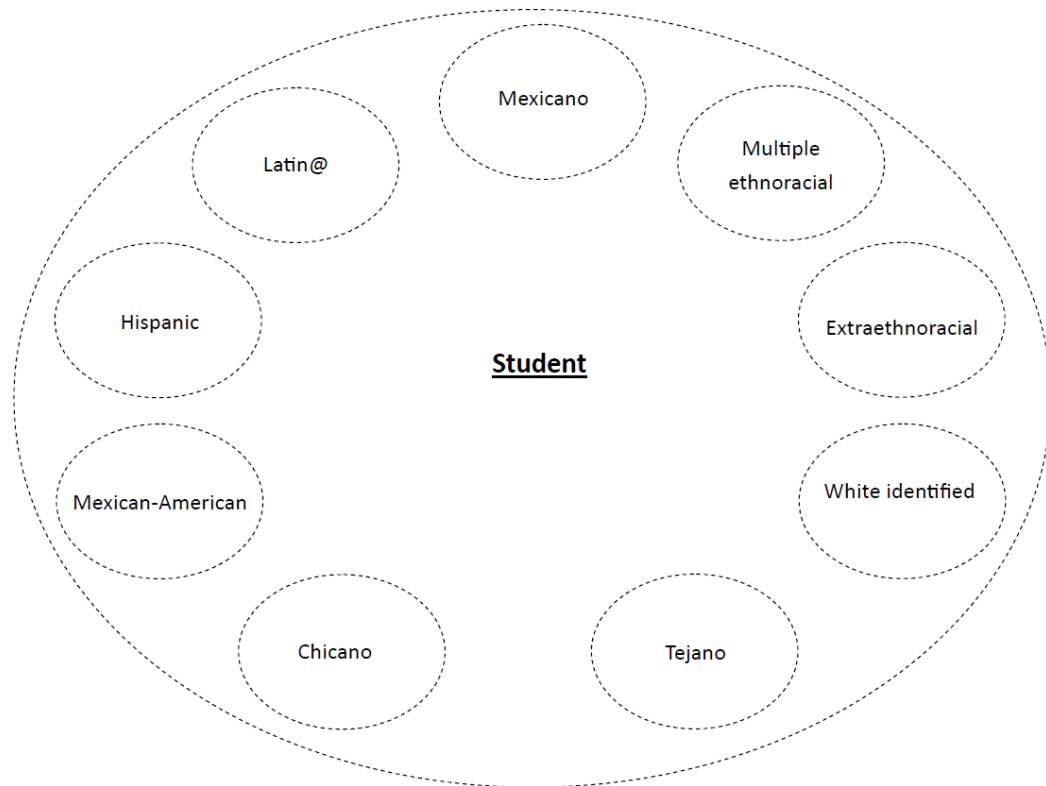


Figure 3. Concept Map of Tejano Ethnoracial Identity Choices

other ethnoracial models were needed that acknowledged that complexity. The ethnoracial identity of being Tejano has the potential to mirror the experiences of Latin@s, Hispanics, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans, and multiracial people. The complexity presented here on paper was done in order to understand all the different moving and interacting parts. From my own experience, it is

not often that I have to take the time to acknowledge all the differentiating parts of my ethnoracial identity. When I do, I'm very glad to have reviewed and presented these models.

CHAPTER 3: A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

My goal for this study was to understand how current Tejano college students developed their ethnoracial identity and how a variety of ecological factors may have influenced that development. The questions I am seeking to specifically answer include:

- What is a Tejano identity?
- What ecological factors emerge as significant in the ethnoracial identity development of Tejanos?
- How do these ecological factors emerge as significant in the ethnoracial identity development of Tejanos?
- As identified by Tejanos in college, what Tejano-sensitive practices might faculty and staff adopt in their work with this particular population?

Methods

To explore these questions, I interviewed eight college students who were born in Texas and identified as Tejano, having Mexican or Mexican-American descent, specifically from at least one parent. My original intention was that all these students would be “typical” college age (18-22 years old) but I found that I had to make adjustments as I sought participants. I will explain why I made those changes after I talk about my initial questionnaire. As I have stated before, the methodological approach that was most appropriate for my research was an ethnographic study, given the possible culture of Tejano students and my goal to observe how they developed and understood their ethnoracial identity. This method provides a picture that helped me to understand concepts of race and ethnicity amongst one of the largest populations of Latin@s in the

United States. I piloted a similar study before, which guided my approach to this more extensive undertaking.

My reason for selecting college age students, besides my own interest in the population, was that the relatively new independence of students at that age frequently leads them to examine their identities at this time in their lives. In addition, while research has been carried out on the experience of Latin@s in K-12, Higher Education, and as adults, I could not find anything in my research specific to Tejanos (R.G. Gonzalez, 2010, 2013; Rivas-Drake, 2008, 2011; Torres, 2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007; Torres et al., 2012). Higher education is also the setting where, in writing about her Biracial identity, Hyman (2010) said “It was not until college that I truly began to develop my Biracial identity and created a hybrid Multiracial reference point *apart from family and friends*” (p. 133, italics added). This, in combination with support from a student group at her undergraduate institution, allowed her to “land on [her] two Biracial feet” (p. 133). Waters (1990) also described similar findings with White students she interviewed saying that “it was not [only] military service that brought them into contact with different kinds of people, but the experience of going away to college” (p. 45). Waters also described that some her participants met others for the first time who were “more” ethnic than their own families. Finally, Waters indicated that college students, when getting to know each other in residence halls and dormitories, would converse “comparing ethnicities” (p. 45).

The setting for this study was again conducted at Lone Star University (LStU) during the Spring 2014 semester. In the two year since my pilot study, LStU had increased to 33,054 students. Of those undergraduate students, 9,983 identified as

Hispanic, 17,780 as White (non-Hispanic), 2,656 as Black, 719 as Asian/Pacific Islander, 634 as multiracial (non-Hispanic/non-Black), 92 as American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 405 as non-Resident International. Just over 41% of the student population was a racial/ethnic minority with just over 30% of that being Hispanic. Of the 23,356 undergraduate less than 25 years old, just over 32% or 7,564 identified as Hispanic. Of that same 5,633 students all but 78 of them identify as being from Texas and only *one* of them identified as being from the country of Mexico (“Lone Star University Data,” 2014). The institution continued to reflect in many ways, but especially in its Mexican-American population, demographics similar to the state of Texas as a whole.

I accessed these students from specific references by colleagues in the field of higher education at LStU, specifically from the offices of Multicultural Student Affairs, Residential Life, and the Honors Program [See Instruction Letter, Appendix A]. The Honors Program, because of its structure, reaches out to faculty across the campus. I asked that the offices that identified students to hand out letters of consent for participation in the study [See Informed Consent-SAMPLE, Appendix B]. I did not hear from this office the name of any students who refused to participate. In order to restrict the range of potential students, I originally limited my population to students who met the following criteria:

- An undergraduate between the ages of 18-22,
- Identified as having at least one parent of Mexican and/or Mexican-American descent,
- Born in Texas, and
- Identify as Tejano.

Students initially met the criteria of Tejano if they identified as so on the questionnaire but as I reviewed my samples I also identified participants as Tejano. My identification of participants as Tejano was that they were of Mexican or Mexican-American descent and born in Texas. Confidentiality was ensured through clean data collection, which included separating names and identifying information from data. My computer is password protected and encrypted and I added another level of protection in the folder that I use to keep my data. Any non-electronic documents were sealed in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Participants were asked a preferred pseudonym upon their agreement to participate.

Data Collection

Three types of data were collected: a questionnaire, a 45-60 minute in person interview, and a group interview with the participants. The questionnaire took approximately 10-15 minutes and included questions that collected demographic data and acted as preparation for the interview [See Questionnaire, Appendix C]. The responses to the questions also helped reshape the semi-structured interview questions. Based on the findings of Terry and Winston (2010), these questions allowed for self-selection across multiple identities in the Latin@ diaspora and explored parental ethnoracial identity and educational background. Twelve students completed the questionnaire before I arrived at the LStU campus in mid-February, 2014 and another five completed it on my arrival. Those additional five students completed the questionnaire after working with some staff to identify students as well as using students who had agreed to interview at that point to reach out to their peers. During my time on campus at LStU I was made aware of two students who were willing to participate in the questionnaire but did not meet the age

guidelines I had originally intended. One student, Albert, was a graduate student and 27 years old. His background as a graduate student and first generation U.S. citizen of Mexican decent I thought would provide a unique perspective. In addition, Albert worked on issues related to the LStU's status as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Chica, while an undergraduate, was 57 years old and not born in Texas. Her parents were from the state and eventually moved back when she was still a child. She has not left since. While Chica presented two conditions that did not meet the original criteria, she also had done research on her ancestry, tracing her roots to some of the original Spanish settlers of Texas. She was Tejana. In addition, she presented a perspective about race and ethnicity that spanned a time period beyond what most college students knew about or had personally experienced.

Nine students indicated they would be willing to participate in an individual and group interview. I contacted eight of them via phone. The interview questions took about 45-60 minutes and were done in person. I asked students for their preference of an interview setting that was quiet and comfortable for them. In several cases I arranged a secured office on campus. The sessions were recorded electronically and transcribed later by a paid confidential professional transcriber. I examined the transcripts and recordings of the interviews before coding to ensure all answers had been understood properly. I did this because some of the respondents' answers were in Spanish, Spanglish, or slang. In one case, a participant played several songs for me, which was later identified using the iPhone app Shazam and through sharing segments of the song with a colleague familiar with Tejano and Latin music. Questions were semiformal and adjusted according to their questionnaire responses and to previous questions. I based

some of my interview questions on work completed by Waters (1990) and Macias (2006). I divided the interviews into 8 sections: personal information, family history, geography, ethnic context, language, cultural practices, ethnic identity, and Tejanos [See Interview Questions, Appendix D]. I gave specific attention to adding sections that talked about geography and language. Arreola (2002) speaks to the importance of geography in defining Tejano culture. For instance, Arreola identifies 32 counties in Texas with half or more of the population of Mexican descent. Twenty-five of these counties are located in the South Texas region that extends from San Antonio to the Rio Grande (p. 44). Bejarano (2007) in her work with Chicano and Mexican students saw the importance of geography and the borderland area. The “Southwest represents a historical template of strong ties to the culture and land deriving from multiple generations of Mexican ancestors residing in the physical space. This is a ‘third space’ that represents the geographical proximity to home, yet they are told that home is a dreadful place that produces immigrants and drugs” (p. 37). The participants in this study, who had lived in Texas most of their lives, were likely to feel the experience and characteristics of the borderland than, for example, Mexican-Americans who grew up in states that were very distant from the U.S./Mexico border. Language is one of the strongest indicators of connection to an ethnic identity. Waters (1990), in her research with White Americans, saw that language connected people not only to their larger community or ethnic group but was used “as a secret language...that was only used with family” (p. 116-117). On the other end of the spectrum, Macias (2006) recognized the power of language and its use in the media “to help create a ‘pan-ethnic’ Latino ethnicity” (p. 40). Beginning to

think about how language and geography shape Tejano identity emerged as something necessary to analyze given the importance in other similar research.

Data Analysis

After I completed each interview, I wrote memos to myself based on observations from the interview. I listened to interviews at least once to ensure proper transcription and determine if there were codes or themes that emerged that I had not considered in my analysis. I then coded the interview data based on a priori codes, i.e., the systems and factors as defined by my conceptual map, as well as any new themes that I noticed during that systemizing process. A priori codes, based on the identity development theories that have been discussed earlier, helped to focus my attention on what has been a relatively unexplored cultural group in the context of ethnoracial identity and higher education. After I coded my data, as a way to establish trustworthiness, a peer debriefer reviewed an uncoded transcription and used my codes to see how much agreement there would be between our coding. There was high agreement between our coding. However, because I coded each individual sentence and the debriefer coded phrases, there was a significant difference between the number of codes between us and using percentages seemed impractical. I also searched for any other themes and then shared all the themes with the participants in the focus group both to see if they have more to say about those issues and to serve as a member checking tool. Participants expressed any agreement or disagreement with my final interpretations. I used the themes to form the questions for my last set of data collection which came in the form of a group interview with participants.

My Subjective Lens

My identity as a Tejano in higher education is essential to this research. It was my initial identity journey that led me to want to conduct this study. I grew up in a working class, Mexican-American home in a small rural, farming community. My hometown was also my mother's hometown so I was surrounded by many of her family members who had never left to live anywhere else. Her mom only spoke Spanish and I spent much time there along with many of my similar aged cousins. Spanish surrounded us but we used English with each other. I spent summers growing up with my dad's mother. His hometown was similar but focused more on ranching and drilling for oil. It was close to a border check point and by that virtue felt more Mexican to me. His mom spoke English and Spanish but it was very common for her to switch between the two along with surrounding neighbors. I learnt early on to work hard and that I was going to do better than my parents or grandparents did. My mom enrolled me in honors classes in junior high and from there I seemed to be on track to be able to attend college.

Growing up I cannot recall having doubts about who I was ethnoracially. I was certain that I was Hispanic and Mexican-American and I knew for sure that I wasn't Mexican. I felt at times that I did better in my classes because I knew "how to speak well" which to me meant that I did not have an accent. I never really questioned skin color as there was a great range of skin color shades in my family and the Mexican-American community. I can recall three families/people who were not Mexican-American or White who went to my K-12 system. One of those people was Filipina who blended in because of her Spanish last name and physical features. The town was divided by class and race in ways that were not ever mentioned explicitly. The Westside of town where I grew up was majority Mexican-American and working class or poor. The

Eastside of town was probably still majority Mexican-American but all the White people were more concentrated there around the high school.

Even as I entered college I did not think about my ethnoracial identity. It was not until my senior year of college that I moved away from using Hispanic because I knew it had something to do with Spanish and by then I had barely passed my Spanish classes. I started using Chicano as my ethnoracial identity description around that point because it had something to do with politics and I was a Political Science major. When I entered graduate school, I noticed that there was one other Hispanic male (a Puerto Rican) and no Latinas. My classes and assistantship introduced me to the term Latino but I did not feel that it applied to me. At the end of graduate school and as I entered my job search process I decided that it would be beneficial to me to use Tomás instead of Tommy in my résumés and applications. First, it would appeal to employers looking for a more diverse pool of candidates. More importantly for me though, as I was looking in the Northeast for a job, I did not expect there to be many Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicano people. My name would then be my connection to home, to my growing Latino identity.

I found myself at a conference in Philadelphia for job placement and became connected with a Latino network of professionals at the conference. One of the socials took us to the barrio of Philly, which was predominantly Puerto Rican, Dominican, and a sprinkling of a variety of other Latino identities from Central and South America. At a community center we met to remember and pay tribute to Pedro Pietri, a Nuyorican poet who has passed away a few weeks before. While there were a variety of poets who performed through the night and from around the country, it was not until the videotaped performance of the recently-deceased Pedro came onto a makeshift screen that I finally

identified as Latino. Pedro's (1993) performance of "El Spanglish National Anthem" was filled with heartache, hope, sadness, and anger. The experience was interactive, asking the audience, to respond back. What struck me though was not the situations in the poem that necessarily played out but the way they were conveyed, in a mixture of English, Spanish, Spanglish, and phonetically spelled Spanish, with words being read and sung at the same time. It was there, nearly 2,500 miles from home, I felt part of the Latino community for the first time.

Being Tejano, as well as Latin@ and Chicano, is important to me. That I discover how important that is in one of the least Latin@ places that I can think of and on the other side of the country from Texas makes me think I missed something growing up. I missed something in my development or maybe something was even denied to me. I have seen Latin@ students more self-assured when their ethnoracial identity is explored and talked about, even though that identity can be a bit messy. I hope that in doing this research, higher education staff and faculty will have an easier time talking about a Tejano ethnoracial identity. As a result, students will be empowered as well.

Trustworthiness

I shared my initial themes and findings in April 2014 with five of the original eight participants. Two of the participants were unable to meet at the multiple times that I had proposed. I was unable to reach the third participant by phone on multiple occasions. After I shared my initial findings, I then developed a series of semi-structured questions for the focus group and recorded the session [See Group Interview, Appendix E]. As with the individual interviews, I followed up the group interview with a memo of my observations, transcribing the group conversation and coding the focus group data. I

compared the data found in the preliminary questionnaire, the individual interviews and the group interviews to look for themes amongst all three sets.

Ethical Issues

I had concerns about my study based on my experience around conversations with race and ethnicity. Either one-or-one or in group settings, even when people are of the same race alike group, I have seen crying, shouting, people leaving in anger, and in general hurt feelings. My experience as a practitioner about these conversations has taught me to listen, acknowledge, and validate people's experiences but from there offer different perspectives that push and challenge what they may have shared. As a researcher, I cannot obviously do that. Instead, as Rose (1990) suggested, my role was to really ask myself, "What am I doing here?" My roles as a researcher was to make sure I was not an exploiter, a reformer, an advocate, or a friend (Glesne, 2011). Even given my intent to disassociate myself from impacting the participants, my questions with them were still likely to affect their perspective on identity.

At every step in the process, I needed to be intentional about creating the most space for self-identification and care. For instance, data I received on the questionnaire asked for multiple ways that the participant ethn racially identified instead of just selecting one. This was done because of multiple experiences where I have seen others forced to select only one ethn racial identity.

The other guide that shaped my process was the tenants of restorative practices. Restorative practices is an approach to building and repairing community if harm has been done to it. One of the basic tenets states that "human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior

when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them" (Wachtel, 2005). While my intent in this research was not to create explicit change with the participants, the tenants of restorative practices addresses my role as an authoritative figure perceived or otherwise. My authority has the potential to present itself though my role as a university administrator, as a masculine presenting man, as someone working on their doctorate, or as someone who was older than most of the participants. My goal was to be restorative during this process and to collaborate *with* the participants as often as possible. This included working with their schedules, and hopefully building a sense of community that led to rich data and better research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The main purpose of this chapter is to share the stories of the eight participants who disclosed their stories as Tejanos and Texans of Mexican descent. These stories explore the context in which their ethnoracial identity developed. As students named their ethnoracial identities, several shared themes surfaced across their respective narratives. I begin by sharing their individual stories. Following the eight narratives, I share the findings of the themes across the interviews, the result of the axial coding process I conducted across the interviews.

Introduction to Narratives

My first academic love is the visual arts, specifically graphic narratives. Graphic narratives, usually known as comics and graphic novels, use the juxtaposition of images and words to tell stories. Stories are very important to me so I tried to make sure that each participant's story was represented well. They are not complete portraits but rather well done sketches, with very intentional details on where they grew up, what that setting looked like, their reason for attending Lone Star University, and how they identify ethnoracially. In addition I tried to incorporate imagery and descriptors for what they looked like and how they behaved during our interactions. I acknowledge that these sketches are subjective but I hope that it manages nonetheless to be respectful of who they are.

I focused on the narrative of each participant by going through each individual interview one at a time. I listened to each interview in its entirety and read through each interview transcript to reacquaint myself with their stories. I analyzed and coded each individual interview and allowed themes to emerge for each individual participant. I also

looked for themes across the participants, comparing their responses and coding across sections of questions and individual questions. These themes served as a basis for their narratives but only touch briefly on the background and experiences as Tejanos and Texans of Mexican descent.

I am presenting the narratives of the participants in two categories that I observed in my time with them and through the course of my analysis. The first five narratives are of those participants who identified as Tejano and for whom the identity was salient. Salience with one's Tejano identity referred "to the prominence or importance attached to a ...social identity" specifically an ethnoracial identity (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 40). Ethier and Deaux (as cited in Jones & Smith, 2013, p. 41) suggested that multiple scenarios "might predict the influence of saliency on social identity." In other words, these scenarios present different contexts in which the saliency of a Tejano identity, or any other social identity for that matter, might be predicted. Those scenarios include: 1) those people who have a high level of salient identity regardless of context, 2) those people whose social identity is in high contrast with their context, such as a man as a nursing major or a woman working in the STEM field, and 3) those people who experience a contrast between past background and current context, such as a student growing up in an ethn racially diverse neighborhood and then going to a predominantly white university (Jones & Abes, 2013). The second group of participants are those for whom their Tejano identity was not significantly salient. For these participants their Tejano identity was on the bottom of their list of ethnoracial identities or they were unsure if they identified as Tejano at all.

