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A CULTURE OF SUCCESS:

AN EXAMINATION OF THE LIFE EXPERIENCES AND PROFESSIONAL

CHALLENGES OF MEXICAN AMERICAN FEMALE ACADEMIC AND

STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS AT FOUR INSTITUTIONS IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

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A CULTURE OF SUCCES; AN EXAMINATION OF THE LIFE EXPERIENCES

AND PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES OF

MEXICAN AMERICAN FEMALE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

ADMINISTRATORS AT FOUR INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF

TEXAS SYSTEM

Stella Silva, B.A., M.A.

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A CUTLURE OF SUCCESS:

AN EXAMINATION OF THE LIFE EXPERIENCES AND PROFESSIONAL

CHALLENGES OF MEXICAN AMERICAN FEMALE ACADEMIC AND

STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS AT FOUR INSTITUTIONS IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

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The purpose of this study is to examine and present the life experiences and

professional challenges of Mexican American female student affairs and academic

administrators. This study was conducted in order to document the strategies

employed by Hispanic women who as part of an increasing national population yet

with low levels of educational attainment, have succeeded in the higher education

system and currently hold positions as Academic and Student affairs

administrators. In order to provide a rich contextual understanding of the current

underrepresentation of Mexican American females as academic or student affairs

administrators, this study uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a methodology, a

theoretical framework, and a critical lens. CRT allows for the questioning of the status quo, provides educational empowerment, addresses social justice, and utilizes a transdisciplinary understanding of racism, sexism, and classism in education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

The findings revealed Successful Mexican American female administrators as well adjusted in cultural identity, grounded in family, a strong work ethic, and the passion to make a difference. They surrounded themselves with support systems that included family members and friends. Professionally, they embraced institutions that supported the needs of Hispanic students, and, for this reason, chose to serve in communities where large Hispanic populations resided. Their cultural identification with the Mexican American culture was considered a source of pride and strength. As a result, resistance toward acculturation provided a strategy for success.

The overarching story of this study is the signing of the Treaty of Hidalgo in which strength was gained through adversity. Participants through their maintenance of the Spanish language expressed a form of strength through resistance. Just as in the Treaty where use of Spanish was guaranteed yet discouraged, participant's use of language in their professional and personal lives reflects a form of strength that endures despite all circumstances.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

<u>Overview</u>

It's not just going to college, but to put ourselves in a position to fight for the cause that makes a difference, and when you are a part of the minority there will always be that cause and there will always be something you have to achieve in terms of that cause, and so that's how we need to incite the people. We can do it, let's go for it, but it's going to be tough. It is not only getting our people educated but educating them to become leaders because that's where it's going to make a difference.
-Mexican American female administrator

The purpose of this study is to examine and present the life experiences and professional challenges of Mexican American female student affairs and academic administrators. The level of underrepresentation of Hispanic women in higher education is considerable. In 1997, Hispanic women held less than 1% of all full-time administrative positions (U.S. Census Bureau, 1994). The historic underrepresentation of Mexican American women in higher education, coupled with rapid growth of the Hispanic population, with 58.5% being Mexican American, warrants the need to collect stories of success from women who have "weathered" the system.

For the purposes of this study a Mexican American female is defined as a female of Mexican American origin living in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). A Mexican American female academic or student affairs administrator is

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defined as a Mexican American female who currently holds an academic or student affairs position in a college or university setting, or is an assistant to or associate of one of the following: president, vice president, provost, dean, chair, director, or coordinator. In this study Mexican American females may also identify themselves as Chicana, Latina, or Hispanic. These terms may be used interchangeably by the researcher to mean a Mexican American female of Mexican origin unless otherwise indicated. The researcher situates herself in the study as a Mexican American female who shares with the participants an orientation to "indigenous roots and memory," "knowledge and experience of conquest," racial and/or ethnic oppression and "control due to gender" (Gonzalez, 2001, p. 641-642).