Salient Tejano Identity

Anastasia is a 19-year old, first-year woman. She was raised in a small city of just over 19,000 people outside of Dallas, Texas. She was a member of the Latina Unidas, a student organization dedicated to empowering young Hispanic women. Her dad is Belgian/Irish and born in Maryland and her mother, who is Hispanic, was born in Washington. They both completed their Masters' degrees. While her parents divorced when she was younger, she has two younger siblings and is close with her stepdad's parents (Meme and Papa). Papa migrated from Mexico, as did her grandparents on her mother's side. Anastasia talked about growing up with different parts of her family based on race and appearance.

“I think I always kind of grew up more of a white culture. Even my mom, my mom's side, even more, they're like coconuts you could say. Dark on the outside, white on the inside. It wasn't very, I really didn't get much into the Hispanic culture until I was kind of older with my step-dad. His family is the typical Mexican family and whatever, speaking Spanish, whatever, so that's kind of like when I mostly got into it. Even though I don't look like it, like when I was a baby, when I was first born, I was really dark and then when I was like four or five I was super white ...[my white skin color] just kind of, like, all set.”

Anastasia described her home as a small, quiet town where people would ride their horses to Whataburger, a Texas-based hamburger fast food chain. Anastasia described the Mexican/Mexican-American population as around 20% of the town. Identifying as multiracial, Anastasia's journey from her hometown to Lone Star University has brought her to a place that she describes as “the most brown people I've ever seen in my life” and “amazing.” She is light skinned with dark, full, wavy hair and full, dark brown eyes.

Being Tejano is important to her, describing her culture as being denied to her when she was younger. She is now “trying to catch up to everybody else.” While she has travelled, she has never lived outside of Texas for an extended period of time. Anastasia, who is studying nursing, fell in love with the beauty of the campus. She discovered that one of her teachers had also attended Lone Star University. She wanted something different from her school where most people were going to University of Texas-Austin or Texas A&M-College Station.

Anastasia is warm, seems happy, and smiles often with an expressive face. She is dressed fashionably but comfortably. Anastasia makes noises of “hmmms” and “umms” as she thinks, her eyes often looking up or down for answers. She speaks fast and carries an accent that is slightly East Texan and Spanish.

Angelica is an 18-year old, female sophomore born in San Marcos, Texas, a midsized city of 54,000 people. She attended another university before transferring to Lone Star University where she is studying social work. Her father, originally from San Marcos, completed high school while her mother, originally from Brownsville, Texas, completed middle school. Brownsville is a city of just over 180,000 people and the southernmost city in the state on the Texas/Mexico border. Angelica’s parents were divorced when she was young and spent time growing up in different parts of Texas, especially San Antonio. Angelica also has a twin sister, a younger brother, a half-sister and other step-siblings. Angelica’s grandparents on her mom’s side are originally from Mexico. Angelica considers where she grew up to be suburban with a majority of the population of Mexican ancestry.

Angelica transferred to Lone Star University to be closer to her family. On top of her social work major, Angelica is the president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) on-campus and involved with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). Angelica considered herself Hispanic growing up but more recently started to use Latina/o. She uses both terms interchangeably. She also identifies as Tejano.

“That’s something you take pride in. You’re from Texas and you’re like Mexican/American descent. That’s important to me, that’s a part of who you are.”

Angelica dresses comfortably in a t-shirt and jeans. She has a smile that turns into a smirk with an occasional snorting laugh. I viewed her as soft spoken at first but realized that she was taking time to warm up to the questions. Her hair is dark, curly and hugs close to her jawline; her skin tone is chestnut and beige.

Chica is a 57 year-old college female senior born in Illinois but raised in a small town of just over 3,000 people in south Texas and about 30 minutes driving distance from the U.S./Mexican border. Her mother and father did not complete their education past second and third grade respectively. She is one of 12 siblings, seven of whom completed high school. Chica has been a college student since 1976 at a total of five schools in Texas before landing at Lone Star University. She is attending Lone Star University because it was easy for her to commute and she majored in history with a minor in English. Chica traced her family history to the De La Garza Falcon Tejano colonizers that came from Mexico in the 1600s and 1700s. Most of her ancestors were born in the lower Rio Grande Valley, predominantly from Rio Grande City. Chica’s father and mother were

born in Edinburg and Edcouch, Texas, respectively. Chica lived in with her parents until she was married. Chica's son, like her father, is a truck driver. Chica stressed the importance of family and religion, as well as the different sides of her family: her father's side ("the original Tejanos, the Spaniards, the unmixed blood") and her mother's side ("mixed blood, Spanish with Indian").

Chica spent several years in suburban Illinois where she felt she was the only family of Mexican ancestry that she knew. When her family eventually moved to rural Texas in her childhood, the population differences were opposite and most families were of Mexican origin. Growing up was marked by an education system that segregated her based on her racial identity into a migrant school. Besides being involved with the Honors College, Chica is involved with the International English Honors Society, the Veterans Association and the Volunteer Association.

While Chica has been mistaken for other racial identities, she identifies strongly as Mexican-American. Being Tejano is very important to her, especially knowing the length of time her ancestors have been in the state. She said that being Tejana:

"... gave me a wonderful sense of self because it made me feel like I wasn't somebody who was here because I had invaded but I was somebody here who was here because my parents had been here for a very long time, long before anybody who felt that I shouldn't be here was...I kind of felt like, if my parents had taken the time to educate our family to let us know that we came from this long line of Tejanos, that when we were made to feel like we did not belong, that we could have made a stand and we could have said, we do belong because we've been here for a long time, way longer than you have and it would have given us a much

higher self-worth that my family didn't have growing up and to this day, we still deal with it.”

Chica wears a simple, dark head covering or cap around her gray hair. Her skin tone is ashen and khaki in color. Her dress was a long skirt and shirt that covers midway down her forearms. Chica has a slight Spanish accent at times. She speaks with purpose and is careful in her word choice, almost appearing profound. Her face is calm, matching the overall tone in her voice.

John is 19-year old male junior born and raised in a town of about 8,000 people in the “Big Bend National Park” region of West Texas. He has three younger siblings, which includes two sisters and one brother. John’s mother completed college while his father completed high school. Both of his parents identify as Mexican. Before coming to Lone Star University he was at another Texas university but transferred for his specific major of Exercise and Sports Science with a concentration in Physical Therapy. John’s brother also goes to LStU.

John’s grandmother on his father’s side migrated from Mexico. John was unsure about his mother’s side of the family as she is not connected with him anymore. John was raised primarily by his stepmother. John considers where he grew up to be rural. According to John, about 98% of the town was of Mexican ancestry with a handful of Asian and Black people. John grew up to consider himself Hispanic and Mexican.

“I would say Hispanic because of the fact that that was a term I heard often. There’d be like between the border of Hispanic and Mexican, ‘cuz I knew all on like my dad’s side, Grandpa, Grandma... but I don’t know anything about my mom’s side

so it would be more heavily weighed as Hispanic just because I didn't know the other half. And then other times I would think Mexican also because of the fact of my dad's side. It was a teeter board between those two."

John considers being Tejano to be important, saying "I have no shame or whatever saying what I am because it's what I am. I'm proud of it." He thought about his race and Tejano identity at a young age, remembering an experience in church.

"Probably around seven... you kind of start realizing, oh, I'm kind of different. And you hear your parish talking about it, like they describe to you, this is your ethnicity, this is your race and as you're older, okay, I'm this, I identify as this, I am this. It's like when you're four or five, you don't think nothing of it. Kids really don't because they tend to classify people, whether it be by color or whatever. They're like oh, it's a friend. Let's play with them. As you get older, you go okay, he's this, I'm this. You can differentiate everything and you can tell what you are and from there you can find out more about yourself and your culture."

John came from a gym class and was wearing a short sleeved shirt and jeans. John is about 5'7" with a slim, semi-athletic build. He speaks evenly and clearly. His face shows little emotion save for some pauses to think. John's skin color is a light brown, slightly bronzed.

Teresa, a 22-year old senior woman, was an English major and Political Science minor. She was born and raised in Corpus Christi, Texas. The Corpus Christi metropolitan area is over 400,000 people and the eight largest city in the state. Her mother attained her Bachelor's degree and her dad attained his Master's degree, both at Lone Star University.

She had an older sister who went to the University of Notre Dame. Teresa's father encouraged her to apply to Lone Star University. After she applied and received a full scholarship, Teresa visited and fell in love with the campus. Teresa was actively involved with FOCUS, the Catholic Student Center, and the Honors College.

Teresa's great grandparents on her dad's side were the first to migrate from Mexico around the late 1800s, originally to California. As migrant farm workers they eventually ended up in a city in southwest Texas. Teresa's dad was born there and has lived in Corpus Christi for the last 30 years, mostly working as a school administrator. Her mom was born in in the Brownville area but grew up in the San Antonio area mostly. Teresa's mom is deceased. Because her parents divorced when she was young, she "had two very diverse ways of living," seeing her dad every other weekend until she spent her junior and senior of high school with him. Teresa explained that because her mother identified as white and father as Mexican-American.

"tradition was always an issue because I had certain traditions with my mom's family and certain with my dad and sometimes they clashed and that was always, I wouldn't say a struggle, like a constant struggle, but there's always tension there."

Teresa described Corpus Christi as urban, especially the part of the city in which she was raised. The Mexican population of the city according to her was around 80 or 85%. Teresa is proud of her connections to her hometown where her family played a part in the Mexican-American movement. In addition, Teresa spent four months abroad in London. According to Teresa, while she is assumed by many people to be Mexican-American, few

people assume that she is white with an entire other side of the family to whom she feels close. In regards to her Tejano heritage, Teresa holds it in high regards saying

“I don’t see myself moving too far from Texas if I ever were to move. I’m not opposed to it necessarily, but I think my culture is going to follow me wherever it is that I go, just because the way I was raised and I have a lot of fond memories about that and it was always something that was encouraged, especially with my dad, to take pride in it. That you are Tejano. That you were raised in Texas and that you are Hispanic and you have this culture that’s very rich.”

Teresa is around 5’7”, has dark brown hair that has a slight waviness to it. It was hard to tell how long it was as it was tied up. Her skin tone is khaki and gold in color. If she has an accent I did not hear one. Her pronunciation of Spanish words was on point. She spoke assuredly, at length, and with lots of thought. I sensed that while she had not explicitly talked about some of these subjects before it had perhaps been on her mind.

Non Salient Tejano Identity

Albert is a 27 year old, male graduate student born and raised in small town outside of Dallas, Texas. Both of his parents migrated from near Guadalajara, Mexico in their late teens and early twenties, and were able to seek residency through Ronald Regan’s amnesty plan in 1985. His mother and father completed 3rd and 1st grade respectively. He is the second oldest of seven siblings. All of his siblings have completed high school with three also going to community college and one graduating from a four-year college. Before attending Lone Star University, he was an undergraduate at the University of Texas-Austin. He also worked for two years in San Antonio teaching high school

students. Albert was the most educated of the respondents, having completed his Master's Degree in counseling a few weeks after the group interview. Albert was involved with assessments related to Hispanic and Latino students and their experience at a Hispanic Serving Institution. Albert described his decision to attend Lone Star University as "time for [him] to go to college, explore a Master's program and help out students a little bit more."

Albert's portrayal of where his home is that of a small, rural town outside of Dallas growing up in a neighborhood surrounded by the same 100 or so people for many years. About 60% of that neighborhood was of Mexican ancestry and Albert indicated he had experienced a very traditional Mexican upbringing.

"They really haven't acculturated or assimilate[d] to the dominant culture. They still live in their country, so they're not going to change or try to see something better for themselves. They've been doing that for 25 years and they don't see any changes."

Albert also indicated that everyone in his family worked at some point to pay their way for what they wanted, as well as supporting the family. Growing up, Albert considered himself Mexican ("If you grow up in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, you're Mexican. You're brown, you're Mexican") and eventually Mexican-American. As he entered college he started to identify more with Latino and occasionally Hispanic. After his time in San Antonio, he moved away from Hispanic and back to Latino. He has never used the term Tejano to describe himself or background.

Albert is confident, speaks fast and assuredly. During our individual interview he was getting over a cold, which mixed in with his accent and speed, made him hard to

understand at times. His hair was neat and he was dressed business casual during the time we talked. He had some facial hair that is short and relatively neat. He moved his hands often during the interview and switched between leaning back in his chair and leaning forward on the table with his arms folded. His skin is the even color of walnut. His questions are inquisitive, almost demanding and looking for debate.

Fernando is a 20-year old, male junior born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. Fernando transferred to Lone Star University after two years at a community college in San Antonio. Both of his parents and two older siblings, also born and raised in San Antonio, completed their high school degrees. His older sister also completed an associate's degree in surgical technology. Currently, Fernando is a Sociology major and involved with Phi Alpha Delta, a pre-law fraternity. He is very close to them and sees them often. Fernando was unsure who in his family migrated from Mexico.

Fernando described the part of San Antonio he grew up in as urban and suburban. He indicated that about 75% of the part of the city he was from was Hispanic, 10% were other minority groups and the remaining residents were White. Although Fernando identified as Tejano on the questionnaire, he uses the phrases Hispanic and Mexican-American interchangeably to identify himself more often.

“That’s funny. When I was growing up I hardly even noticed I was Hispanic. I didn’t notice it being I grew up in San Antonio. I was the majority I guess you could say and it wasn’t until I got here that I realized that I was actually a minority. So growing up I didn’t even, I guess you could say I didn’t even know,

didn't know that I guess you could say, social inferiority, 'til I got here. It's interesting."

At the same time, Fernando says that it is at home when he mostly associates himself as Mexican-American.

"When I leave the home, I consider myself to be an American. I am American. I consider myself to be more Americanized than from Hispanic descent."

By then end of our interview Fernando seemed to rethink how strongly he identified as Tejano.

"My parents were more Tejano than I am. I feel like I'm more like Texan. Not really Tejano, more Texan I guess. I don't know why. I guess just school Americanize you. I think that's what they want fortunately and I think they do a very good job at doing that but I don't consider myself to be Tejano."

Fernando had neat short hair with a bit of facial hair around his chin and lips grown in. He wore jeans, a t-shirt and a hooded sweatshirt. He is of average build and probably about 5'9". He speaks with relative confidence but his sentences carry off, almost off topic and his words fade at the end. He has a slight Spanish accent and one that I would describe more as working class. It isn't staccato and almost becomes "mushy". He smiles often during our conversation and his face shows expression of confusion, thought, and humor. Fernando has light brown skin.

Sophia is an 18-year old sophomore woman, born and raised in San Marcos, Texas.

Both of her parents are originally from Mexico, having arrived about a year before she was born. While her dad completed his GED and attended some college, her mom was

homeschooled until about 4th grade. Education is very important to her parents, which has been strongly imparted to Sophia and her three younger triplet sisters. Sophia chose Lone Star University because it was affordable. She is a Geography major and involved with LULAC.

Sophia describes San Marcos as a mixture of rural, suburban, and urban. The specific mobile home neighborhood that she grew up in was entirely Mexican. Sophia indicated that on paper she would put down Mexican-American or Latino but says

Although I'm Mexican-American, I do consider myself more Mexican than anything else, just because my parents are from Mexico and...we grew up in that kind of culture and the same kind and Spanish is just everywhere in the house so I would consider myself more Mexican

Sophia is about 5'6" with black, slightly curly hair up in a loose bun. She wore jeans and a short sleeved shirt. She has a distinct Spanish accent. Her voice is sure, though her answers tended to be short or quiet at times. Her skin color is a warm taupe brown.

Naming Ethnoracial Identity

As can probably be determined from the short narratives that I have provided of the participants, each student had a unique experience and story related to their ethnoracial identity and experience at Lone Star University. In trying to determine what themes were present across their stories, I first went back to the Concept Map of Tejano Ethnoracial Identity Choices. Using that imagery, I added the various ways in which people mentioned that they had identified through the course of our interviews (See Figure 4). Any participants who "waivered" in their identity choice, for instance

Fernando who at the end of our interview did not seem to identify as Tejano anymore, was included in parentheses. Their ethnoracial identity choices were specific to my observations during the interview process. It is possible that they identified in other ways outside of our interviews and in addition to their identities around gender, sexual orientation, ability, class, etc.

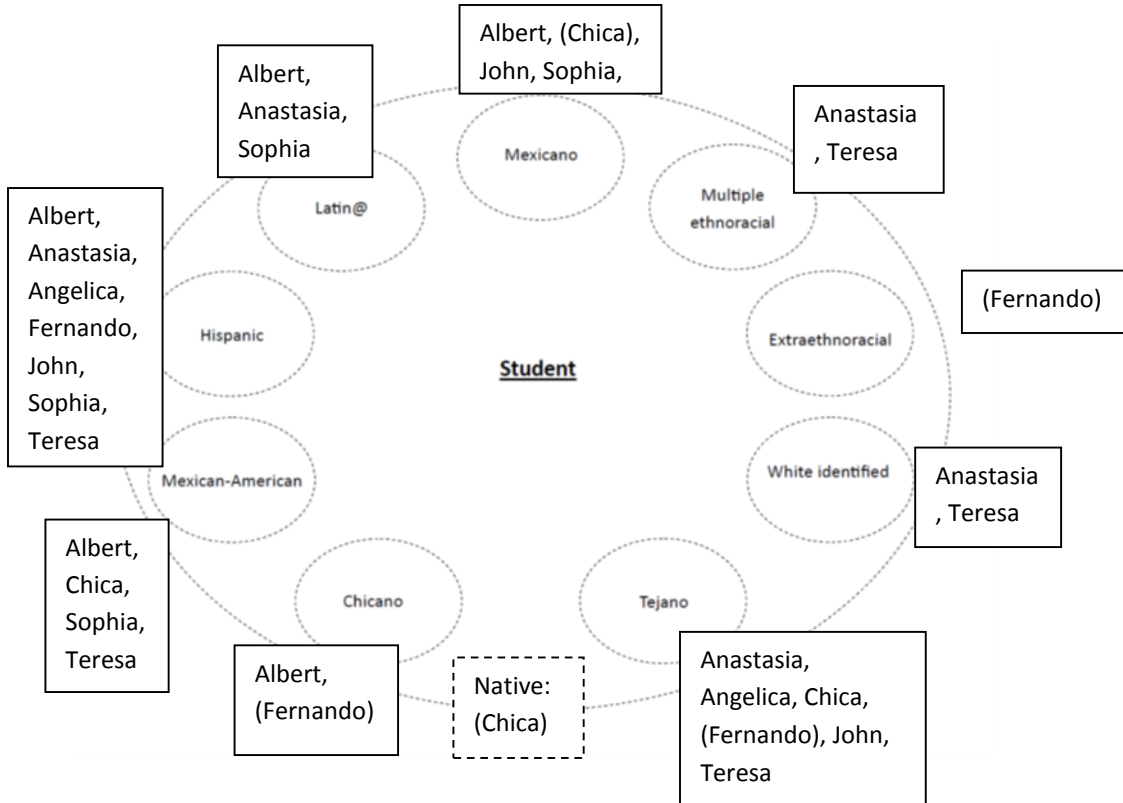


Figure 4. Concept Map of Tejano Ethnoracial Identity Choices with Participants

The use of parentheses also included participants who named experiences in which they had been identified by others as that ethnoracial identity. For instance, Chica’s experience of being considered Native American through her childhood and statements regarding that impact of being “otherized” warranted her inclusion on the concept map. My review of how the participants identified, often selecting more than one identifier, speaks to the complexity of an ethnoracial identity on top of their

experience as college students. I will begin by speaking about the Tejano identity and from there move on to ethnoracial identities that included fewer participants.

In my original outreach for participants, one of my original qualifiers was that participants identify as Tejano. You can imagine my surprise when over the course of the interviews I had participants who did not identify as such. Albert for instance seemed to acknowledge that by “definition” he was Tejano but that otherwise did not identify and has never used it for himself. He further explained:

“If you were to tell me when I was 18, are you Tejano? And give me a definition, born to Mexican-American parents or Mexican parents, yes, but realistically, are you Tejano? What does it mean to be Tejano? Or are you Latino? Or Hispanic? Or Mexican-American? So if you had to choose just one, or put them in order from like yes to least, Tejano would definitely be least.”

Sophia also did not identify as Tejano saying “I never did see myself as Tejana. It’s not that I wouldn’t want to be called Tejana, it’s just, I’ve never been identified as that.” In addition, though Fernando identified as Tejano at the beginning of our interview, by the end there was doubt as to whether or not that was a part of his identity choice.

For some of the people that identified as Tejano, they had specific instances of being instilled with a Tejano identity. For instance when Teresa was asked when she first identified as Tejano she responded that it occurred probably around her time in elementary school and in relation to her parent’s divorce.

“it was always me trying to identify myself I was always looking for ways to identify myself and....my family, my dad and my sister, my aunts and I were all in a traveling theater group and it was, I guess mostly, well, we performed plays

that were usually written or mostly performed or like for Tejano audiences so we would go to places in south Texas and stuff and perform these plays. One of them was actually about La Llorona. Another one was called Los Tejanos and another one that we did was having to do with, I guess the Aztec heritage and how it kind of came into Texas and stuff and so that was always something that was very present because we did, we would have these minor roles in these plays and it was something that was really fun in a way ‘cuz my dad would spend more time with us, but it was something that he also used as like a teaching point and saying this is your heritage. This is what you are raised with so like everything that we were doing was, we had ancestors in the past that had done that so it was really cool, and again, it was something that I really latched onto when I was trying to identify myself as a child.”

Anastasia recalled that she did not identify as Tejano until her grandparents got angry at her during her sophomore or junior year of high school. Similarly John owed his claiming of his Tejano identity to support and conversations in his parish. Chica’s Tejano identity came much later in her life, given her age in comparison to the other participants:

“About ten years ago when I first began to investigate my genealogy and I found out the difference between a Tejano and a non-Tejano. And that I was in fact a Tejana. That I wasn’t just Mexican-American. That I was from Tejano lineage.”

There was not much mention of how friends, family and coworkers identified as Tejanos, except for Chica who broke her friends down into Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Tejanos. The overall concept of what it meant to be Tejano seemed generally negative

for those who did not identify as Tejano and more positive to neutral for those who did.

Albert saw the Tejano identity as something that would disappear over time.

[A college application] “says Hispanic or Latino but it doesn’t say Mexican-American or Tejano or Chicano, so for the longest time all these students are here, everything they see since the same thing, would identify the same thing as race, ethnicity, you don’t see Tejano on there. So by default, Tejano is already out, so I mean it’s sort of like here we are in a HSI, Hispanic Serving Institution. Oh you’re Hispanic, like people don’t come to me, oh you’re Tejano. What the hell are you talking about? Tejano. Am I from Texas? That’s another way I interpret it. Am I from Texas and because I’m Hispanic you call me Tejano? So that’s the only thing I can see about it.”

Fernando felt similar, though perhaps more reserved in his statements, saying:

“As a whole ... Tejano culture is changing. The time to ask is like now because in about 50 years or so it’s going to be gone. Going to be gone. That’s what I would say about that.”

Chica’s perception of Tejanos currently was very positive:

“Tejanos have a great sense of pride about their identity as Tejanos and I see that people that are Tejanos walk with a straighter back and a higher head than people who are not, in Texas especially... They strive for individuality. They are more apt to speak up when injustice is being done.”

Chica used her Tejano identity as a way to acknowledge that she had always been here in Texas and the United States. For her this was different than Chicanos, who she saw as having to fight for their rights because they could not trace their ancestry to what is now

the United States. Chica also named that not everything was necessarily positive for Tejanos all the time. When I asked her what image comes to mind when picturing Tejanos, she pointed to a statue outside of our interview room and responded:

“This guy right here. The vaquero, the vaquero held with his head high. But I also see the vaqueros dead on the streets because maybe for being Tejanos, many of them were persecuted for their lands because they refused to be dominated more so than Mexican nationals because they spoke up more than others. They were more likely to be killed or persecuted, but today, the image of Tejanos is what I told you earlier.”

John also spoke of being proud of his Tejano identity and how unique it was:

“I think it’s a special thing because it’s not something that everyone can say really. It’s really like a section of the US, not like a whole span because I mean, you happen to be in that culture, that specific diffusion from that Mexican descent and you can say, well I’m proud to be this specific branch off where it’s not the general thing where people will say, oh, I’m American then, applies a whole country. With this it’s a bit more specific and so you can be more proud of it.”

Angelica spoke of how being Tejano was important to her:

“That’s something you take pride in. You’re from Texas and you’re like Mexican/American descent. That’s important to me, that’s a part of who you are.”

Her definition of what it meant to be Tejano was pretty basic, saying

“that’s just like narrowing it down more. Like you’re of Mexican-American or Mexican descent but you live specifically in Texas. It’s just being more, it’s refining...It’s more specific.”

At the end of our interview however, when I asked if there was anything else that I should know about being Tejano she responded:

“No, because *I don't know anything about it either*. Just like you. I don't know.”

(italics added)

Even as Angelica said that being Tejano was important to her and what by definition it meant to be Tejano, by the end of our interview she was unable to qualify her identity outside of the questions that I asked her. As I share more details below of the themes that came up with those who identified as Tejano, I will also address this phenomena of uncertainty around a Tejano identity. In addition, as I move onto other ethnoracial identities, those descriptions will add to a fuller picture of what it means to be Tejano.

All of the participants except Chica used Hispanic as a self-identifier as they grew up. Their use of Hispanic as a self-identifier changed depending on the context. For instance, Albert identified as Hispanic and Latino as an undergraduate but when he went to San Antonio, identified more as Mexican-American:

“I went down to San Antonio and that's where I started seeing, well Hispanic because people who don't really speak Spanish, who are more acculturated, who just have some sort of ancestry in Mexican-American, or Mexican, so at that point

I didn't want to be Hispanic and used more Mexican-American and Latino.”

When he came to Lone Star University, Albert noticed the importance of the university as a Hispanic Serving Institution. He uses Hispanic as the situation calls for but he prefers Latino. In a different case, Anastasia did not identify as Hispanic till later in her childhood when she became a part of her stepfather's family who was “the typical Mexican family...speaking Spanish.”

The participants identified a variety of people around them who identified as Hispanic as well, whether it was current classmates, past friends, family, or members of current and past communities. Fernando used the term Hispanic the most out of all the participants, especially in places that others did not. This included describing the population he grew up with. The interactions with Hispanics were overall positive though some qualifiers as to what exactly Hispanic was given. Chica, in trying to identify the difference between Chicanos and Hispanics said:

“to me Chicanos were like the revolutionary group of Hispanics that wanted to take a stand and because they were of Mexican-American descent, they called themselves Chicanos but they were more revolutionary.”

The idea that I read in that statement was that Hispanics were in some way “moderate” in their beliefs or thoughts. Albert provided another perspective on the idea of being Hispanic as generational or diluted from being Mexican or Mexican-American.

“The new term now is Hispanic/Latino or sometimes as they put it on the surveys, Hispanic or Latino, and/or Latino, whatever the heck that means. I think that’s more Mexican- American, you’re labeling yourself like I’m Mexican and I’m proud, goes to Mexico, practice part of Spanish or, you’re like more of the first generation. Second generation I think it starts going more towards Hispanic or Latino.”

Unlike Hispanic, identifying as Mexican-American did not seem to be based on a specific situational context. Though four of the participants identify as Mexican-American only Albert and Chica gave some grounding for associating with that identity. Albert

explained that his perception was based on his experience of growing up in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, he was Mexican.

“If you grow up in the Dallas/Forth Worth area, you’re Mexican. You’re brown... You’re Mexican So I identify that and I think slowly, when I grew up a little bit more, I was like Mexican-American, ‘cuz like I grew up here, a Mexican-American.”

Chica explains a similar situation in which being born in America validates her Mexican-American identity despite the opinion or treatment from others.

“I knew that we were Mexican-Americans, I knew that both my parents had been born here in the United States, even though going through life, it never seemed to matter to the people in my environment in authority. It was like, I was a Mexican. So many times it was just, we were Mexicans but to me I always knew within myself that I was a Mexican-American, yes I came from Mexican descent because my parents of course came in through Mexico but I knew that I was American born, both my parents were American born. I didn’t know that my grandparents were American born. I didn’t know that much but I knew that I was a Mexican-American.”

While Sophia and Teresa acknowledge identifying as Mexican-American, they use it interchangeably most of the time with Mexican and Hispanic respectively.

Moving on to a Mexican identity, Albert, John, and Sophia were the only individuals who explicitly and saliently identified as such. For Albert and Sophia, this was not surprising to me given that their parents had immigrated from Mexico. However, it was John’s grandparents that migrated from Mexico. John mentioned that his

grandmother, with whom it sounds like he spent a lot time with growing up, received her citizenship only three years ago. John's relationship with his grandparents seems a possible reason that his Mexican identity is salient.

While all the participants at some point during the interview used the term Mexican to describe themselves, often in the same phrase they also identified with other ethnoracial labels. While no one specifically said why they used Mexican interchangeably with other identities, John offered up an explanation of sorts when talking about the difference between being Mexican, Mexican-American, and Tejano.

“I would say that [the] base would be Mexican and then from there it diffuses because of whatever culture is, it later came into contact with, which ones were born in. Pretty much it's a diffusion from Mexican descent...For example, you could say, it would be like the same thing [as] religion. Like some religions they branch off from a single one because of differences of ideals and what not. And you can say the same thing about culture, whether it be Mexican, Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, etc...I would say, that root, I would say it'd have to be Mexican because when it comes to like Latino, Hispanic culture in America, that's where it's really derived from and concerned with that, pretty much western and southern US was, used to be Mexico at some point. A lot of that culture is still left there even after it was taken in by the US and it's still there, it's not just something that leaves, not just taken over. It stays there. And eventually it diffuses with the American culture that's there presently.”

In other words, whether the participants were the children of Mexican immigrants or were of several generations born in the United States, they could still claim some part of the Mexican diaspora.

Of the remaining ethnoracial identities, there was little that participants said or stood out about them. Albert was the only participant to identify as Chicano, thanks to his dad calling him that as he grew up. While Fernando mentioned being identified as Chicano by his Chicano supervisor in an internship, he spoke more of how that incident made him realize he was a minority and thus, Hispanic. Fernando also interchangeably used a variety of ways to identify himself sometimes mixing them up all in one statement. When I asked him to explain the difference between Tejano, Mexican, Mexican-American and Chicano he responded:

“As far as I think, at least, I consider them to be all the same, Hispanic. Like I consider myself being Mexican-American or before I consider myself to be Tejano... I never even thought about it really. That’s probably the reason why. I feel like they all mesh together. I guess. The minority in some sense. You know, Tejano, Chicano, Mexican-American. They all clash with each other, not clash, they all just mesh together.”

Fernando’s meshing of these identifiers reflects other participant’s use of Latin@ amongst Albert, Angelica and Sophia. These three participants identify as Latin@ depending on the context but use it interchangeably with their other identities. Albert again is the only one who gives some explanation for his use of it.

Two of the participants, Anastasia and Teresa, identified as multiracial. They were also the only participants who identified as white. In spite of these shared identities, their skin color impacted their experience growing up. Teresa said that:

“Usually people don’t assume that I am half white and that I have like this other side of the family that I’m also very close to and feel very strongly about.”

Anastasia on the other hand shared examples of being “this lighter girl” where others would not realize she was Hispanic.

“people... mostly Whites, ‘oh you’re kind of like us’...but then they come out and look at my features and [say] ... ‘what are you?’... it was difficult for me at first to go a group of Hispanics ‘cuz you know, they might not at first, oh you know, not like they were judging me or anything but they were like, oh, here’s this lighter girl and not realize immediately that I’m Hispanic as well.”

Skin color and appearance played out was also a factor in Chica’s ethnoracial identity. While she did not identify as Native American explicitly, indirectly it was part of her identity. She first talked about it in describing her family.

“My mother’s side of the family was mixed blood, Spanish with Indian, so they were always separate from my father’s side of the family and so my family, with my parents had much closer ties with my mother’s side of the family and we kept very constant close unity between us, until we moved to South Texas.”

She also recalled how the assumption that she was Native American was used negatively.

“They called us wetbacks and they called us Indians. I remember one time when we were up north during one of the summer seasons, a photographer, my mother sent us to a little school where they were teaching summer classes for migrant

families, and we were playing out in the playground and a photographer for the town newspaper came out and asked if he could take our pictures... so we came out front page of this newspaper and that's what we were labeled. Los Indios. And we were actually wearing sandals and you know, just regular, I think we were wearing like dresses because my father was not too much into letting us wear pants so we were wearing dresses and sandals, open toed sandals, so there we were, in the playground, Los Indios, and we probably looked like Indians at the time. We had been playing out there but anyway, yeah. So yeah, we were stigmatized as far as that was concerned.”

Chica continued to use Native Americans as an example of being treated negatively.

When I asked about why she thought some friends and family treated Tejanos differently than other Mexican-Americans, she compared that treatment to how Indians were treated by European colonizers:

“My perspective is that they feel that way because since they were raised among white populations, they have the same sense of superiority toward other people in regard to themselves. Their sense of self is more like, we are white. We live among the white and we are superior to the Mexicans. Pretty much like the Spaniards or the Anglos felt towards the Indians, like they were almost subhuman and I've experienced that kind of sensibility over the years towards myself in action, in looks, in gestures. You feel, you sense, you hear what they're telling you. They're saying you are like the Indians. You are inferior. You are subhuman. You are the ignorant...”

When I asked Chica if she identified as Native American, she replied that she did not. In spite of not saliently identifying as Native American, the ways in which others have ascribed a Native American identity to her seemed to have had an impact on Chica.

Similar to Chica, I observed comments and experiences that Fernando shared which to me expressed saliency with an extraethnoracial identity. For instance he said:

“Other than that, I don’t really associate myself with Mexican-American heritage, other than when I’m at home. When I leave the home, I consider myself to be an American. I am American. I consider myself to be more Americanized than from Hispanic descent.”

Even as Fernando “opted out” of a racial identity to a national one, he also described a state identity and explained why he was “Americanized”

“I feel like I’m more like Texan. Not really Tejano, more Texan I guess. I don’t know why. I guess just school Americanize you. I think that’s what they want fortunately and I think they do a very good job at doing that but I don’t consider myself to be Tejano.”

Fernando’s final comments on the Americanization process points to systems of education as the source for this change. Fernando seems to think that even those people who identify as Tejano do so as part of the Americanization process.

“The people that are identifying themselves as [Tejano], I feel like that’s kind of doing, I guess, with the American high school system, even private school system, they’re getting more Americanized and I think that’s what they want. That’s what they want. Like I said, they’re doing a good job of it.”

According to Fernando, he thinks that ultimately “one day [it] is going to be dwindled and they’re going to be more American.” Fernando’s assertion that ethnoracial identity will disappear seems contradictory to the multiple ways that he and the other participants have named themselves. All of the participants saliently acknowledged at least two ethnoracial identities and three of them acknowledged five (See Table 2). Gallegos and Ferman (2013) asserted that although ethnoracial identity amongst Latin@s is an individual choice, it is done as forces of family, student organizations, and other institutions sway those choices. These forces flux constantly and as such “identities morph and change depending on how we respond to the changing contexts of our lives”

Table 2. Participants’ Ethnoracial Identity Selection

	Albert	Anastasia	Angelica	Chica	Fernando	John	Sophia	Teresa
Chicano	■				■			
Extraethnoracial					■			
Hispanic	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Latin@	■	■				■		
Mexicano	■			■		■	■	
Mexican-American	■			■		■		■
Multiple Ethnoracial		■						■
Native				■				
Tejano		■	■	■	■	■		■
White Identified		■						■

(Gallegos & Ferman, 2013, p. 65). In this case, participants may have been impacted by the way that I was asking questions to the manner in which their parents raised them. In addition, how each of the participants identified is valid. In talking about Latino Orientation, Gallegos and Ferdman said “each Latino identity orientation has value and is useful at meeting particular environmental demands” (p. 66). By exploring the participants’ various ethnoracial identities, I hope that what emerges is an apparent network of factors that interact to create patterns of who does and does not identify as Tejano.

Themes Across the Narratives

By exploring each student’s narrative and choices of ethnoracial identity, several elements emerged across their stories. These elements seemed to relate as to whether or not they identified as Tejano. This section will illuminate those elements and how they were demonstrated in each of the student’s lives. The elements that contribute the participants’ ethnoracial identity choices do so in various combinations with each other and should not be viewed as separate from each other. However, for the purposes of simplicity I will share each of these themes individually.

Parents from the Tejano cultural zone. Family background was part of almost every response to a question that was asked. It should be of no surprise then that where family came from had a significant impact on whether or not the students identified as Tejano. As discussed earlier, geography and space offer different experiences for Mexicans-Americans especially in states that are along the U.S./Mexican border (Arreola, 2002; Berjano, 2007). Arreola (2002), citing the work of De León, discussed the region between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande as the “Tejano cultural zone.” Arreola

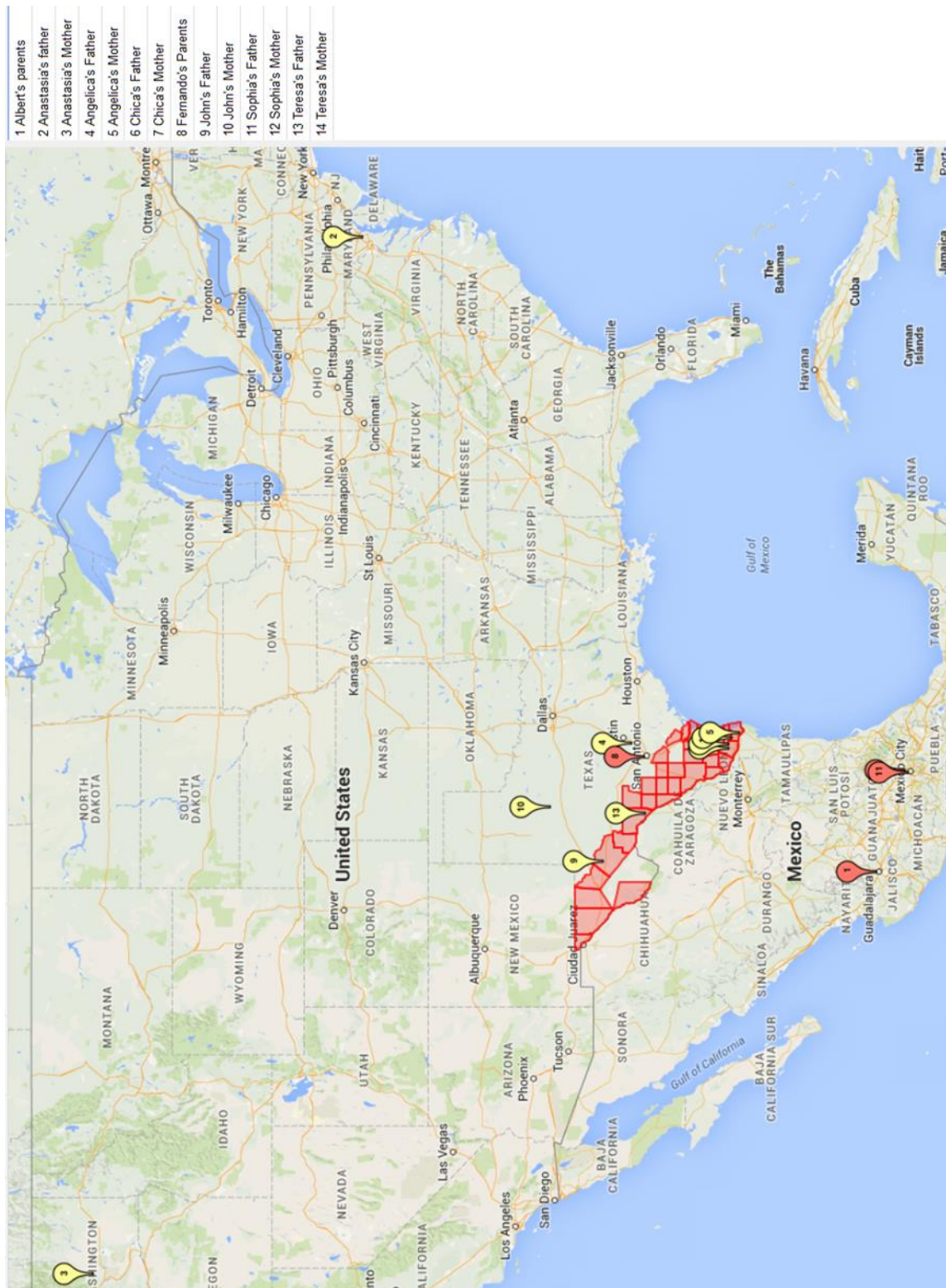


Figure 5. Participants' parent origins and Texas counties with Mexican-American majority explored that zone further by examining which Texas counties in 1990, just a few years

before most of the participants were born, had Mexican-American populations of more than 50%. Looking at those 32 counties and knowing the familial background of the parents of the participants, four of the five students who identified as Tejano had at least one parent from those locations (See Figure 5). Three of the Tejano-identified participants (Angelica, Chica, and Teresa) had parents from counties that were at least 70% Mexican-American. The parents of the three non-Tejano participants were not from any of these aforementioned counties. Association with the Tejano cultural zone seems to have played some part in the participants' ethnoracial identification. At the same time, all the students, except Anastasia (the only Tejano to not have parents in the cultural zone), identified their hometown as being majority Mexican-American.