Mexican American women are present in higher education in small numbers as students, staff, administrators, faculty, chief executive officers, and governing board members (Herrington, 1993). In 1997, of all full-time administrative positions in the nation 2,029 were held by Hispanic women as compared to 6,977 positions held by Black females and 54,553 by all other counterparts. Currently in the state of Texas, Hispanics account for 4.8% of all full-time faculty with Hispanic women following with 1%. Administrators in Texas public institutions total 3,231 with 380 or 11% being Hispanic (Apodaca, 2001).

At many campuses across the country, just as in Texas, Mexican American females as faculty, staff, and students feel isolated and alone with no one to turn to (Bernal, 2001). They may seek support of other faculty members and administrators, but may not find many who look like them or know how they feel, and they will persist painfully alone. Many Mexican American females (Chicanas) in their higher education experience will feel out of place; as students they will be subjected to lowered expectations by professors, and will face negative attitudes and behaviors attributable to race and gender related factors (Solorzano, 1998). These women will also encounter few individuals who can effectively relate to their experiences and function as mentors and role models to address Latinas' concerns and doubts (Cabrera, 1999, p. 136). Those who have traveled the path before these young women can provide strategies to navigate them toward degree completion and on to advanced degrees. Unfortunately, Hispanic females are represented on university and college campuses in very small numbers with no signs of increase in the near future, unless significant change takes place (Ginorio & Huston, 2001).

The shortage of Hispanic women as administrators and in faculty ranks creates a void in terms of a support system of mentors, role models, and persons who can identify with a Mexican American female student's higher education experience.

Two variables bring this underrepresentation to the forefront as a major concern: (1) the estimated exponential growth of the Hispanic population by the year 2050, and (2) the prediction that by 2050, 58.5% of the total Hispanic population will be Mexican American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Of the 35 million Hispanics currently residing in the U.S., Hispanic women make up slightly less than half and are expected to increase in number as the Hispanic population climbs to 24.5% or 100 million by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In the state of Texas, 23.4% of the total population is Hispanic, with 93% of this population self-identifying as Mexican American and slightly less than half of this group female (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Although Hispanic women represent the fastest growing "minority" group of women at both the national and state levels, they continue to maintain the lowest levels of educational achievement. Explanations include historic encounters with oppression, poverty, racism, prejudice, parents with little schooling, segregation, poorly resourced schools, unequal educational opportunities, and unsupportive campus communities (Mellander & Mellander, 2001).

One way to counter this low educational attainment is to embrace strategies that provide support systems of mentors and role models who will be instrumental in recruitment, retention, and degree completion of Hispanics (Mellander & Mellander, 2001). Other proposed efforts include quality public education, encouragement and support by educators, adequate financial

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assistance, and sensitivity to and awareness of barriers that discourage and dissuade Hispanic women's efforts to achieve (Cardoza, 1991).

Low educational attainment and the predicted growth of the Hispanic population warrant the need to compile knowledge from administrators from states such as Texas, which, with its current Hispanic population, will continue to feel the growth of this group along with, or faster than, the nation (U. S. Census Bureau, 1999). The life experiences and professional challenges of Mexican American female academic and student affairs administrators can be used to explore the underrepresentation of the national Hispanic female population. Hispanic female administrators have broken through the two historic barriers of race and gender. They have also succeeded in identifying these historic barriers in their environments in order to surmount them, and they have developed strategies to overcome them that may be generalizable and useful to others. Narratives about their lives are instrumental in producing counterstories to the myths and stereotypes used to justify inequities in the educational system (Valverde, 1998).

In order to provide a rich contextual understanding of the current underrepresentation of Mexican American females as academic or student affairs administrators, this study uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a methodology, a theoretical framework, and a critical lens. CRT allows for the questioning of the status quo, provides educational empowerment, addresses social justice, and

utilizes a transdisciplinary understanding of racism, sexism, and classism in education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study is based on my (the researcher's) direct experience as a Mexican American female administrator working at an institution of higher education in the State of Texas. This study was conceived with the purpose of examining the life experiences and professional challenges of Mexican American female administrators to understand and explain reasons for their under representation in higher education as students, faculty, staff and administrators. This examination as a dissertation topic appeared appropriate at a time when growth of the Hispanic population and the need for an educated workforce appeared logical, yet those in the higher education system with the greatest opportunity to identify with Hispanic students, build community and retain them are few in number. With this in mind, I felt an intrinsic need to explore factors that attributed to the under-representation of these women, including historic legacies of subordination, academic underachievement, and limited educational opportunities, as well as, other unexplored factors which impact their access and success in higher education. My quest to explore this underrepresentation was enhanced as I set out to find others who could identify with my experience as a Mexican American female graduate student and higher education administrator. This identification I knew I would find in a mentor. My

search for this mentor led me to the Annual Texas Association of Chicanos in

Higher Education (TACHE) regional conference where I was introduced to the

few Latinas that currently worked in higher education in the State of Texas. This

conference provided a welcomed oasis for Mexican American females in the field

and produced an irreplaceable support system that provided encouragement, a

sense of solidarity, a celebration of ethnic culture, and opportunities to openly

express passion for serving the Hispanic community.

Through my discussions (platicas) with individuals from this group of

women, and through a retrospective look at my own life, it appeared to me the

skills we, as Mexican American women, used in our everyday activities as

administrators were skills acquired in our early childhoods and homes as part of

our culture. I believe as Mexican American female administrators our leadership

abilities, in combination with our ethnic cultural identity, provided a powerful

combination that made us effective as leaders, student advocates, mentors and role

models.

This cultural-leadership idea involved the inclusion of cultural relevancy

as spoken of by Ladson-Billings (1995) and cultural leadership discussed by

Nahavandi

(2000), resulting in the concept of culturally relevant leadership from a Mexican

American female (or Latina) perspective. This hybrid concept was used as a

vehicle for these administrators to translate their culture, life experiences and

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personal challenges into skills and success strategies of competent and effective leadership.

Why Study Texas Mexican American Females?

The Hispanic population will not only continue to increase in numbers but will also be, according to Chapa (1989), the least educated "majority minority" group, and "the least likely to graduate from high school, enroll in college or receive an undergraduate degree" (Ginorio & Huston, 2001, p. vii). This persistent underachievement has implications for the Hispanic population as a whole, as it will constitute a serious mismatch between the needs of the economy and the skill and preparation of what will ultimately be a substantial segment of the U.S. population (Gandara, 1995). This increase in the Hispanic population will be most noticeable in California, Texas, New York, and other such states that currently maintain large numbers of Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

With Mexican American females constituting a large portion of the Hispanic population, there is a need to ensure that their historic and persistent underachievement is circumvented in order to produce an educated populace. This underachievement includes problems in the educational pipeline leading to higher education and deficit thinking models that blame the victim for their own lack of achievement (Valencia, 1997).

Four-year public institutions in the University of Texas System were used for this study for the following reasons:

- Texas closely resembles the overall Hispanic growth in the country;

- In national statistics, Texas is second only to California in Hispanic population;

- The institutions chosen for this study reflect a dense population of Mexican Americans, the largest percentage of Hispanics in the state of Texas;

- Texas has a history of maintaining an ongoing discussion of inequality in the education system including but not limited to: <u>Edgewood v. Kirby</u>, <u>Sweatt v. Painter</u> (McLemore & Romo, 1998), and recently <u>Hopwood v. Texas</u> (Parker, 1998).

- The location of the institutions allowed the researcher to have immediate access to the participants.