- “There was very little, whether it be Asian or black people there. There was like a handful of Asian people. And the few, some of the doctors there, and there were like one or two, maybe five black families there. It was primarily Hispanic, Mexican, Latino community. - John
- “So I went to high school on the west side of town which was definitely like I think the Mexican-American, Hispanic population was, I want to say 97%... and I was in a program there that was... prepping you to go to a nursing program or pharmacy and stuff like that... there definitely were more Anglo-Americans and Asians in that program specifically but the rest of the school was Mexican-American...Spanish and English were like both used in the classroom. So that definitely changed my perceptions of the city itself and got to see a more diverse community other than what I grew up with.” -Teresa

Another similar anomaly is apparent in looking at where Fernando, who did not identify as Tejano, grew up: San Antonio. Although Bexar County, where San Antonio is located, was not part of the 32 counties recorded by Arreola (2002), San Antonio itself has historically been proposed as the “capital of South Texas” (p. 190). Bexar County also “included 600,000 Mexican Americans, the largest single county concentration in the entire South Texas region” (p. 60). To have Fernando have both parents grow up in San Antonio, grow up there himself, and not identify as Tejano seems contradictory to the impact of environment on ethnoracial identity choices. Overall, though, Fernando seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

While there seems to be a relationship between having family from the Tejano cultural zone and identifying as Tejano, the actual locations that the students grew up in, most of which were in the same zone, didn’t seem to be significant. Despite that lack of significance, the students that identified as Tejano originated from an area covering over 79, 000 square miles. The epicenter of that area itself also seems to have its origins in the Tejano cultural zone southwest of San Antonio. This would seem to suggest that being Tejano spreads far beyond the cultural zone and in part because of parental influence.

Family and community influence. While the origin of parents seemed to have an impact on whether or not the students identified as Tejano, support and insistence from family and community appeared just as important. When I asked Anastasia about if she would remember when and why she first identified as Tejano she said:

“Yes, because I was kind of like, not really denied culture when I was younger, but I just didn’t really know about it so I’m trying to catch up to everybody else

kind of thing....I remember I used to not and then my grandparents got mad at me. Not like I was rejecting it, I just didn't see myself really as that way but maybe sophomore or junior year.”

In the case with Chica, lack of talking about a Tejano identity pushed her to explore her history more, tracing her roots to some of the original Spanish settlers of Texas. She expressed regrets about her parents' lack of knowledge of her Tejana history.

“...all this stigmatizing that had been going on all my life, I kind of felt like, if my parents had taken the time to educate our family to let us know that we came from this long line of Tejanos, that when we were made to feel like we did not belong, that we could have made a stand and we could have said, we do belong because we've been here for a long time, way longer than you have and it would have given us a much higher self-worth that my family didn't have growing up and to this day, we still deal with it.”

While Chica specifically recalls her family as influential, though negative in some ways, John explained that his Tejano identity went back to his religious upbringing.

“Probably around seven...you kind of start realizing, oh, I'm kind of different. And you hear your parish talking about it, like they describe to you, this is your ethnicity, this is your race and as you're older, okay, I'm this, I identify as this [referring to Tejano], I am this.”

While Chica's Tejana identity came late in her life, Teresa's identification as a Tejano came early enough in her life that she cannot recall exactly when that happened.

Exploring her identity seemed to have been an early part of her life and one set of activities with her family seem to have secured her Tejano identity.

“I guess my parents got divorced very young, that it was always me trying to identify myself and who I was which...was weird at the time but now I see it as like I was always looking for ways to identify myself...my family, my dad and my sister, my aunts and I were all in a traveling theater group and ... we performed plays that were usually written or mostly performed or like for Tejano audiences so we would go to places in south Texas and stuff and perform these plays. One of them was actually about La Llorona. Another one was called Los Tejanos and another one that we did was having to do with, I guess the Aztec heritage and how it kind of came into Texas and stuff and so that was always something that was very present because we did, we would have these minor roles in these plays and it was something that was really fun in a way ‘cuz my dad would spend more time with us, but it was something that he also used as like a teaching point and saying this is your heritage. This is what you are raised with so like everything that we were doing was, we had ancestors in the past that had done that so it was really cool, and again, it was something that I really latched onto when I was trying to identify myself as a child.”

The impact of family, immediate or otherwise, and community had an effect on the ethnoracial identity choices for all the Tejano-identified participants except Angelica. The influence made by family and community also seemed to have occurred during the participants’ childhood, except for Anastasia who named a specific incident during high

school. The construction of an ethnoracial identity related to family is o't anything new. For instance, Waters (1990) spoke about the construction of an ethnic image based on family characteristics. She also pointed out that

A consequence of this construction is that it is difficult for respondents to be sure what constitutes ethnicity as opposed to idiosyncratic family values and practices. The substance of this ethnicity is also selective, intermittent, and symbolic. You can choose those aspects of being Irish that appeal to you and discard those that do not. (p. 115)

Other familial and community considerations that seemed to play out for the non-Tejanos was at the community level, specifically for Albert and Sophia. Albert described the neighborhood that he grew up in as about 60 to 70% Mexican and about 30 to 40% White. He seemed to specifically indicate Mexican, as opposed to Mexican-American. He described his family as having a very traditional Mexican nuclear structure.

“...that’s very old school so, like I said, this way or the highway. Sometimes he’s [father] very closed minded. So every time I try to have an input or try to say something different, he doesn’t, he won’t take for it. ... They really haven’t acculturated or assimilate to the dominant culture. They still live in their country, so they’re not going to change or try to see something better for themselves. They’ve been doing that for 25 years and they don’t see any changes.”

Sophia described her neighborhood, a trailer park, as “all Mexican.” While she made no comments about its structure or specific rules in the house, she acknowledged that her English language skills developed later because of how often Spanish was

spoken at home. In addition she shared that if other relatives wanted to watch TV in Spanish, it was an obligation and happened frequently. This concentration of Mexicaness at home and in the neighborhood for Albert and Sophia seemed align in part with their ethnoracial identity as Mexicans and non-Tejanos.

Generational status. In the course of the interviews I asked the participants if they knew who in their family immigrated to the United States, when, and where from in Mexico. The impact of ongoing immigration on people of Mexican descent prevents Mexican-Americans from attaining what Macias (2006) describes as a symbolic or optional status of their ethnoracial identity. On the other hand European-Americans' ethnoracial identities become diluted over a few generations. Leiberson (as cited in Macias, 2006, p. 97) suggests that "high levels of immigration tend to create a heightened awareness of race and ethnicity among members of the dominant group, who perceive newcomers as reinforcing ethnic stereotypes. These, in turn, come back to negatively affect all members of the group, new and old, in the form of prejudice and discrimination." I tracked that this knowledge of their generational status had an impact on their ethnoracial identity as Tejanos.

Connection to generations in the United States. All of the Tejano-identified participants had family that migrated from Mexico as recent as one of their grandparents to as far back as the colonization of Texas. This awareness was sometimes very specific, including what part of the United States they came in to and what specific family member. Waters (1990) found that knowledge about their ancestors amongst Whites and their ethnicity similarly impacted their ethnic identity choice.

- “My grandparents on my mom’s side I believe. I don’t exactly remember where. My grandfather is from Mexico. I don’t exactly remember where. And then they came to El Paso.” – Anastasia
- “My grandfather is from Mexico....he doesn’t really talk about it [where in Mexico he is from] that much but my mom was adopted. I recently found this out so her adopted father is from Mexico, but supposedly her biological parents are from Mexico as well.” – Angelica
- “On my father’s side, on his maternal mother side, they came from Mexico as colonizers back in the 1700’s, 1600’s. On his father’s side, they came from Mexico. I think my father’s grandfather came from Mexico. On my mother’s side, it was also my mother’s grandparents or great-grandparents but on her father’s side, on my mother’s father’s side, my grandfather lived in Reynosa until he died....on my father’s side, they came from actually Saltillo they migrated to Nuevo Leon and from Nuevo Leon they migrated to Mier and from Mier they crossed over to Rio Grande and to this day, a large population of the family is still in Rio Grande. On my mother’s side, they came from Montejurra and came to Weslaco and from Weslaco they moved to a little bitty town... where my mother was born.”- Chica
- “I believe my Grandma did on my dad’s side. That’s as far back as I know because I don’t know much about my mom’s side.... I do not [know what part of Mexico she came from]. I’ve never asked her before. It’s never been a thought to ask.” - John

- “I want to say it was my great grandparents on my dad’s side. My grandmother’s and grandfather’s parents both came and I want to say my grandmother’s family was originally in California but they were migrant farm workers and so they made their way up and down the southern part of the country and ended up in Texas.” –Teresa

Waters (1990) found that that there was no consistency between generational status and ethnic identity choice. This does not seem to be the case for the Tejanos in this study. The participants who were aware of their generational status (second generation and beyond) and knew who immigrated to the U.S. seemed more likely to identify as Tejano. The non-Tejano participants had two generational attributes that I suspect were part of their ethnoracial identity choice. First, for Albert and Sophia, they were the first generation to be in the United States. Albert’s parents permanently settled in the United States two years before he was born and Sophia’s parents arrived a year before she was born. Both were relatively knowledgeable about where their parents also came from.

- [My dad lived] “About 30 minutes from Guadalajara, Mexico. My dad migrated here when he was 16, going on 17. He spend his 17th birthday crossing the border. Was here for about 6 years maybe before he went back and married my mom. Between that timeframe, he was probably deported he says 8 times. My mom came here legally too, and they were able to get residency through Ronald Reagan in 1985 through the amnesty plan. They’ve been here ever since.” –Albert

- [My parents are from] “Estado de Mexico....It’s down in Mexico, right by Guerror I want to say, what other states by, I’m not really sure, but it’s, Mexico City is right, Estado Mexico is the state.” - Sophia

The second generational attribute that became apparent was Fernando’s lack of knowledge about who in his family migrated from Mexico, when, and where from. He simply had no idea. Fernando’s connection to his extended family seemed limited overall as evidenced in the way he talked about only his parents and siblings. All of the other participants mentioned connections to grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins. Waters (1990) observed that “Families that remain intact over the life cycle of the individual have more time and opportunity to convey complex information about their ancestry” (p. 60). Fernando’s apparent lack of connection to anyone outside of his immediate family seemed to have had an impact on knowledge on his ancestry and thus an impact on his ethnoracial identity choice.

Connections to Mexico. The Tejano-identified participants have generally limited connections in Mexico including having no family that they know and have spent little time there. John for instance has never been to Mexico. Other experiences, such as those of Anastasia, Angelica, and Teresa, are relatively superficial and hard to recall because they occurred early in their childhood. Chica seems to be the exception given her overall age and intensity of her experiences.

- “I was young and it was to Honduras, it was on cruise. It was really nice from what I remember. I remember naked people tanning, but other than that. It was nice and it was comfortable and fun but since I’m older now,

my mom was telling me that the people that greet you when you get off the boat, like something bad was happening at that time. I don't remember what it was but they were like acting as if nothing was wrong and like deterring you away from the negative that was actually happening and probably, my mom said they were like detouring us away from something that was happening. But me being like what, seven, was like, oh hey. Oblivious to everything. I really liked it.” – Anastasia

- [I went to Mexico] “When I was little...[I remember] Just like a lot of people in the street and the grandparents tugging at me to stay close to them. People just all over the place. We walked like in and out of the stores. My grandpa always bought corn tortillas with this cheese and butter. It was cheese. And music. It being loud and there's just like a lot of cars and people. That's all I really remember.” – Angelica
- “I love the people of Mexico. They are such a wonderful friendly giving people. Everywhere that I've gone in Mexico, the communities that I have visited have been so wonderful, even though...I remember particular one experience where I went to the mercado and we were walking around or shopping and all of a sudden this car pulled to the curb and there was this lady that was sitting there begging, ... and a man got out and he began to physically drag the lady by the hair and put her in the car and the lady was screaming ... and he was like cursing at her and from the verbalization that both of them were having I deduced that they were a married couple but the treatment that he gave her was horrendous... if that would have

happened here in the states, that guy would have been in jail...but in Mexico, it was like perhaps a common practice...Everybody just went about their business like nothing had happened and I was shocked but as far as my dealings with people wherever I went...the people were just wonderful, very ...I haven't been to Mexico in years ever since all this mess started going on in the border towns... but I would love to go just because there's so much history that I want to investigate in Mexico but I'm scared to go there because of the violence that's going on in the border towns.” – Chica

- “...we did growing up and we would just literally cross the border...but that's become very unsafe now so...I have vague memories of going in, not anything that was substantial. Just for shopping or getting medicine or alcohol usually...For Mexico, I remember driving over and I was always sitting in the back and just like trying not to make it obvious that I was staring out the window, a lot of the kids were like waiting on the sides and asking for money or food or anything and yea, that always was very startling to me... I just remember it being very dusty and hot. Usually we would go in the summertime and, I knew that I should be aware...of where my parents were. I was usually holding onto my dad's hand...there was always like a lot of activity, a lot of bustling and so my dad was always holding on tight and we would just make a couple of stops here and there but I don't remember ever going to go eat anywhere or like sitting down for a particular amount of time or staying in one area for an

amount of time. It was always just walking and shopping and then we'd get back in the car and go." - Teresa

The Tejanos' experiences of Mexico, even with some of the negative perspectives presented, gave a sense of temporal distance and nostalgia. Comments made by Chica and Teresa seem to suggest that their travels were right across the border while Anastasia's journey was part of a cruise. These experiences seem absent of intimate encounters with Mexican people and experiences. In addition, their journeys to Mexico were guided by family members, with no time to explore on their own. On the other hand, Albert and Sophia have also been to Mexico in ways that seem to differ qualitatively from the Tejanos who have visited Mexico.

- "I mean my grandparents are still down there so I think it's just good for me to get reattached or reconnected with them. It's like my norm. I go there, it's not something I'm wild about, the main thing like I've been more hesitant is it worth coming me down here with school, with work, and I mean, it's a city so it's not as if you can be a tourist... that's why I continue to make the trip like every year at least so I don't lose touch connection, but I know there's going to be a point where it's like I might not be as frequent traveling down there, especially while my grandparents are alive I have a connection there that I do have right now. You know, ten years from now, it may not be the so if me going down there the experience is the same, I'm just like a lonely ranger just going downtown and not having anything to do. People like I can connect with and feel

connected. It may not be as pleasing as it was before when we'd go down there for two-three weeks, cousins and everything and now it's different because even then cousins grow up and they may not come back as often either so we're not as connected, unified, so several years a little bit, every couple years new changes, dynamic." – Albert

- "It's different. It's different. Depends where I go too. I mean there are some towns that are like pretty much poverty everywhere but it's not traumatizing really. I guess I'm used to it. There's other towns that are just, I've gone to Mexico City for the first time last summer. As it was like really mixed in, seeing just everything, the traffic, the cars, there's no rules, nothing. It's crazy. It's different from here. Just people walking in streets. I mean you see people wearing pretty much torn up clothes, even in the subway there's like so many people begging for money and even little kids asking for it... finding people, just trying to get a coin or whatever is in their hands and they'll do whatever. They'll sing, they'll walk subways, poverty is everywhere over there." – Sophia

Albert and Sophia both speak of journeys that have occurred recently and regularly. Both observe consistency in how they observe their trips ("It's like my norm" and "I guess I'm use to it"). In addition they name ways in which they see the culture or themselves changing as they travel to Mexico in the future.

Experiences of not being enough. During the course of the interviews, Albert commented "You're all part of the Mexican culture, regardless if you're second

generation, first generation.” His intent is saying this was about the intimacy of the Mexican/Mexican-American culture and that its members will always have a place to belong. As Waters (1990) has pointed out though, the “social and political consequences of being...Hispanic...are not symbolic for the most part, or voluntary. They are real and often hurtful.” The reality of these inequities has shaped race relations in the United States. (p. 156). My interviews with the participants would support Waters and other researchers. Anastasia, Chica, and Teresa shared stories in which they did not belong. Albert did as well but the differences between the two, while subtle, revealed a probable factor in why some of the participants identified as Tejano and others did not.

Anastasia spoke of three instances in which she felt as if she did not belong. She shared one in talking about her multiracial identity earlier but the other two illustrate similar feelings starting with the aforementioned story in high school followed by an incident involving her parents and grandmother.

- “... in high school, my junior year, I was in a dual credit history class and mostly White people in that class, but there was one other dark head, dark skinned, Mexican girl other than myself, but the teacher was talking about something...maybe food...Mexico and he goes to her and asks her about it. I guess because she looked more like it, and she’s like, I don’t know... and I was like, why don’t you ask me? Just ‘cuz I don’t look like it, you didn’t think to ask me, so not like offended but kind of like, oohh, that kind of hurts ‘cuz I don’t look like my culture so it kind of makes me upset every once in a while.”

- “We went to [a restaurant] in our town, and it was under mostly, so it was, I guess, a White manager at the time, and I guess my Tete [grandmother] had seen like a bug and the whole thing that they had given us, I mean like hey man, you know, like there’s a bug in it and then the manager is like, are you sure it wasn’t a jalapeño bug and just assuming that we were stupid. We were like, what, look on your thing. It was just horrible. It wasn’t multiple instances. They think my parents don’t have money because we don’t dress up fancy and have all this fancy stuff and they were like, oh well, I don’t think you can afford it and we’re like, oh well we’re going to buy it anyway just so we can. That kind of thing has always kind of frustrated us.”

Anastasia seemed to share an instance of not being “Mexican” enough for one of her classes and in the case of the restaurant not being wealthy enough to deserve being served well. Similarly, Chica’s stories went back to elementary school at a time in Texas when students were segregated, sometimes unofficially. Her stories continue through her adulthood and show a pattern of feeling as if she did not belong.