<u>Statement of the Problem</u>

The Hispanic population is the fastest growing minority group in the United States, and is expected to reach a quarter of the nation's population by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Currently, Hispanics (Latinos) comprise 35 million or 12.5% of the total population of 281 million people in the United States. Persons of Mexican origin make up 7.3 % of the population, with females numbering 17 million, slightly less than half. As education continues to be the overriding factor influencing attainment of a greater income and better quality of life, it is imperative that these women be provided with support systems that

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include access to faculty and staff who can relate to their life experiences, and, in

doing so, present the greatest potential to have a positive impact on their rate of

retention (Bernal, 2001). Factors that explain the historic underachievement of

Mexican American women vary, but there is evidence that a welcoming

environment and the existence of role models and mentors increase persistence

and retention of Hispanic females at all levels of education (Mellander &

Mellander, 2001). As Mexican American women emerge on the scene as part of

the fastest growing yet undereducated population, it is imperative that they be

provided with opportunities to obtain higher levels of education and bring

economic benefits to themselves, their families and communities, and ultimately

to their country (Opportunity, 2000).

<div align="center">Context of the Problem</div>

History of Oppression

Texas Mexican Americans maintain a complex existence grounded in

conquest and colonization, which evolved into subordination based on race

(Menchaca, 2002). Due to this low social status, Mexican Americans have

experienced discrimination in both financial and human resources (Casso &

Roman, 1976). From the Spanish conquest in 1519 to the signing of the Treaty

of Hidalgo, which in 1848 guaranteed equal educational opportunities, on through

the Chicano Movement of the 1960s, and the fight for equal representation

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highlighted in the Affirmative Action Movement, Mexican Americans have struggled to claim all the rights and privileges afforded them as U.S. citizens.

Educational Underachievement. Educational underachievement is rampant for Hispanic students. Current statistics reveal that, of the Hispanic students who aspire to attend college, only 37% actually enroll in four-year institutions as compared to Whites (56%), Asian Americans (55%), and African Americans (39%). Hispanics also have the highest dropout rates compared to their White or African American counterparts (Ginorio & Huston, 2001, p. 10). When data are examined by gender, Hispanic women have the lowest graduation rates, earn a higher percentage of associate degrees than their male counterparts, are well represented at community colleges, and are the least likely to complete a bachelor's degree. Of the 44,652 doctorates conferred in 1996, Hispanic women received 462 (1% of the total), while Hispanic men received 488 (also 1% of the total) (Ginorio & Huston, 2001, p. 10).

History in Higher Education. While approximately 65% of all Chicano college students are women, very little is known about the educational journey of these women, and until recently their educational paths were not even considered an important topic for research (Bernal, 2001). Hispanic females constitute the largest "minority" group of girls in the United States, and in states with large Hispanic populations such as Texas, they make up slightly less than one half of the 32% total Hispanic population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The experiences

of Chicana graduate and undergraduate students are much like those of their male

counterparts as well as other marginalized communities, and often include

feelings of being out of place, perceptions of lower expectations by their

professors, and encounters with subtle and not so subtle racism and sexism

(Solorzano, 1998).

<center>Significance of the Problem</center>

The presence of minority administrators and faculty on college and

university campuses is vital to students if they are to be provided a well-rounded

post-secondary education. Students from underrepresented and marginalized

communities benefit from the addition of faculty and staff administrators from

similar racial or ethnic backgrounds because they provide a sense of

connectedness, identification, and affiliation with the institution (Brown, 1998).

Mexican American administrators, faculty, and staff in the education system can

be influential as role models and mentors offering support and encouragement to

Mexican American students (Fennell, 1997).

<center>Purpose of the Study</center>

The purpose of this study is to create a rich contextual understanding of

the current underrepresentation of Mexican American women who are academic

and student affairs administrators. The study was carried out by collecting

interviews that focus on self-reported life experiences and professional challenges

of Mexican American female administrators who occupy academic and/or student

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affairs administrative positions in four University of Texas System schools located in South Texas. Information from the interviews was used to present further evidence validating the participants' experiences and naming specific factors that have impacted their educational attainment. Mexican American women as a raced group were explored using a CRT framework and critical lens. Interview data were used to deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct stories to explain persistence in a landscape littered with low educational attainment (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The success of these women in reaching their administrative levels within the education field provides valuable insight into the struggles and triumphs of other Mexican American women both within and outside the field who have attempted to pursue advanced degrees.