- “... because my father was a truck driver and because his income wasn’t enough to provide for the family, my mother began to migrate to the northern states to work in the fields and sometimes we would leave before the school year was out and we would come back a couple weeks or so after the school year had begun. And we became labeled as migrants and I remember we would come and there was a migrant school and they called it La Escuela de los Burros, the school for the donkeys. In other words, the

school for the ignorant and so at that point we were labeled, that we were burros, that we were ignorant, unlearned and incapable of learning and so we began to be stigmatized and from there on, throughout my whole school experience, all the way until I was in high school, I always carried this feeling that I was a burra.

- “...one of the incidents that most stuck with me over time and really bothered me, I went to purchase carpeting for my house one time and I went to the carpet place and the man was an older White male. It was Texas...this particular carpet that I’m buying, it was a different kind of carpet that I usually bought, I said, how many times do I need to vacuum it and he said let me look at your hands and I showed him my hands and he said “oh...you don’t have diamond ring fingers, you can vacuum it every day” and I was like, “so what is diamond ring fingers?” Is it the fingers of a White lady who doesn’t do her own carpets or what? Somebody who can afford a diamond ring and I cannot? It really bothered me for a long, long time.”
- “I remember I had one instructor, he was a White man, and oh that man the whole semester, he made me feel like I just wanted to quit that class but I was determined not to quit it because I was determined to finish the class and to make an A in that class so I didn’t leave because I was determined that I would do that but his racial remarks throughout the whole semester were extravagant to say the least and I was very upset. To this day I mean I’m just totally upset. I wanted to go back and I wanted to

talk to him and tell him everything that I felt but this guy is set in his ways.”

Chica illustrates two instances of not being smart enough, not being wealthy enough and in some ways not being White enough. Teresa’s first story illustrates an instance of not being Mexican enough. Her other narrative illustrates an instance of being “too Mexican.”

- “I had somebody tell me that I was the whitest Mexican that he knew and I was like, that’s an interesting statement. I didn’t really know how to respond to that and I was like, he’s from South Dakota and so I was like, how do you answer to that and it’s like, it’s okay if you actually knew more people in Texas, maybe you would feel differently. I didn’t know what to say to that and I told him, well you know, I said part of that might actually be the fact that I’m half, so half White, half Mexican American, whatever you want to call it, but it was just interesting to me. He was like, I can tell if people have accents or that talk about traditions and stuff more and everything, and well maybe I just haven’t been around you long enough.”
- “I know in high school, what always sticks out in my mind, but I think about discrimination. I played soccer and my soccer team at my high school was mainly Hispanic girls. Most of them spoke Spanish on the field and we had like a rival team... that we always knew we were always going to have conflict with....the team [was]...very White, affluent community, and the officials usually at that game were not always fair and

so we always knew what to expect going into the game...I remember my senior year, we showed up and right off the bat, literally right off of the bus, walking onto the field, we heard a few of the girls from the other team saying “oh look at the beaners, oh, look at them coming on the field” and stuff and it was like immediate from there. A fight broke out in the middle of the game. One of the girls got carried out in a stretcher... I remember just being like so hurt but also very angry ...but I didn’t really know how to respond and I remember leaving the field and my dad was there and I just started crying because I don’t even know what to do with all of this emotion. I didn’t know people could be that mean and that angry about something ... I felt we were totally over....that always sticks with my memory that I just was really shocked. The fact that it was 2010 and still, dealing with that.”

Anastasia’s, Chica’s, and Teresa’s stories generally illustrate themes of “not being enough.” With the exception of Teresa’s story of being too Mexican, the three participants were either not Mexican enough, not smart enough, or not wealthy enough. Albert was the only non-Tejano to share similar experiences. He shared one story that was similar to Anastasia’s experience at a restaurant.

“This happened here and probably within just the last year, but I went to...a local wings shop place... and there’s [a] card membership so...we went up and there’s [a]... taller White guy, maybe in his 30s or 40s, looked wealthy, so we went up together but I think I was there a little bit earlier so he was attended first and the server, to the intake person, “Are you a....card reward member?” and he says

yes... When you first check in, like how many do you people want table, because sometimes they try to get the preference, and make sure we're well cared of because we're a...card member, so she asked me the same thing so I asked for a table for four, four people. "Okay, it'll be about 25 minutes." I'm like, I'm also a...card member. Okay. So she put it on there but I guess her instinct was like, you look super Mexican, you're not a...card member and that's the way I took it and it still sticks to me to this day. It's like just because I look Mexican, I don't care I'm super Mexican, I can still buy a club membership card...because I thought, I wonder if she's going to ask me if I'm a Pluckers card and she didn't, and she was White, and so I'm not sure if she forgot or something or intentional but I think part of society, people sometimes you get certain privileges, other individuals get certain privileges because of the way who they are and who they come across unless it's a White person and we've got to treat them well. Ask them all the questions. How can we help you? Compared to a young Mexican guy, like he's not going to be anything, he's not the top priority."

Albert's experience, while similar to Anastasia's, shows some differences, particularly in how he names the details of what occurred. Albert describes being perceived as "super Mexican." While Teresa described an incident of discrimination based on her and her teammates' Mexican ethnoracial identity, there was not a qualifier to the level of their "Mexicaness." This attention to how Mexican Albert is perceived is continued in another story that he shared.

"... last week I was down in San Antonio, I was walking with my friend who is also Hispanic, we were walking down, there was a guy, a Hispanic guy ... and

walking down for some bottled water, so he made a comment after we had past them, he's like, "Oh he's too dark for water." And this is a Hispanic guy. He wasn't like from Mexico, San Juan, he was someone from San Antonio. He was White, second generation what have you but ... he said "He's too dark for water." Essentially saying like he's Mexican, he's not going to buy water from us or he's like cheap or something, he's not going to buy water from someone off the street, but I didn't hear him...I'm a little dark complected but I wasn't dressed down. I mean I was wearing a nice shirt and boots and he was just saying, oh he's too dark for water. He's not going to buy water off the street from anyone. I was like, wow, I just didn't know how to take it, but I mean, reflecting back on it, I was thinking maybe I should go confront him"

Albert concluded his story by saying "So with me, you have a nopal afrente, you have a cactus on your forehead. Like you're super Mexican; you can't get away from it. Wherever you go you're going to be Mexican." His use of the phrase "nopal afrente" or "cactus on your forehead" reaffirmed the concept that being "too Mexican" was at the root of why the incident occurred. However, I noticed that at the same time the use of this phrase and that of being "super Mexican" was said with a sense of confidence and even pride. While these incidents caused him distress, Albert's response appeared to preserve his Mexican identity even more.

The harm that was caused for most of the Tejanos spoke to "not being enough." While Albert and Teresa shared stories of being "too Mexican," Albert, as the only non-Tejano, spoke in a way that only seemed to strengthen his ethnoracial identity as Mexican. In addition, most of the experiences seem to originate from White identified

people, with Albert being an exception. Anastasia, Chica, and Teresa's stories speak to the possibility that experiences of "not being enough" relate to identifying as Tejano.

Physical appearance. Ethnoracial identity is a social construct based on a number of factors including most often physical appearance. While physical appearance has typically included skin color and tone, hair color and texture, eye color and shape, facial shape and size, and body structure (Renn, 2003; Root, 2003; Wijeyesinghe, 2012), clothing is included in the analysis in this study. Differences in clothing have previously been mentioned as markers between Chicano and Mexican children (Bejarano, 2007). It made sense to see if any markers might be present between who identified or was perceived as Tejano and non-Tejano.

Physical appearance played a part in most of the participants' experiences growing up and how they identified ethnoracially. While Anastasia previously mentioned her skin tone getting lighter as she grew up, she also talked about the kind of dress that Tejanos would have around her.

- "I guess sometimes [to others] I'm like Aryan, Middle Eastern, and some people are like, okay I can tell you're something but I can't quite tell what it is because I have the light skin but I have the features that are different."
- "They're dressed in their cowboy hats and the nice shirt and their boots and I see them dancing to that kind of music, but I guess that's mostly it."

Angelica's experience concerning physical appearances focused more on hair.

"They just straight up ask me what, now what are you but like, they'll ask are you mixed? And I'll say, no. Then because of your hair, I thought you might have been mixed with Hispanic and black, but I'm not. But I get asked that a lot...I

guess I could see why they would think that. It just feels like, like the type of hair I have, it's very similar to African American but I mean, sometimes I wish they wouldn't ask that."

Chica acknowledged that part of what she wore probably contributed to "El Indio" ethnoracial identity that impacted her life. John however spoke about the complexities that clothing brings to a Tejano identity.

"I would say certain dress styles, depending on what part of Texas you're at. I think like more so like Southwest Texas, just like the way they dress and some others might be where their occupation work on a ranch or not."

John named the concept that Tejanos look different, depending on a number of factors, including whether they work at a ranch. In the case of non-Tejanos, Albert and Fernando brought up instances of growing up that relate to *Mexicaness*. Albert said previously that "if you're brown, you're a Mexican" but he recalled other qualifiers as well.

"It was obvious I look Mexican. My hair was long. I didn't have the same clothes or the cool stuff that people had so that meant I knew that I was Mexican or Mexican-American."

Fernando's experiences regarding physical appearance had little to do with his skin color. Originally talking about what made music that he listened to Tejano he said:

"I'm not sure honestly... I don't know. Like when I go the flea market, that kind of music's on and everyone's just dancing. *Mexican hats on, beards and moustaches* and everything so everyone just brings the Mexican community together I guess you could say." [emphasis added]

In trying to describe Tejano music, Fernando instead names features that he describes as Mexican. Fernando also continued with physical descriptions when I asked specifically about Tejano social traits and what being Tejano looks like at Lone Star University.

- "...I guess clothing. Like Mexican American, Mexicans, Tejanos like wear boots and cowboy hats but they're Mexican hats and belt buckle, moustache, call it a beaner bar like a moustache, and just dark. Like if I could think of one right now, I'd think of a hat, moustache, belt buckle, tucked in white shirt with those blue pants and white snakeskin I guess, or something like that, boots. Typical Mexican that's real, stereotypes are real."
- "You can definitely identify people here, I mean obviously through the color. It's not the majority ever I guess. What does it look like? Other than the, well the clothes are the same I guess. Everything looks the same. Actually I take that back. You can tell. I feel like I dress normally, I think, but you don't see like a blonde, I guess white girl wearing a big T-shirt with Santa Maria, you wouldn't see them wearing that. It's not often that you see even a Hispanic person wearing that but occasionally you can't tell, but generally you see them wearing normal clothes, American clothes."

Fernando's assessment of Tejanos, as a non-Tejano himself, is that they look like "dark" males with mustaches and/or beards who also wear cowboy hats, white shirts, blue pants, belt buckles and cowboy boots. If they are women it's likely that they would wear a large, Santa Maria shirt [See Figure 6]. Fernando's description of Tejanos closely aligns with Albert's description of Tejano social traits.

Maybe wearing the cowboy hat and the boots, the wranglers, maybe that's Tejano, or dressing like Tejano, and venue, so socially yes.

The physical appearance of Tejanos that Albert and Fernando identify were in response mostly to questions about how they identified growing up, what being Tejano looked like at Lone Star University and social traits of Tejanos. Albert and Fernando were the only participants who brought up physical characteristics consistently through all three of these questions and with the moniker of



Figure 6. Santa Maria image on fabric

“Mexican.” Sophia, the other non-Tejano-identified participant, brought up only one instance of her experience regarding physical appearance. When asked if people asked about her ethn racial identity, she said, “When they do, I do look like my ethnicity so I don't think of that as bad.” Teresa was the only Tejano-identified participant to bring up physical appearance when I asked about what being Tejano looks like at Lone Star University.

“Maybe style of dress or I would say speech even more so, being able to like use Spanish or just knowing some of the things that are specifically Tejano, like some of the food, or like I said, the cascarones and the things that are related around tradition and especially with family.”

The distinction between how some of the Tejano and non-Tejano participants talked about physical appearance is subtle but important. Tejanos' responses that

connected physical appearance and ethnoracial identity generally discussed more being mistaken or misunderstood as another ethnoracial identity. Non-Tejanos talked more about being perceived as Mexican. While most of the participants talked about skin color and other physical features, non-Tejanos mentioned clothing and dress style. The context of these responses, especially concerning clothing, was different for Tejano and non-Tejano participants. Most of the responses about physical appearance for Tejanos came up during questions about growing up. The responses that non-Tejanos gave about physical appearance came up during questions around growing up and their current perception of Tejano social traits and Tejanos at Lone Star University. Again this is especially true for Albert and Fernando. Conversely, when participants were asked what symbols or images came to mind when thinking about Tejanos, the Tejano respondents said:

- “Stars, Texas, cowboy hats, cowboy boots, dancing, music, weddings, things of that sort.” – Anastasia
- “Like cowboy hats.” – Angelica
- “This guy right here. The vaquero, the vaquero held with his head high.” – Chica
- “Like also clothing. You can identify some clothing as well, whether it be the sombrero, serape, or something like that.” – John
- “I would say maybe just general what I’ve seen maybe even in my Southwestern Literature class, it’s usually with the cactus and man with the moustache and the hat with the rope attached to his side and riding a horse and everything but I’ve never personally seen that. I’ve seen my uncle out

working his ranch. It's always in the truck with the camo and with a pair of either the maybe an ax or like shears to clear the land and so, I guess the way society portrays it and the way I've seen it has been a little bit different at least." - Teresa

When non-Tejanos were asked the same question, Sophia was the only one to mention clothing saying

"Cowboy hat. Although my dad does wear a cowboy hat because of his culture but Tejano I would say like bar-b-q reminds me of them a lot. Just Tejano music. Symbols? Yea, cowboy hat."

The conclusion that I would infer from these responses is the perception that the Tejanos have of themselves concerning physical appearances is more nuanced than non-Tejanos. Only when Tejanos were asked about themselves symbolically did they discuss clothing and outward, changeable appearance. The participants who did not identify as Tejano, in this case Albert and Fernando, used what I would call stereotypes about what Tejanos look like and wear. In addition, with the exception of Fernando, all of the participants who mentioned physical appearance and gender specifically, spoke of men. That suggests to me that the perceptions the participants have of Tejanos, symbolically or in actuality, is preferential to men. Whether or not this preferential treatment is incidental or because there is more imagery of Tejano men available is unclear. Ultimately the effect that physical appearance had on participants relates to stereotypes of Mexican-Americans and other ethnoracial identities about skin color, hair type, clothing choices, and even gender.

Spanish and English Use. Language proficiency arose as a strong theme amongst all the participants. Regardless if English or Spanish was the primary language in their home, they all acknowledged some sort of struggle about language at some point in their lives. Albert and Sophia indicated that their use of Spanish had an impact on their academic success and were placed in separate classes until their English proficiency could improve. Fernando related two instances in which his Spanish speaking ability was taken for granted.

“... everybody assumes I speak Spanish which I guess it’s weird, expected but a lot of the Mexicans, they come from Mexico to come shop, they would come up and speak Spanish to me because I look Hispanic and I just feel bad. They would get really mad at me, I think because I couldn’t speak Spanish. They just kind of think that I would automatically speak Spanish...I went on spring break a few years ago and a white girl came up to me and was like, “¿Hablas español?” I later found out she was from Tennessee so I was just a regular person and she just kind of thought I only spoke Spanish, which is weird.”

Angelica named not only the impact from strangers but on family and possible future career.

“I wished I had learned and that’s what I’m trying to learn because I know how valuable it is to know it, like in social work, but also just with family and stuff, I’m kind of embarrassed that I don’t know Spanish and I wish I did.”

Parents’ first language use aligned relatively close with whether the participant identified as Tejano. This may also have to do with generational status in the U.S. All of the Tejano-identified participants except for Teresa and Chica, had parents whose first

language was English. Teresa's mother spoke only English whereas Chica indicated that both English and Spanish were her parents' first language. Fernando was the only non-Tejano whose parents' first language was English

While the participants' parents may have had the ability to speak Spanish, not all of them necessarily spoke to their children in Spanish on a regular basis. Albert and Sophia had theories as to why their parents spoke to them only in Spanish.

- "... I think it was something more like he didn't want us to lose that Mexican identity, especially since we had such close ties to Mexico." – Albert
- "That's the only language they know so we had to, just learned it." – Sophia

Chica seemed to be explicitly clear as to why her mom made sure she knew Spanish.

"When I grew up in Illinois, my parents, my mother was cultural. She would always tell us, you need to remember your culture, you need to remember you ethnicity, you need to remember who you are and never forget it so, at home she always enforced us speaking Spanish, even though my brothers of course knew English...we were required to speak Spanish at home."

Teresa on the other hand had explicit knowledge as to why English was used almost exclusively in her household.

"I guess when I talked to my dad about it, again, it was point of tension, but he was like, well, your mom couldn't speak it so we didn't. So that was always I guess his respect for her and the fact and she couldn't learn it or didn't want to learn it."

The other participants, Anastasia, Angelica, Fernando and John, never knew why only one language was used almost exclusively in their household and in their cases, English. For the participants where English was the primary language spoken in their household, Spanish nevertheless still had a presence in their family. Spanish use was sometimes small but impactful and often directly with parents or other close family members.

- “Like with my grandparents, they do it, they’ll switch back and forth and then my mom and my step-dad will speak Spanish and then to me, and back and forth for like little things.” - Anastasia
- “I speak Spanish quite frequently. At home with my husband, with my kids. We’re kind of, what is it called now, where you interject both languages in the same conversation, in the same sentence... We speak a lot of Spanglish at home.” – Chica
- “They [Fernando’s parents] speak Spanish to themselves and little words, like close the door or turn off the light, little phrases or words, other than that we only spoke English to each other.” – Fernando
- “Yea, there were some phrases I would catch, I would understand what he was saying, and there would be others where I would have no idea, or others where I’d be like, okay, I kind of because I could pick out a few ... it’s kind of a switch off between English and Spanish because my step-mom doesn’t know Spanish and she likes to know what they’re talking about sometimes.” – John

- “My dad would sometimes speak Spanish to my sister and I but it was just, I mean, slight, small phrases here and there. And I guess like the terms of endearment were always usually from him in Spanish so that was always *mija* or whatever, but everything else was in English.” - Teresa

This use of Spanish comes with frustration, roadblocks, anxiety, and even shame.

- “...my mom isn’t fluent. She may have been...but I guess she’s kind of lost it and then I was upset because I was like, ‘Why didn’t you learn? Your parents are fluent. How are you not? Why didn’t you teach me’ kind of thing so I’m kind of starting to learn now but it was never like, this is why.” - Anastasia
- “I’m telling my parents and family and roommates, like talk to me in Spanish. Don’t speak to me in English. I’m trying to, consume myself in it.” – Angelica
- “...my sister’s boyfriend, actually his family is from Mexico and we’ve gone over to their house several times and I guess I would tense up and freeze up...” - Teresa

Anastasia expressed frustration that when her mom had the chance to teach her Spanish, she didn’t take it. Just as important, she wanted to know why that aspect of her identity was not given to her and now she has to try to learn on her own. Angelica has been given that chance to learn and is now explicit with her family and friends to help her develop those language skills. Even as the participants were trying to learn, they could still find themselves in places where shame and anxiety kept them quiet. Teresa found herself frozen despite knowing that speaking up would have been beneficial to learning the

language. In addition, all of the participants except for Albert, Chica, and Sophia had at some point or were currently in class to learn Spanish. Their comprehension of Spanish, either through writing, reading, or verbal understanding, seemed in general to outweigh their ability to actually speak it. Learning the language connects them more with their Mexican roots, even if they don't identify as such.