<div align="center">Research Question</div>

The open-ended research question designed to guide this study was as follows:

What are the life experiences and professional challenges that have impacted the educational attainment and administrative positions of Texas Mexican American female academic and student affairs administrators? This question was guided by the following inquiries:

1. Factors that affected their educational access;

2. Factors that enabled them to remain in the education pipeline long enough to obtain a post-secondary degree;

3. Types of personal challenges they have encountered as women and

administrators, i.e. balancing career and family; and

4. Perspectives regarding gender/racial discrimination.

<u>Design of the Study</u>

This qualitative study uses a Critical Race Theory (CRT) methodology

and CRT as a critical lens in order to gain an in-depth understanding of factors

that have impacted female Mexican American administrators' lives and their

administrative positions. Information was gathered about early childhood

experiences, early mentors or role models, community characteristics, higher

education experiences, early administrative experiences, and family experiences.

Data for this study were collected between May 2001 and September 2002.

The researcher distributed letters of invitation for this study to a cohort of

14 women who were chosen from four institutions of higher education in the

University of Texas System. Follow-up phone calls and e-mails confirmed

participation along with the scheduling of a focus group and initial interviews.

The interviews, as well as one focus group, were audiotaped, allotting an

interview time of two hours for each administrator. Interview data, relevant

literature, and direct observation were used to analyze themes and experiences.

Delimitations

The study was limited to 14 administrators. All administrators held positions in South Texas higher education institutions. In-depth interviews were used to document the life experiences, professional challenges, and perspectives of the participants.

Definitions of Terms

Administrator. An individual currently holding a position as a student affairs or academic administrator or as an assistant to or associate of one of the following: president, provost, vice president, dean, chair, director, or coordinator in a university setting.

Racism. An unfavorable attitude and perhaps an unfavorable action toward people who are members of particular racial or ethnic groups; it may or may not specify the type of relationship that exists between unfavorable attitudes and actions; and the idea of group ranking may be more salient (McLemore & Romo, 1998, p. 153).

Chicano/Chicana. A person self-reporting "Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent" and identifying the source of that affiliation as "Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano" (Gonzalez Baker, 1996, p. 6).

Hispanic. A term fabricated by the U.S. Census Bureau to include

American residents who identified themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban,

Central, and South American, and "other" Spanish descendants (Rochin & de la

Torre, 1996, p. 63).

Latino. A term sometimes used as a substitute for "Hispanic" in order to

lessen the implied European bias of the latter (Rochin & de la Torre, 1996, p. 63).

Mexican American. A term that appears to be most widely accepted and

used in reference to all Americans who trace their ancestry to Mexico (McLemore

& Romo, 1998).

The terms Hispanic and Latino will be used in this study to represent

individuals residing in U.S. territories (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000) of Latin

American, Spanish, and Mexican American ancestry, unless otherwise indicated

by a particular study to mean a specific ethnicity. The term Chicano will be used

to identify individuals who consider themselves to be of Mexican ancestry. This

term is also used for Mexican Americans or for self-identification.

<u>Summary</u>

Chapter One presents the level of underrepresentation of Mexican

American females in higher education and the need to educate the fastest growing

Hispanic population in the country. This underrepresentation coupled with the

growth of the Hispanic population creates a void in the need for an educated

populace. Strategies for recruitment and retention of Mexican American females

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as faculty, staff and students should include a support system of those who have weathered the sometimes difficult road toward degree completion.