- “I understand more than I speak it.” – Anastasia
- “I understand it to a certain extent but I don't speak it. I speak pretty much as much as I understand, which is close to nothing.” – Fernando
- “I have a better time understanding it than I do speaking it. When I took classes in high school, is pretty much like a bunch of reading and writing, not so much speaking so you didn't really learn to speak it but you could learn to maybe read it or listen to it. It sounds weird, but it happens.” – John
- [I understand] “To a certain degree. Yea. When I'm around my family and they're using it interspersed in their conversation I can definitely pick up what's going on.” – Teresa

Several features emerged that could possibly connect to some of the participants identifying as Tejano. While all the participants acknowledge the impact of language on their ethnoracial identities, Tejanos were the only ones where English was used primarily at home intermingled with some level of Spanish and where Spanish use extended outside of class and parents. Fernando came close to identifying with some of these factors but acknowledged

“I try to talk to my parents in Spanish. Other than that, not really. I don’t speak to anyone in Spanish and nobody speaks to me in Spanish. My friends that do speak Spanish, they don’t speak it to me because I don’t understand it.”

For Tejanos, using Spanish extended to friends and other family members. Waters (1990) in her work with Whites of European ethnicity said that their original ethnic language was a “secret language” used only “when they were quite young and that [it] was used only with the family” (p. 117). It did not extend “to a wider collectivity, to a community or an ethnic group”, and was only “experienced as a private affair” (p. 116). For the Tejanos in this case, the opposite seems to be true but bringing out that aspect of their culture comes with risks. Bejarano (2007) acknowledged that the shame of not knowing one’s language can also cause one to feel shame for one’s ethnoracial identity. “The question ‘How can you say you are Mexican if you can’t even speak Spanish?’ resonates throughout the borderlands where, often, the contradiction of being despised and loathed as both Mexicana/o and Chicana/o is problematic” (Bejarano, 2007, p. 139). This shaming of not knowing Spanish impacts ethnoracial identity choices. Albert talked about this when he left college briefly.

“I went down to San Antonio and that’s where I started seeing, well Hispanic ... people who don’t really speak Spanish, who are more acculturated, who just have some sort of ancestry in Mexican-American, or Mexican, so at that point I didn’t want to be Hispanic and used more Mexican-American and Latino.”

The choice to come out with the use of Spanish outside of close family would seem to correlate to also identifying as Tejano.

Representation in media. Throughout the course of the interviews, specific questions were asked regarding representation of Tejanos in art, books, film, music, and television. Previous research has suggested that mass media and marketing in some ways produces and shapes a Latin@ culture. Macias (2006) argued that media, specifically Spanish-Language television, worked “to help create a ‘pan-ethnic’ Latino ethnicity” but was unsure how it impacted Mexican-American ethnicity (p. 40). Bejarano (2007) argued that instead it “symbolically strip[ped] youths of the integrity of their cultures,” damaging what it meant to be Mexican, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, etc. in a sort of “Latin Implosion” (p. 97). All of the participants named how media had an impact on their identity choice. Albert when asked how he identified growing up said:

“I would probably say I was Mexican, just because in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, we always watch Univision and stuff like that, so it was a lot more referred to as Mexican...Most of the time you see in media or whatever, anything that has Hispanic or Latino, for race and ethnicity so I think mainstream has also affected it is how people start thinking what they really are.”

In talking about her trip to Mexico, traveling the subways, and witnessing poverty everywhere, Sophia noticed the impact of media.

“...the culture, it’s still trying to hold on. I mean you’ll see Justin Bieber or Selena Gomez, Taylor Swift, everywhere, even on the radio. They have a pop station where it’s all English. It’s kind of a little crazy.”

Albert talked about a book that caused him to think about his Hispanic identity while Chica’s love of reading books and magazines helped her to get over the time she was in “the school for the donkeys,” *la escuela for las burras*. Despite the participants’

acknowledgement of the impact of media on their identities, there seemed to be no relationship between that impact and whether or not they identified as Tejano. Their responses however demonstrated their understanding of what being Tejano is through media and popular culture. I examine what being Tejano looks like through media in three parts: personalities and Selena, television, and music.

Personalities and Selena. All of the participants except for John named someone they thought was Tejano during the interviews. John admitted that he was bad at remembering musicians and artists' names but when it came to actors and movies he was pretty explicit about the lack of Tejanos.

“Usually when I watch films, it’s usually something like American, Hollywood, something like the Avengers or some animated movie.”

John was also the only individual to not name a specific television program, film, or book. The closest he came to naming any type of specific media was that he watched telenovelas with his grandmother. All the other participants named at least one personality in the media, either as a character in the media or a real person. Between the seven

Table 3. Personalities Named by Participants			
Name	Occupation	Ethnoracial Identity	Fictional/Non-fictional
A.B. Quintanilla III	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Augustin Ramirez	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Belinda Peregrin	Musician	Spanish, Mexican	Non-fictional
Bobby Pulido	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Cesar Chavez	Activist	Mexican-American	Non-fictional
Dora	n/a	Latin@	Fictional
Eligio "Kika" de La Garza	Former Congressman	Hispanic, Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Elvis Crespo	Musician	Puerto Rican-American	Non-fictional
Eva Longoria	Actor	Mexican-American, Texican, Tejano	Non-fictional
Flex	Musician	Panamanian	Non-fictional
George Lopez	Actor	Mexican-American, Latin@	Non-fictional
Jay Perez	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Jorge Ramos	Journalist	Hispanic, Mexican, Mexican-American	Non-fictional
Kumbia Kings	Musicians	various including Mexican-American, Tejano, Mexican	Non-fictional
"Little Joe" Jose Maria DeLeon Hernandez	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Los Tigres Del Norte	Musicians	Mexican-American	Non-fictional
Ozomatli	Musicians	Various including Chicano, Creole and Choctaw Indian, Jewish, Mexican	Non-fictional
Pepe Maldonado	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Robert Rodriguez	Director	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Ruben Ramos	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
Selena Quintanilla-Pérez	Musician	Mexican-American, Tejano	Non-fictional
The Brothers Garcia	n/a	Latino-American, Mexican-American, Tejano	Fictional
("Belinda se recupera", 2008; "BIO", n.d.; Birchmeier, n.d.; Elbein, 2011; Friedman, 2010; "George Lopez Talks", 2014; "Hispanic Americans in congress", 2010; iraygoza, n.d.; "Jay Perez on", 2012; "Jay Perez's Biography", 2014; Martinez, 2014; Moreno, 2015; Nunn, n.d.; Pacheo, n.d.; Puga, 2012a; Puga, 2012b; "Ruben Ramos and", n.d.; "RubenRamos.com biography", 2012; "Selena – Mexican America", 2010; Sierra, 2010; "Spanish roots", n.d.; "UTPA Kika", 2009)			

remaining participants, 21 distinct personalities were named (See Table 3). My purpose in creating this list was to breakdown the occupations of the personalities and determine

if they were actually Tejano by its simplest definition: a Mexican-American born in Texas. Of the personalities named, two-thirds were musicians, two were actors, and there was one director, one former congressman, one activist, and one journalist.

Two occupations were listed as “not applicable” as they were fictional television characters and children (though I was tempted to list “explorer” for Dora). Thirteen of the personalities named were indeed Tejano. Nine of those included musicians, while the others were actor Eva Longoria, former Congressman Eligio “Kika” de La Garza, and The Brothers Garcia. Of the remaining personalities, six were on the Mexican diaspora while the remaining were Panamanian, Puerto Rican-American, and Latin@. What I noticed emerging was the lack of Tejano representation brought up by the participants. When they were asked more directly to name Tejano actors or celebrities, only half could identify anyone. In one of those cases the person was incorrect about that person’s Tejano identity. When they were asked to name artists or musicians, again only half of the participants could name any Tejanos, all of whom they were correct about. Anastasia could not name any musicians but she offered to pull out a playlist on her laptop and sample through her Tejano music. Out of the six artists she played only two were Tejano.

Most of the participants seem generally unaware of who were Tejanos in the popular culture. What awareness there was also seemed to lean more towards an awareness of musicians, a minimal awareness of people in television and film, and a very limited awareness of anyone in politics or public service. With the exception of two, every personality was only mentioned once. Los Kumbia Kings were named directly three times, once each by Albert, Anastasia, and Fernando. Selena Quintanilla-Pérez was

named 16 times by Albert, Angelica, Fernando, Sophia, and Teresa. Selena presents a particular unique case in Tejano personalities. As a young, female musician who was on the verge of breaking into main stream music before her murder, she is probably the most well-known Tejano in the world. When Teresa studied abroad in London she indicated that people would say “oh you’re from Corpus Christi, oh that’s where Selena’s from.” Most of the participants, especially those who mentioned Selena themselves, were too young to remember the



Figure 7. Selena statue, Mirador de la Flor

musician and in many cases they were not even born when she was alive. Her murder on March 31, 1995 propelled a movement of sorts that Paredez (2009) calls Selenidad. In the same way that latinidad is “the process of Latina/o identity making” (p. xiii), Selenidad is the process of evoking her absence and what she represents. Paradez noted that Selinidad takes many forms and explicitly has resulted in a monument in Corpus Christi, Texas that literally recreates her presence (See Figure 7), allows fans to meet her (See Figure 8), and even enables them the ability to leave messages



Figure 8. Picture with Mirador de la Flor



Figure 9. Examples of messages written around Mirador de La Flor

(See Figure 9). When the participants evoked Selena’s name, Paredez might argue that what they were actually educating is what it means to be Tejano. Even though only Angelica and Teresa saliently identified as Tejano, the other participants’ responses were potentially expressing what Selena, and hence Tejano, meant to them. Albert for instance responded to a question about whether or not he saw shows on television that were Tejano.

“The only thing I can think as Tejano is radio stations and Tejano music ...I don’t want call myself Tejano ‘cuz every time I go to Mexico, down in San Antonio, that’s all there would be is Tejano music.... I recall when I was in high school... a couple of my friends were Hispanic. They would listen to Tejano music... I guess their parents were Mexican-Americans here so they grew up more like were more attached to the Tejano music, Tejano culture where I was more attached to the Mexican mission culture like directly from Mexico so it seemed that their parents were already born here. So when they grew up it was more about the Tejano because they were better, the way I see it, a level above the Mexican. It’s like I explain with them, the people from the Valley... don’t want to be called Mexican

because Mexicans like you're from Mexico and you're here type of thing. So I think that really impacts much. I think Tejano is a lot more used like with Selena, Tejano music, Corpus Christi area. Down in the valley area, they maybe use more Tejano than this part up north and to Dallas is like, I mean Tejano music every once in a while on the radio station...but that is the only place I can see Tejano and media coming through.”

Albert connected Selena strongly with being Tejano and a sense of entitlement among those who identified as such due to being born in Texas and the United States. Whereas Selena creates a sense of disadvantage for Albert, Angelica is instead empowered by her identity. When Angelica was asked if she could remember the first time she identified as Tejano, this was her response.

“I guess like growing up, I always watched Selena. I'm sure you've heard that from some other people. That just made me like made me think. That's something I could identify with. Something I could call myself.”

Selena was indeed the only personality that Angelica sure positive she could identify as Tejano. Angelica also acknowledged the *Selena* movie as the only Tejano film that she could identify. She had also seen the real Selena through other mediums. Fernando, Sophia, and Teresa were generally neutral in how they spoke about Selena but nonetheless their inclusion speaks to the power that her figure had on the Tejano representation in the media.

These competing perceptions of what Selena represented reflects a “critical map with which many Latinas/os navigated and continue to navigate... inter-Latina/o tensions” (Paredes, 2009, p. 26). With these participants as well Selena seems to be one

of the few specific Tejanos who can be named by many of them. In addition to the comments about Selena, most of the other Tejano-identified personalities favor musicians. While Paradez (2009) concluded that remembering Selena provided “both the evidence and the methods by which we can ensure that the Latina body remains palpably re-membered” (p. 192), I would argue that relying on one figure as representation for that body, in this case the Tejano body, does more harm. While Selena was recognized for her work with the community and emphasized the importance of graduating from high school, her actual occupation provided limited opportunities for others to follow in her path. A wider range of Tejanos in different types of occupations would provide a variety of goals to which all Tejanos could aspire to. Selena’s emphasis on appearance, though she was careful to not over sexualize her image (Paredes, 2009), is potentially problematic. Much in the same way that the participants’ imagery of Tejanos was restricted to stereotypes focused around the appearance of men, Selena herself has the potential to become the feminized, Tejana equivalent of those stereotypes. Finally, Selena’s life ended tragically and in the prime of her youth. In the time since her passing, much has changed in the Latin@ community. To try to mirror her experience to the experience of Tejanos 20 years later seems illogical.

Television. Almost all participants mentioned watching some aspect of film and television as they grew up. Chica was the exception as she explained that growing up television was brand new. There were only three stations, all in English, and her mother was leery of the programming available. Even as Spanish television became available, she did not watch that media.

“I’ve got this thing. I can’t stand Spanish programs, television stations. I’m just like, because for me, son muy guatosos they’re like too much drama. Although I know that not all of them are that way... I’m not a big TV watcher so when I do watch, I try to watch something that is geared toward my taste and ... I don’t take the time to investigate what actually is out there for the Spanish TV stations.”

Teresa also did not watch Spanish television growing up and instead read bilingual books. This supports her earlier comments about the limited use of Spanish in her house due to her mother’s inability to speak the language.

The range of television that is currently watched by participants remains varied. Telenovelas were by far the most watched form of Spanish language entertainment often with friends and family.

- “Every once in a while when I can I watch novellas with my friends but not like frequently.” – Anastasia
- “Like sometimes I’ll watch novellas with my tías and stuff like that but other than that, no.” – Angelica
- “When I’m with my Grandma, she usually watches like the Spanish networks, whatever novella she’s watching, like I’ll sit there and watch it with her. Other than that, that’s the only Spanish network or programming I watch.” – John
- “My roommate, she has family that’s originally from Mexico so we turned on a novella the other day ... and so we watched that and I was asking her like, am I right about this? Is this going on? And she’d go like yea, and she would clarify, but that was the extent of it really. Kind of

when she turns it on or it happens to be one, when I've gone to visit my sister's boyfriend's family, and so yea, that's about it." – Teresa

Macias (2006) noted that several of his respondents who viewed Spanish-language programming did so with their Spanish-speaking relatives. That was also the case in this study and extends to their friends as well. The participants who did watch telenovelas were Tejano. While there is no specific relationship between identifying as Tejano and watching telenovelas, the mention of these is meaningful. It is likely that telenovelas provide an easy outlet to understand Spanish. This is supported by the shows that Albert and Sophia watched, which included the news, entertainment, and sports (Etsa America, Impacto Deportes, Impacto Reportido, Jorge Ramos, and Rojo Vivo). These shows are less scripted, more data driven, and would not necessarily provide storylines or content, characteristics that make telenovelas easier to understand. The only Spanish Language program that Fernando watched were music videos on the television station Mun2. These do not necessarily require any Spanish language understanding to enjoy. Tejanos watching telenovelas may be another example of how practicing their Spanish skills incorporates friends, community, and extended family.

Three majority English language shows were also named by the participants: *Dora the Explorer*, *Dallas*, and *The Brothers Garcia*. *Dora the Explorer* was named by Angelica as an example of a Spanish language program while *Dallas* and *The Brothers Garcia* were named by Anastasia and Fernando respectively as shows with Tejano characters. While Angelica responded with jest when giving her response, *Dora the Explorer*. Her comment speaks to a small but growing number of shows on television that

were meant to appeal to a English speaking audience but also appeals to Latin@s through its intermittent use of Spanish and setting within Latin@ culture. *The Brothers Garcia*, which is set in San Antonio and premiered around the same time as *Dora the Explorer*, focused on a Mexican-American family. By definition this is a show about Tejanos, even if that isn't the core of its premise. *Dallas*, in this case the series that ran from 2012-2014, featured at least one Latina as part of its main cast, Elena Ramos as played by Jordana Brewster. Despite the setting for this show, Elena's background as having migrated from Mexico at the age of 8, doesn't necessarily fit it into the category of a Tejano show.

I noticed two characteristics associated with the identification of these programs. An overwhelming majority of *Dora the Explorer* takes place in English. Identifying *Dora the Explorer* as a Spanish language program indicates a possible perception that *any* Spanish is enough to make a television show a Spanish language program. It also presents the possibility that Angelica and the other participants are aware of only a small number of Spanish language programs that exist outside telenovelas, sports, and news and entertainment programs. When they identified *The Garcia Brothers* and *Dallas* as Tejano shows, the location of these shows, not necessarily the ethnoracial identity of the character, was the main characteristic that warranted the Tejano label. While *The Garcia Brothers* focuses specifically on a Mexican-American family, *Dallas* does not. Jordana Brewster's character is Mexican-American but with a history that brings her from Mexico at the age of 8. Julie Gonzalo, the other main Latina actress on the show plays a White character. In an interview soon after the show started she said:

It's funny, because I'm Brazilian and I'm playing a Mexican character, and Julie [Gonzalo] is from Argentina, and she's playing the American character, and she's the one who speaks Spanish (Puga, 2012b)

Ultimately these three shows speak to perceptions to participants' impressions of what constitutes a Spanish-language program and the lack of diversity or awareness of Spanish language programs outside of Spanish language stations. In addition the participants' perceptions of Tejano shows was shaped by location rather than the actual the ethnoracial identity of the characters. Behind the scenes of Dallas, this issue of who was Tejano was further muddled by casting of actors in roles different from their ethnoracial identities. The impact of television on Tejano and other Latin@ identities remains muddled but within this small sample television shows allow people to connect with Spanish language and serve as a window for viewing some Latin@ identities.

Music. Whenever I brought up the phrase Tejano, soon after those familiar with the word would ask some variation of the question: "Oh, so you're looking at Tejano music?" The word Tejano is as closely associated with the musical genre probably more so than the ethnoracial identity. I will explore what exactly Tejano music is and how the participants identified Tejano music. By comparing the two I hope to make a distinction between the two terms, as well as give some insight as to how the perception of the music might also affect the perception of the ethnoracial identity.

Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr (2002) refers to the confusion between Tejano as a people and as a musical term. He defines the musical term Tejano, which rose in the 1980s, as "the music played by Tejano artists in the later part of the twentieth century" (p. 4). He postulates that most commentators cannot agree about what it exactly means and

thus the term means whatever it is that listeners want. His preferred terminology is *musica tejana*, which “comprises all the musical genres, forms, and styles that have existed in the Tejano community since at least the nineteenth century” (p. 4). *Musica tejana* is defined by five elements. First it is music developed by Tejanos in relationship with the physical and metaphorical border of the Rio Grande. Secondly, *musica tejana* reflects and meets the sensibilities of Tejano life. Third, *musica tejana* is rooted in Mexican history through its language and the history of indigenous and Spanish people. Fourth, while rooted in this history, *musica tejana* incorporates modern influences such as using different instruments to play traditional Mexican tunes, mixing in other musical rhythms in to Mexican songs, and appropriating, adapting and re-inventing other rhythms, Mexican songs and non-Mexican tunes. Fifth, *musica tejana* uses diverse types of groups with specific mixes of instruments and vocalists.

The participants shared their impressions of what I will refer to as *musica tejana*. These impressions were generally divided into what the music sounded like or their experience around the music. For instance, Albert described it as “a softer jazz” and smooth, different from Mexican music which he thought of as “hardcore” and “krunk.” Chica reflected that *musica tejana* had “more of a flow to it.” Both Chica and Anastasia referred to the music as Mexican or Spanish “country.” These descriptors gave the impression of incorporating modern influences, such as jazz, while also acknowledging the sensibilities of a Tejano lifestyle. This included the dominance of country music in the state of Texas. In terms of actual instruments or vocalizations, Albert and Sophia made references to Spanish. While Albert described it as easier to follow, Sophia indicated that Spanish had a different kind of “accent,” “tone,” or “pronunciation”. She

could tell it was Tejano music by how the Spanish was spoke or sung. Albert's and Sophia's acknowledgement of Spanish is reflective of the element of the language of Mexico. Their awareness that there is something different about how Spanish is spoken or sung is a signature of the metaphorical border of the Rio Grande. Teresa was the only participant to name actual instruments (i.e. an accordion) and a tempo or style that would allow for dancing (i.e. the polka or cumbia). Teresa recognized that música tejana uses different instruments and mixes in different musical rhythms.