The Literature Review in Chapter Two will be presented in three sections. Section One highlights possible factors contributing to the underrepresentation of Mexican American females in higher education, namely historical events, problems in the education pipeline, and educational policy. Section Two contains a review of studies examining factors that have impacted Hispanics in higher education as students, faculty, and administrators. Section Three provides the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Texas Mexican American female possesses a complex heritage beginning in Mexico, and encompassing South Texas and the Southwestern United States. Her ancestors were native to the area. She may self-identify as Latina, Tejana, Hispanic, Mexicana or Chicana. She is currently one of 35 million Hispanics currently residing in the United States and one of 58.5% of all Mexican Americans included within this group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). If she enrolls in higher education, she is likely to be one of the first in her family to attend college and the least likely to pursue an advanced degree (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Her low educational attainment and representation in institutions of higher education as a student, faculty, or staff member result from many factors including but not limited to problems in the educational pipeline, unequal access to post-secondary educational opportunities, and lack of institutional support.

This literature review contains relevant scholarship about the educational experiences of Mexican American women and their journey toward administration through the higher education system as students, faculty, and staff. Section One, Historical Legacies, presents pertinent literature that is intended to lay a foundation for discussion of the current underrepresentation of Mexican American women as administrators. This information includes historical accounts of oppression and subordination that have been built on stereotypes and myths

about Mexican Americans and their educational attainment. Section Two will highlight relevant studies showing Hispanic women's interaction with higher education as students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Section Three, Theoretical Framework, is presented to introduce Critical Race Theory as the methodology for this study and to demonstrate use of this framework as a lens in the analysis.

<div align="center">Historical Legacies</div>

Several major historical events influenced the current status and treatment of Mexican American people in U.S. society. Beginning with the Spanish Conquest in 1519, to the signing of the Treaty of Hidalgo in 1848, and on through the Chicano Movement of the 1960s, persons of Mexican ancestry have maintained a subordinate status fueled by stereotypes and myths about their worth and intellectual capability. The resulting ideology of the Mexican American persona directly impacts the way this population is deemed worthy of access to various resources, including opportunities in the education system.

In 1519 the Spanish conquest of Mexico and parts of most of what is now the southwestern United States established the subordination of persons of Mexican descent through a system of social hierarchy. Persons of Spanish-dominant ancestry held positions in the upper echelons of society, and individuals of indigenous or mixed Spanish and Indian blood were relegated to subordinate positions. The term "mestizo" was then introduced to identify people who

possessed this mixture of Spanish and indigenous blood (Meier & Ribera, 1993).

Indigenous ancestry became a measure of inferior social status and value—the

truest indigenous blood lines occupied the lowest eschelons of the stratification

system.

The signing of the Treaty of Hidalgo in 1848 signified a change in status

for Mexican citizens. Prior to the Treaty, Mexico had battled to maintain its

northern territories, which included much of what is now considered the

southwestern United States. In essence, the war between Mexico and Texas

ended through the signing of the Treaty of Hidalgo, which guaranteed to

Mexicans living in the northern territories, or what is now known as Texas, rights

of citizenship and use of the Spanish language. As a result, a border was drawn

along the Rio Grande River and "over the heads" of Mexicans already living in

the territories. Ideologies of conquest, domination, and superiority, perpetuated

by the dominant Anglo society, were reflected in their treatment of Mexican

populations (Menchaca, 1993). Although specific provisions were included in the

Treaty guaranteeing citizenship and language rights, these provisions went largely

ignored, precipitating sentiments of betrayal among Mexicans living in the

confiscated territories (Hernandez, 1997, p. 969):

> The failure to fully explain how America acquired its Southwest and how
> it subsequently dishonored its obligations has a great deal to do with the
> way in which Americans have regarded Mexicans. Few treaties have had
> a more lasting influence on one nation's perception of another's peoples
> than the Treaty of Hidalgo, which formally ended the war and sealed the
> annexation of the territories to the United States.