How and with whom música tejana was heard was what was shaped for most participants. Anastasia tended to listen with friends but other participants listened with family. Angelica and Fernando spoke about listening to the music at flea markets while Albert had seen música tejana at a San Antonio festival. Listening to música tejana on the radio seemed to be a common theme among many of the participants and in the case with Chica very powerful. Chica explained that as migrants who found themselves traveling up north, the radio became very important.

“...coming back from working in the fields, we lived to hear the Tejano music because when we heard the Tejano music, it meant that we were home and there was just this whole cultural difference. As soon as you cross San Antonio, southbound, it was like you were in a different world and you were home. You could feel it, you could sense it, and the music just told you, you were home. Yeah, the music played a big part in all of that.”

The power of radio to Chica’s homecoming was shaped in actual geography as she crossed back over into the Tejano cultural zone. Radio, even with the advent of the Internet, can still be relatively limited. For instance, Albert mentioned Tejano station KXTN 107.5 in the San Antonio area (“Radio Stations in San Antonio,” n.d). This station was classified as having a very strong signal but its reach does not extend beyond an hour away from the station epicenter (See Figure 10). If radio is one of the main ways that the participants were experiencing *musica tejana*, then the ability to carry that beyond the

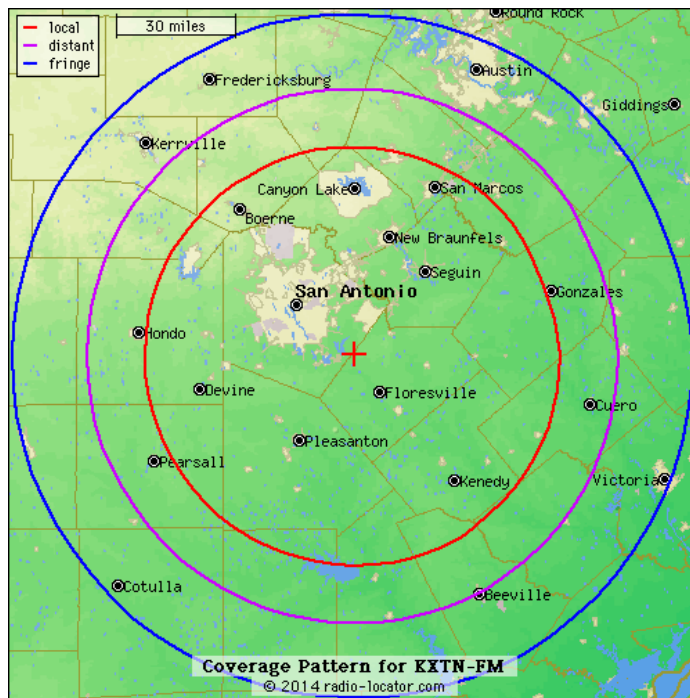


Figure 10. Tejano station KXTN 107.5 coverage

Tejano cultural zone, where many Tejano radio stations are located, could prove challenging (“Radio Station Finder,” n.d.).

The bands and musicians that were identified by participants as Tejano were mentioned above (See Table 3). Ultimately, it was determined that many of those noted did not fit the ethnoracial definition of being

Tejano. This was due to the fact that the bands and musicians were not born in Texas and in a few cases were not ethnoracially Mexican-American. The question remains though as to whether or not their music is Tejano, or more specifically *musica tejana*. The musicians identified by the participants also included some specific songs. I created a list of these songs as well as the top three to five songs from the musicians according to the

website Spotify (See Tejano Playlist, Appendix F). Based on the five elements expressed by San Miguel, Jr. (2002), most of the songs are *musica tejana*. Most of the songs were developed by Tejanos and talked about aspects of Tejano life, with Spanish as a dominant if not sole language. The types of vocals and arrangements alternated from a single vocalist to “boy band” configurations and featured multiple instruments including keyboards, accordions, guitars, drums, and horns.

Two of the musicians did not easily fit into the five criteria: Flex and Elvis Crespo. As a Panamanian and Puerto Rican-American, it would seem that their songs would not relate to the border of the Rio Grande, nor would they necessarily reflect sensibilities of a Tejano lifestyle. Musically, however, their songs were in Spanish and the musicians incorporated a broad range of vocal styles, tempos, and instruments into their work. Given this criteria, how is it then that these two artist were identified as Tejano and should their music be considered *musica tejana*? There would seem to be exceptions for these criteria. For instance, in the 1980s, La Sombra and La Mafia gained popularity in Tejano music despite their origins from Chicago and Houston, Texas. These locations were not a part of the border of the Rio Grande. However, San Miguel, Jr.’s (2002) interpretation of the border is metaphorical. He states that “these musicians continued to play border music because they were the borders of two clashing cultures” (p. 6). The borders for these two musicians would seem to then be international (Flex) and territorial (Elvis Crespo). The final criteria of *musica tejana* reflecting and meeting the sensibilities of Tejano life is also applicable in this situation.

Anastasia identified these and several other musicians. After she played songs by these artists she said, “This is like families driving in the car and all singing together

[this] is kind of what I think of.” For Anastasia it is possible that the music had a beat or tempo she enjoys and connects her to a larger community and a place of belonging. If “Música tejana...can be viewed as an act of cultural affirmation by the Tejano population” (San Miguel, Jr., 2002, p. 135-6), then based on Anastasia’s feelings, flex and Elvis would fit under the criteria.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to gain perspective on how the participants ethnoracially identified and the common themes across their respective narratives. While all of the participants identified a multitude of ethnoracial identities, only five participants saliently identified as Tejano. Each of the participants presented a variety of experiences for their ethnoracial identity selection, some relatively recent in their lifetime. Despite the diversity of stories that they shared, several common themes emerged regarding how they saliently identified as Tejano. Findings indicated that having at least one parent from the Tejano cultural zone was a strong indicator of a salient Tejano identity. The influence of family and community also impacted the saliency of the participants’ Tejano identity. Community make-up that was majority Mexican also indicated that some of the participants would not saliently identify as Tejano. Findings indicated that those who saliently identified as Tejano were at least second generation in the United States and had some awareness as to who in the family migrated from Mexico. However, their current connections to Mexico were limited, either with no family that they knew of or with little actual time spent there. While some participants shared experiences of not belonging, the Tejano participants’ narratives focused on “not being enough.” This theme particularly focused on either whiteness,

wealth, or intelligence. Tejanos' physical appearance arose as significant as they tended to be mistaken or misunderstood as other ethnoracial identities other than Mexican. The participants spoke about skin color and other body features in regard to this theme.

Unlike the others, the Tejano-identified participants only brought up clothing when asked about Tejanos symbols and images as opposed to current perception of Tejanos at Lone Star University. Findings also showed that Tejanos use of Spanish and English was very specific. While all participants acknowledged the impact of language on their ethnoracial identity, Tejanos primarily used English at home intermingled with various levels of Spanish and practiced Spanish with extended family and friends. Finally, the impact of media emerged in how participants identified, sometimes incorrectly, Tejanos in film, television and music. The participants also noted how they used some media to affirm their own ethnoracial identity.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The purpose of this study was to understand what is a Tejano identity is, to explore what and how ecological factors were significant in the ethnoracial identity development of Tejanos, and determine how higher education faculty and staff might adopt their work with the Tejano population. Themes emerged related to geography and parental origin, influence of family and community, awareness of and connection to extended family and Mexico, experiences of not being enough, physical appearance, and the use of English and Spanish at home and in the community. Media in various forms also proved to be a way in which some of these themes were reflected and supported their ethnoracial identity.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 suggests that some of these themes are not new or surprising. Those findings will be discussed along with unexpected themes that emerged through the course of this study. Finally, recommendations will be made that will allow higher education faculty and staff to better support Tejano students. These recommendations come from my own observations as well as from participants' feedback.

Discussion and Research Questions

Geography and Parental Origin.

Findings from this research indicate that parents' geographic origins was a factor related to a Tejano ethnoracial identity. Wijeyesinghe (2012) acknowledged the impact that certain geographic regions have on multiracial identity. Root (2003) also acknowledged this impact saying "a geographic region's ...history of race and ethnic

relations provides a critical format for understanding what identity options are available” (p. 36). The parents’ origin in a specific region of Texas gives power to the Arreola’s (2002) thesis that “Mexican South Texas is a unique Mexican American cultural province” with a “specific regional subculture, rooted in nearby northeastern Mexico yet wed to social and economic circumstances of South Texas” (p. 7). The exceptions to this finding are the cases of Anastasia, whose parents were not from Texas, or Arreola’s Tejano cultural zone and Fernando whose parents were from the epicenter of Tejanos in San Antonio. Any mention of geography for Anastasia related more to growing up in a predominantly white, small town. The impact of geography on Fernando is one that I have trouble explaining, especially in light of several references that some of the participants made to San Antonio as a literal and symbolic capital of Tejano people. I can only assume that Fernando’s parents may have discussed ethnoracial identity and being Tejano with him but this influence was outweighed by other developmental factors.

Two questions remain related to parents’ origin. First, how did their upbringing allow for a Tejano ethnoracial identity to be developed? Even though their children grew up in majority Mexican-American locations, this is likely not the case for some of them. This warrants further exploration of generations of Tejanos within the same family to see how important geography and other factors may have been. A second question is, how have those locations in the Tejano cultural zone changed since the time that the participants were born and raised there? Arreola (2002) conducted his research based on U.S. census information from 1990. Since then the Latin@ population across the nation has grown tremendously and perhaps more so in Texas.

Influence of Family and Community

Closely related to the geographical origin of participants' parents was how family and community also influenced their ethnoracial identity choice. Family socialization has previously been cited as an aspect of ethnoracial identity (Root, 2003; Wijeyesinghe, 2012), particularly the impact of parents. The cases discussed here included not only parents but also grandparents and the surrounding community. Root (2003) discussed community with particularly mention of church and Wijeyesinghe (2012) brought in the element of spirituality in her Intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity. Participant John's specific experience with his congregation would seem to support their perspectives. Albert and Sophia's community make up would also seem to support this previous research.

Mentioned by participants but not specifically explored in this study was how these families, extended or otherwise, changed over time. Several participants mentioned stepparents, some of whom brought a stronger sense of their ethnoracial identities into family interactions. Communities also changed over time for participants. Anastasia, Angelica, and Chica revealed that they had moved at least once during their childhood. Further research could also include specific explorations of the communities in which participants were raised. The impact of a rural, suburban, and urban communities did not emerge from this research as having a specific relationship to the participants' ethnoracial identity choice. It is possible that in a sample this small such details would not emerge.

Awareness of and Connection to Extended Family and Mexico.

Knowledge of one's generational status and ancestry was cited multiple times in the literature as being impactful on ethnoracial identity (Macias, 2006; Root, 2003; Wijeyesinghe, 2012). The findings from this study support this previous research. In the

case of the Tejano-identified participants, generational status in combination with knowledge of ancestry precludes their ethnoracial identity. In light of their awareness of their past, their present interactions with Mexico are limited. Given that many of the participants were second generation or beyond, it is unlikely that many had family in Mexico or personal connections to visit or spend time there. Participants making connections with Mexican people might also be challenging given the difficulties of Mexican-Americans connecting to each other in the United States. Macias (2006) related a similar problem for Mexican-Americans and Chicano saying “just being accepted on equal terms as Mexican-American is challenge enough” (p. 113). Any threat to a Tejano identity by being “too Mexican” could be part of the reason that more intentional connections to Mexico are not made.

Further areas of research exist based on generational status in the United States. While most of the Tejano-identified participants were second generation, Chica’s ancestry in Texas went back centuries. Exploring the identities of Tejanos who are first, second, third generation and beyond could present ways in which the factors that have been discussed so far have different influences on identity choice. In addition, while the Tejanos in this study had limited connections to Mexico, Tejanos at colleges closer to the border may have a different experience and relationship with Mexico.

Experiences of Not Being Enough

The sense of not belonging and in the case of the Tejano participants not being enough, seemed like a phenomenon that was not discussed in depth in the literature. Root (2003) discussed belonging and acceptance but in the context of family. Wijeyesinghe (2012) in her model of Intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity

included factors of “Early Experiences and Socialization” and “Situation.” Neither of those authors spoke to the harms caused and the ways those experiences then shaped ethnoracial identity.

By looking at the areas in which the Tejanos do not feel enough (e.g., whiteness, wealth, intelligence), some insight might be offered. Whiteness may intersect with the physical appearance, wealth with socioeconomic class, and intelligence with education level. These factors could be explored more to see whether or not they emerge as significant in Tejano ethnoracial identity development. While physical appearance was discussed in the findings from this study, socioeconomic class and education did not emerge as significant across all the participants or with Tejanos specifically. Given the size of this group, it would seem further research could be conducted to track any themes in a larger sample.

Physical Appearance

Physical appearance is a significant influence regarding the social construct of race and ethnicity. This phenomenon has been explored in a variety of works (Anzaldúa, 1999; Jones & Abes, 2013; Macias, 2006; Root, 2003; Waters, 1990; Wijeyesinghe, 2012). Tejanos in this study were often mistaken for other non-Mexican ethnoracial identities because of their skin color or hair. This was the case whether or not they identified monoethnographically or multiethnographically. In all these cases, the people who mistook the Tejanos for another ethnoracial identity were perceived by the Tejano participants as White. Being mistaken for another ethnoracial identity speaks to a larger assumption that people should “look like” their ethnoracial identity (Gallegos & Ferdman, 2012; Wijeyesinghe, 2012). The complication that all the participants added to

that issue was that many of them identified as more than one ethnoracial identity. What does someone look when they identify as Mexican-American and Chicano? What does someone look when they identify as Hispanic, Mexican, and Mexican-American? What does someone look when they identify as Tejano, Mexican-American, and Hispanic? These assumptions of what someone should look like when they identify with just one ethnoracial identity much less a few or several came from White people and members from within the Mexican diaspora. This was evident in Albert and Fernando's perceptions as to what a Tejano was supposed to look like and wear.

Further research in this area could include researching multiethnoracial Tejanos, including those of Black and African-American ancestry. In addition, specific research could be done on perceptions of skin color within the Mexican diaspora. I know in writing for this research, my word palate was stretched to its limit in thinking about how to describe color. Thankfully, online tools exist to help address these limitations and would be useful for how others write about race and ethnicity in any context ("Writing with Color", n.d.).

English and Spanish at Home and in the Community

The impact of language on ethnoracial identity has been addressed previously. The amount of knowledge about ancestral language has various effects on how strongly a person identifies ethnoracially (Arreola, 2002; Bejarano, 2005; Horse, 2012; Macias, 2006; Paredes, 2009; Root, 2003; Water, 1990; Wijeyesinghe, 2012). Findings here reflect previous research but also show that Tejanos use of Spanish and English was very specific. The contexts known by the participants and the ways they used English and/or Spanish according to those contexts was as important as their specific language

knowledge. Not knowing enough English, for instance, had an impact on early education for Albert and Sophia. Not knowing enough Spanish created moments of tension, frustration, and confusion for participants such as Anastasia, Fernando, and Teresa. The unique finding here was how Tejanos primarily used English at home intermingled with various levels of Spanish as well as how they practiced Spanish with extended family and friends. I immediately thought of this expansion of Spanish use to a larger group of people as a sort of “ethnoracial coming out” process. *I am Tejano and here is how I prove it.* Further research in this area could examine Tejanos’ continued use of Spanish outside a university setting. Given the current and growing size of this group, further work could examine students who were raised bilingually and determine if that has an impact on their ethnoracial identity.

Media

There was limited data that media had any impact on how the participants identified. Media did provide a perspective about how Tejanos were viewed by the larger society. One of the areas I was hoping to address was how Spanish-language television helped to produce, if at all, a “Mexican-origin ethnicity” (Macias, 2006, p. 40). Data show that media was used by participants to facilitate the “Spanish language coming out process” discussed earlier. How much of that contributes to a wider “Mexican-origin ethnicity” is still unclear. English-dominant programming on the other hand lacked significant Tejano representation outside of *The Brothers Garcia*. The participants recognized some Tejano figures but a majority were musicians, most notably Selena Quintanilla-Perez. Musicians and music were often recognized as Tejano more often than the ethnoracial identity itself. The definition of Tejano music itself, or *musica*

tejana, covered a wider range than I had anticipated but there were limitations in how it was heard via radio stations

Further research could be conducted on all these types of media and the personalities that are part of them as there was not a clear picture of the impact on a Tejano ethnoracial identity. While my interviews included questions specifically about media and Tejano representation, my knowledge base of this area proved to be limited. Research from those academics who focus on media could prove to be insightful. Participants' responses did not include any mention of online media. Netflix, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other online media and communication tools are possible ways in which a Tejano ethnoracial identity could be expressed and examined with others.

Tejano Culture

One final area that was not explicitly discussed was Tejano culture, such as food, traditions, clothing, religion, and politics. While these items came up during the course of the interviews, there did not seem to be any themes that emerged across each of the participants' narratives. Arreloa (2002) described several cultural qualities related to being a "Texas Mexican" (p. 161) but his focus was on South Texas. The participants' in this study were not necessarily from that area. Further research on this subject could include a larger population outside of college students and with a population that saliently identifies as Tejano.

Implications

The findings allowed me to reflect back to the concepts and literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The concept map that emerged from various ethnoracial identity development models provided a way for me to understand a rather complicated issue. Based on my

findings, I made adjustments to the map that highlighted how the factors and various systems interacted with each other (See Figure 11). Three of the themes that emerged were what I identified as factors. Family and community were microsystems while the impact of participants' parents being from the Tejano cultural zone was an exosystem. Media was represented as either being a factor or as being part of the larger macrosystem and is the theme that I feel most unclear about. Viewing Tejano ethnoracial identity development in this manner provides a way in which faculty and staff can begin to understand their role in supporting students with their development. It puts students at the center. With faculty and staff as part of a student's microsystem, faculty and staff can

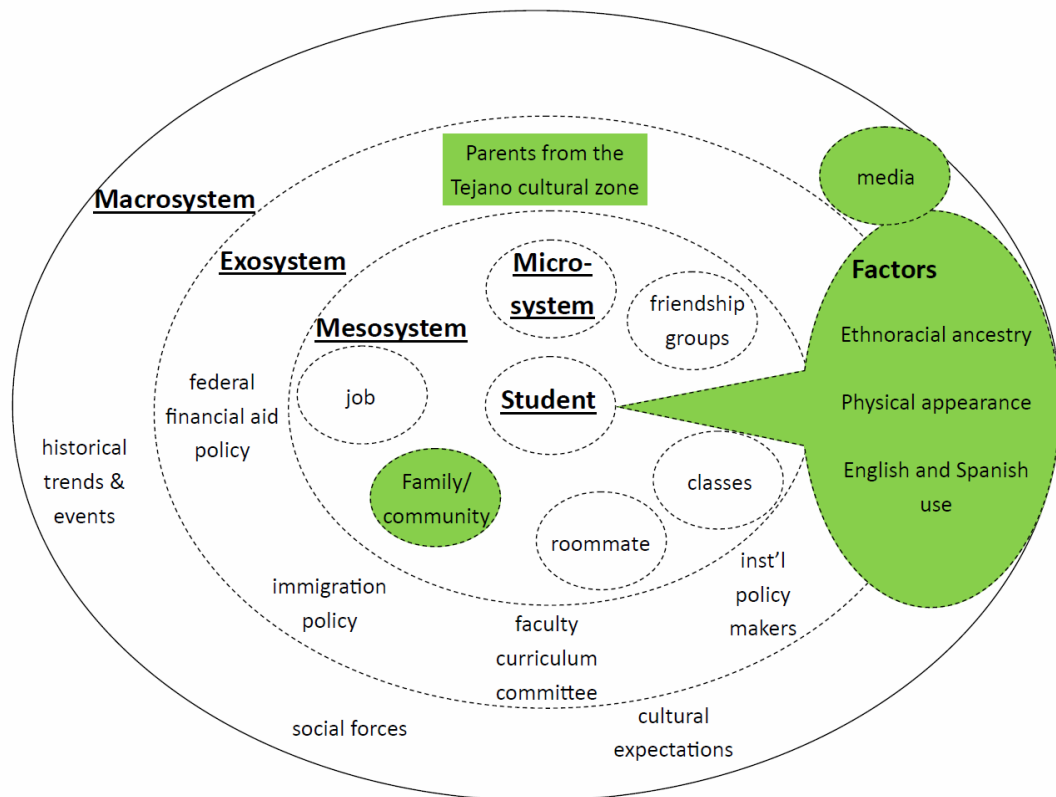


Figure 11. Concept Map of Tejano Ethnoracial Identity Development and Ecological Factors with Findings

see the ease or challenges that they would have in influencing the other parts of the ecosystem.

Recommendations

The set of initial recommendations is aimed at staff and faculty who work with Latin@ students, especially those who are Mexican-Americans in Texas. While some of the recommendations are aimed at allowing students to explore their Tejano identity, some of these recommendations may also be applicable to Latin@s, multiethnic students, and students of ethnic identities focused on a geographic region, such as Nuyoricans, Nuevomexicanos, and Californios.

Additionally, several stories shared by the participants were painful reminders of the impact of racism and white supremacy. Addressing some of the individuals responsible for that pain in these stories might have eased the suffering of the participants. Broad education of those who are historically responsible for creating the dynamics of racial injustice, mostly Whites, could begin to address the pressures and constraints placed on ethnic identity. The complexity of the participants' ethnic identity wasn't because they choose that option. They didn't choose to have to identify as one ethnic identity in one instance and another in the next. The complexity was an indication of the limits of ethnic identity created by a state with a history of racial and ethnic violence and systemic oppression. While these recommendations are aimed at Latin@s, they are also aimed at Whites who have historically always been in power when it comes to race and ethnicity in Texas and the United States. These recommendations address individual actions and behaviors but are also meant to dismantle the systems of racial discrimination and white supremacy.

Support Complex Ethnoracial Identities

As I have noted at length, many of the participants identified more than one way ethnoracially. When students are given multiple ways to identify, they seem to have taken advantage of it. Faculty and staff would benefit from supporting students in this aspect whether it is talking about these various identities, creating multiple ways for students to identify on administrative forms, or helping to advise student organizations through these multiple identities.

Connection with Their Cultural Traditions

When students were asked about how they felt they could be supported, creating space for cultural traditions was named. Chica talked about altars created for Dia de Los Muertos while Albert was explicit about food and music events that brought students together across Latin@ identities and the Mexican diaspora. Moments that create these opportunities to connect with cultural traditions should also be done in spaces that are open and accessible by all students, publicized well, and conducted in places that allow maximum visibility, such as in student centers or at student orientations. In addition the opportunity to connect to these traditions should happen regularly and not just in the time periods (mid-September through mid-October) designated as Hispanic or Latin@ Heritage months.

Education on Latin@ History

I would recommend that more opportunities be given to explore and educate on Latin@ history outside of just the classroom. Several students shared that knowing more about their history, both personal and as a cultural group, would give them more insight and comfort with who they were personally and how they fit into the school. Specific

attention should also be given to history of Latin@s at the school itself, Latin@s in higher education, and Latin@s in the fields of study that students have majored in.

Examination on the Impact of Language on Identity

Language had an impact on students in this study, both positively and negatively. Staff and faculty should examine how language impacts ethnoracial identity and any harm it causes students and their ability to succeed academically and socially at the university. For outside of the classroom, students who are trying to learn Spanish should be given the opportunity to do so in spaces free of shame or judgment. The role of language in the history of Latin@s should also be discussed from “English only laws” to what indigenous languages existed before the arrival of Spanish colonizers.

Support Ethnoracial Affinity Group Work

Many institutions support Latin@ student groups and the events they create. Ethnoracial affinity groups go beyond food and dance events. Also known as race alike groups, ethnoracial affinity groups allow participants of the same identity to come together and talk about the impact of race and ethnicity in their lives, their work, and the university that they are attending. Groups like this can start off with a larger identity, such as Latin@, and break off in to smaller groups, such as Mexican-Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, etc. The students in this study enjoyed the chance to come together to talk about this topic even if at that point there was no action being taken or event planned. These groups allow issues to be addressed in a safe and supportive space while also ideally challenging them on other identities that impact them as well.

Limitations of Study.

Though this study was meant to yield information applicable to Tejanos in general and will hopefully lead to some ways to support Latin@s as well, there were several limitations that should be addressed. First the study was bound by one institution, which poses limits to its applicability to other institutions and Tejano students. The sampling approach also provided some challenging areas and possible limitations. Students who may have been interested in this topic may have been unaware of the study if they not connected to the offices that reached out to students on my behalf. In addition, the phrase Tejano may not have been familiar to some students though their experiences might have fit in that ethnoracial identity. Another sampling concern was that, except for Chica, I focused on students born in Texas. Students raised in but not born Texas may have also identified as Tejano and I would have generally missed researching their experiences.

Despite being familiar with Lone Star University, my role as an outsider may have kept participants from engaging me fully and willingness to share with a stranger. My identity as an older adult male and university staff member may have also prevented students from sharing information that was embarrassing or socially unacceptable in a university setting.

In terms of my data analysis, limitations presented themselves in my understanding of Spanish and in a few cases being unable to understand what was said, even after consulting Spanish speakers. My data analysis also presented rich information that I had time to code sentence by sentence but in which my peer debriefer did not, instead selecting one students to focus on and coding instead phrases or paragraphs. This may have presented findings that emerged differently because of our approaches. I

believe, however, that our analyses were relatively aligned after talking through the coding in person. Despite these limitations, I believe these findings to be relatively sound enough to provide at least a framework for similar studies with Tejanos and other ethnoracial identities.

Final Thoughts

This study provided an opportunity to research an ethnoracial identity group that has limited to no previous attention. Personally and professionally I found that to be very satisfying and challenging. The narratives that the participants provided, even those who did not identify as Tejano, felt familiar but with enough difference to feel like a new perspective. I sensed that this was the first time many of the participants had talked about this topic. I was glad to hear that some of them took back those conversations to friends and family.

As students shared their identities as Latin@s, Hispanics, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Chicanos, multiracial people, Whites, Americans, and as Tejanos, I was reminded very much of the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa (1999). She said “I write the myths in me, the myths I am, the myths I want to become” (p. 93). At this point in their lives that is what many of the students were doing; creating their own myths, their own ethnoracial identity. I heard from a few of the students who did not identify as Tejano that the term was going to die out, that much like Chicano was for some people, it was for the generation before and would not be carried forward. But I also heard from those that were Tejano something very different. Teresa shared the following with me:

“I love [being Tejano]. That’s what I know so I can’t speak as to any other culture or anything but it is what I identify with and I think that eventually Tejanos are going to go far. ... I think that there are more opportunities for us to go out and to reach for the higher education, to go for bigger jobs and I think that that eventually is going to start shifting the population and I see that as a very positive thing... I’m ready to see a politician that I can identify with, that I see them and I know that they’re like me and definitely, I think it’s time and I think the people are starting to get impatient and starting to get to think that way as well. And so yea, as far as being Tejano, I think it’s an exciting time to be Tejano. I definitely see that things are going up.”

I hope that all the participants no matter their identity can hope to see themselves in that same exciting future. I sincerely hope that this study creates a space at universities to nourish that possibility.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Instruction Letter

Instruction Letter

Thank you for taking the time to reach out to students in regards to my study. I really appreciate the assistance especially from such a long distance.

In regards to students that you can reach out to, please follow these instructions:

1) Please let them read or read to them the following:

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Tomás Sanchez, a student at the University of Vermont, is conducting a research study on how college students of Mexican or Mexican-American descent who were born in and live a majority of their lives in Texas (Tejanos) develop their concepts about themselves, their view of the world, of their college experience and how they think about race and ethnicity particularly.

As a first generation college student and researcher who identifies as of Mexican-American descent and who grew up in Texas, Tomás wants to examine the experience of other Tejanos who may have had a similar experience as he has. Tomás believes that these findings can lead to creating ways to ensure a better college experience for Tejano students -- from recruitment through graduation and beyond.

He is doing this research to complete his dissertation research as part of the requirements for his Doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. In order to participate you must be a current student who is:

- age 18-22,
- have one parent of Mexican or Mexican-American descent
- were born in Texas
- and identify as Tejano.

There may be no direct benefit to you for your participation. This study will yield valuable information that may add insight to overall ethnoracial identity developmental models, as well as how information is gathered on racial and ethnic identity. Finally, it may help people in colleges and universities to think about how to serve the Tejanos student better.

You are being asked to fill out a questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes and at a time that is convenient for you online. Participants must submit

their e-mail only and the questionnaire will be emailed to you. During the questionnaire, you will be asked if you want to take part in an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes and a time and location that is convenient for you. The researcher will be taking notes and recording audio for transcription. You will be contacted to arrange a time for an interview. You have the option to take part in the interview and focus group.

Every effort will be taken to maintain confidentiality of your record. Personal identifiable information will be removed. You may discontinue your participation in this study at any time. Withdrawing will in no way impact your relationship with anyone at the University.

If you are interested in participating in this study, then please contact Tomás Sanchez at the University of Vermont at tsanchez@uvm.edu or you can go to the survey link at _____. Your consent to participate will be implied upon the completion of the survey.

Appendix B. Informed Consent-SAMPLE

Informed Consent

Title of Research Project: Raza y Etnicidad: How Tejanos in College Navigate the Hyphen in Mexican-American

Principal Investigator: Tomás Sanchez

Faculty Sponsor: Jill Tarule

Sponsor: University of Vermont

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a student who has been identified as being between the ages of 18-22, have lived in Texas for at least the last 12 years and identify as having one parent of Mexican or Mexican-American ancestry at Lone Star University. This study is being conducted by the University of Vermont

We encourage you to ask questions and take the opportunity to discuss the study with anybody you think can help you make this decision.

Why is This Research Study Being Conducted?

This research is being conducted to examine how college students of Mexican or Mexican-American descent who have lived a majority of their lives in Texas develop their concepts on race and ethnicity. As a first generation college student and researcher who identifies as of Mexican-American descent and who grew up in Texas, I want to examine the experience of other Tejanos who may have had a similar experience as I have had. I believe that these findings may lead to a better college experience from recruitment through retention.

How Many People Will Take Part In The Study?

Two 18-22 year old students at LStU have been selected to take part in this pilot study.

What Is Involved In The Study?

The researcher will have the participants fill out one questionnaire that will take approximately 10 minutes. After the questionnaire, the researcher will conduct one 20 minute interview with each student separately. Finally, the researcher will have the participants conduct three exercises on their own that will take approximately 30 minutes total, with responses sent back electronically.

What Are The Risks and Discomforts Of The Study?

Risks may include the inadvertent release of information from the researcher. However, every effort will be taken to maintain confidentiality of your study record. You may have thoughts and feelings that make you uncomfortable as you process the questions during or after the interview. Services are available to you through the LStU Counseling Center if you would like support through this process. They are located at the Student Center Room 5-4.1 and can be reached at 512-245-2208, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

What Are The Benefits of Participating In The Study?

There may be no direct benefit to you for your participation. This study will yield valuable information that may add insight to overall ethnoracial identity developmental models, as well as how information is gathered on racial and ethnic identity.

Are There Any Costs?

There are no costs associated with this study.

What Is the Compensation?

There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

Can You Withdraw or Be Withdrawn From This Study?

You may discontinue your participation in this study at any time. There are no consequences for discontinuing this study and will in no way impact your relationship with anyone at LStU.

If you choose to discontinue your participation in this study, please send a signed letter or email asking that you be removed from the study.

What About Confidentiality?

A record of all field notes and observations will be kept in a locked, unmarked filing cabinet at the University of Vermont. All electronic recordings and notes will be kept in a private password protected electronic folder. The results of this study may eventually be published or presented at a conference but participant confidentiality will be maintained.

Contact Information

You may contact Dr. Jill Tarule, the advisor in charge of this study, at (802) 656-XXX or jtarule@uvm.edu for more information about this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project or for more information on how to proceed should you believe that you have been injured as a result of your participation in

this study you should contact Nancy Stalnaker, the Director of the Research Protections Office at the University of Vermont at 802-656-5040.

Statement of Consent

You have been given and have read or have had read to you a summary of this research study. Should you have any further questions about the research, you may contact the person conducting the study at the address and telephone number given below. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice to your present and/or future care.

You agree to participate in this study and you understand that you will receive a signed copy of this form.

Signature of Subject Date

Name of Subject Printed

Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee Date

Name of Principal Investigator or Designee Printed

Name of Principal Investigator: Tomás Sanchez

Address: 406 South Prospect Street

E-mail Address: tsanchez@uvm.edu

Telephone Number: (802) 656-7945

Name of Faculty Sponsor: Jill Tarule

Address: jtarule@uvm.edu

Telephone Number: (802) 656-XXXX

Appendix C. Questionnaire

Questionnaire

1. Age

2. Where were you born?

3. Where would you say you were raised?

4. Current class standing:
 - a. First year/Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior

5. What is the highest level of education that your mother completed?

6. What is the highest level of education that your father completed?

7. If you have any siblings, please list their ages and highest level of education completed.

8. If you could mark more than one, how would you identify racially/ethnically?
 - a. Mexican
 - b. Mexicano
 - c. Mexican-American
 - d. Chicana/o
 - e. Hispanic
 - f. Latina/o
 - g. White
 - h. Brown
 - i. Native/Indigenous American
 - j. Bi/Multiracial
 - k. Tejano

- l. _____ (Fill in-optional) m. _____ (Fill in-optional)
9. If you could mark only one, how would you identify racially/ethnically?
- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Mexican | f. Latina/o | j. Bi/Multiracial |
| b. Mexicano | g. White | k. Tejano |
| c. Mexican-American | h. Brown | l. _____ (Fill in-optional) |
| d. Chicana/o | i. Native/Indigenous American | |
| e. Hispanic | | |
10. How would your mother identify racially/ethnically?
11. How would your father identify racially/ethnically?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word Tejano/a?
13. Is there other information about you that you would like for us to know?
14. Would you be willing to participate in an individual and group interview to gather more data on this research? Yes or No

Appendix D. Interview Questions

Personal Information

I am interested, as you know, in understanding more about how Tejano students experience being in college.

1. So to begin, tell me a bit about yourself: Why did you come to LStU? Can you tell me a bit about what you are studying? What is important for you here? Generally, how it is going for you to be a student at LStU?

Family history

2. Who in your family migrated from Mexico?
3. What part of Mexico did they come from?
4. How long ago did they first arrive in the United States?
5. How do you know this information?
6. Where were your parents born?
7. Where do they live now?
8. What is their occupation?
9. How often do you maintain contact with your parents/siblings?
10. Who else is a regular member of your family that you grew up with?
11. What else is important to know about your family?

Geography

12. Would you consider where you grew up to be rural, suburban, urban or a mixture?
13. About what percentage of the local population where you grew up was of Mexican ancestry?
14. How else would you describe where you grew up?

Ethnic context

15. How did you consider yourself ethnically/racially when you were growing up?
16. Of what ethnicity/race were most of your friends growing up?

Language

17. What is your parent's first language?
18. Did your parents speak Spanish to you or to each other when you were growing up?
19. Did they ever discuss their choice of language use with you?
20. How often do you speak Spanish, if at all? If you don't speak it, how much do you understand it?
21. Who do you use Spanish with?
22. Were there any Spanish language programs your parents watched when you grew up? Are there any Spanish language programs that you watch now regularly? If so what are they and why do you watch them?
23. Would you consider any of these shows Tejano? If so, why?
24. Do you listen to Tejano music? If so, what artists and why? What makes this music Tejano to you?

Cultural Practices

25. Did your parents belong to any organizations or clubs, ethnic or not?
26. How would you describe yourself politically growing up? What are you politically now?
27. Do you regular eat Mexican food? Do you consider any of these foods Tejano? What makes it Tejano?
28. Are there any practices associated with the holidays that you connect with your Tejano heritage? What is it that makes these practice Tejano?
29. What religion were your parents growing up? What religion are you now? Do you practice regularly?
30. Are there any practices associated with celebrations (weddings, birthdays, funerals, etc.) that you connect with your Tejano heritage? What is it that makes these practices Tejano?
31. Are there any other practices or customs that affect your day to day life that you associate with being Tejano?

Ethnic Identity

32. Do you belong to any organizations, ethnic or not?
33. How would your friends describe themselves racially/ethnically?
34. How would your co-workers describe themselves racially/ethnically?
35. What is the most common racial/ethnic group in the place that you live now?
36. Have you ever been to Mexico? What was that experience like?
37. Is it common for people to ask you about your racial/ethnic identity? What are these interactions like? How do you feel about them?

Tejanos

Now I'd like to ask some additional questions about being a Tejano specifically.

38. Is being Tejano important to you?
39. When is the first time you can remember identifying yourself as Tejano?
40. What does it look like to be Tejano? What does it look like to be Tejano at LStU?
41. How does being Tejano compare to being Mexican-American/Mexican/Chicano?
42. Are there any social traits you associate with being Tejano? If so, what are they? Do you associate with them?
43. Are there any social traits you associate with being Mexican? If so, what are they? Do you associate with them?
44. When you think of being Tejano, what symbols or images come to mind?
45. When you think of being Tejano, what television shows, movies or celebrities come to mind?
46. When you think of being Tejano, what songs, bands, art or artists come to mind?
47. What else should I know about being Tejano?

Appendix E. Group Interview

Group Questions

Do these themes make sense to you? Do they capture the experience of being Tejano here?

What surprised you about these themes?

What didn't surprise you about these themes?

What is missing from themes?

Are there things that college faculty and staff have done to create a better experience for Tejanos?

Is there anything else that you would like to say?

Appendix F. Tejano Playlist

Tejano Playlist	
https://play.spotify.com/user/therewasme/playlist/6euFftFzKbCFVIAOJGWC	
Track	Artist
Fuiste Mala	A.B. Quintanilla III, Ricardo Munoz, Kumbia Kings
Na Na Na (Dulce Niña)	A.B. Quintanilla III, Kumbia Kings
No Tengo Dinero	A.B. Quintanilla III, Kumbia Kings, Juan Gabriel, El Gran Silencio
Mi Gente	A.B. Quintanilla III, Ozomatli, Kumbia Kings
Chiquilla	A.B. Quintanilla III, Kumbia All Starz
Que Me Entierren Cantando	Augustine Ramirez
Tres Ramitas	Augustine Ramirez
Sangre de Indio	Augustine Ramirez
Se Murio De Amor	Bobby Pulido
Desvelado	Bobby Pulido
Le Pediré	Bobby Pulido
Suavemente - Merengue Version	Elvis Crespo
Te Quiero	Flex
Paloma Dejame Ir	Gilberto Perez , Pepe Maldonado
Ven A Mi	Jay Pérez
Hoy Soy Feliz	Jay Pérez

Lo Que Yo Tengo	Jay Pérez
Que Paso (La Ultima Vez)	Little Joe & La Familia
Carmen Carmelita	Little Joe & La Familia
Las Nubes	Little Joe & La Familia
Ni Parientes Somos	Los Tigres Del Norte
La Bala	Los Tigres Del Norte
Contrabando Y Traición	Los Tigres Del Norte
La Mesera	Pepe Maldonado
Amigo Mio	Pepe Maldonado
Paloma Negra	Ruben Ramos
Tres veces Te Engane	Ruben Ramos
EL Gato Negro	Ruben Ramos
Bidi Bidi Bom Bom	Selena
Amor Prohibido	Selena
Baila Esta Cumbia	Selena
Dreaming Of You	Selena