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Mexicans like sheep were largely shorn of their property and dignity. They may have been Hidalgos under Mexican rule, but they were awarded by their conquerors a lower-class status. Lynchings and murders kept them in their place and they became aliens in their own country. A racist regime put them in their place. The land of liberty had numerous embarrassments in store for those who were not Anglo-Saxon. These cultural codicils included what could kindly be called an imperfect suffrage system and rampant Jim Crowism extended to Mexicans. It was a society of violence, power, and profit. It was racist and discriminatory. (p. 969)

As most societal norms and mores are mirrored in social systems, the prevailing sentiment of Mexican American inferiority was reflected in the education system--segregation as a social norm was used to address the schism between Mexicans living in the territories and Anglos claiming "true" citizenship. Segregation in the existing education system served to separate Anglo and Mexican children, affording Anglo children educational advantages while providing children of Mexican descent inferior school structures and curricula.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 added to this schism. While Mexico was draped in political and economic unrest, the Mexican Revolution prompted increased migration of Mexican nationals toward the northern parts of the country and along the border between Mexico and the United States. This movement was largely felt in the southwestern U.S. and in northern American areas in the agricultural industry, which attracted a large number of migrant Mexican laborers. Due to the increase of this workforce, patterns of migration developed from southwestern to northern states depending on harvest times (Chavez & Martinez,

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1996). The increase in the migrating Mexican population crossing the border to work and live incited generalized xenophobic responses toward all citizens of Mexican appearance (Chavez & Martinez, 1996). Mexicans who were employed on U.S. soil were perceived as "stealing" jobs from Americans, even though the low paying jobs held by Mexicans were generally undesirable to most Americans. The view of Mexican Americans as inferior, once again, was reflected in the K-12 public school system. As an attempt to offer higher levels of educational resources and opportunities to Anglo students, segregated Mexican schools were established (Meier & Ribera, 1993). Court cases such as <u>Brown v. Board of Education</u> focused on eliminating segregation of Black and Anglo children (Parker, 1998). For the purposes of this federally mandated desegregation, Mexican American children were considered White (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). At various points in history, Mexican Americans maintained a White status. For example, the state of California circumvented desegregation laws by placing Mexican-origin (White) and Black children together in schools for the purposes of integration, subjecting both groups to inferior educational systems (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998).

In the 1950s the G.I. Bill proved to be a major breakthrough for Mexican American military veterans as it facilitated their access to post-secondary education (Meier & Ribera, 1993). Organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), established in 1929, served as advocates and

activists for Latinos in all areas including education (Meier & Ribera, 1993). As educational levels increased, awareness grew. As the number of Mexican Americans and other Latinos on college campuses rose, their solidarity also increased. University and college campuses soon became sites for discussions of inequality, discrimination, and racism.

Within the civil rights movement, the Chicano Movement of the 1960s also called attention to social injustices suffered by people of color, specifically Chicanos (Mexican Americans), and challenged the status quo through political, economic, and social channels. Student organizations such as Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MeCHA), established in 1969, were instrumental in illuminating social injustices and discrimination, as well as creating opportunities for cultural awareness for individuals of Mexican origin (Meier & Ribera, 1993).

The subordination and discrimination experienced by persons of Mexican American descent provide a platform for discussing the impact of this treatment on their educational attainment and established persistent underachievement.

<u>Educational Underachievement</u>

The Hispanic population is projected to become the largest minority group in the nation. By the year 2030 Hispanics will comprise 16 million or 25% of the total school population with 35% under the age of 18 (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Current high school achievement statistics reveal that only 46.4 % of all Hispanics

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possess a high school diploma and some level of college as compared to 60.3% of Whites and 62% of Blacks. Only 10.6% of Hispanics hold a bachelor's degree or higher as compared to 28.1% of Whites and 16.5% of Blacks. (Ginorio & Huston, 2001).

In summary, these statistics reveal that current levels of educational attainment by Hispanics do not match the need for a well-educated workforce, particularly in light of the current global economy and expected growth of this population (Gandara, 1995). A study by Sorenson (1995) concludes that it is in the best economic interest of the country to increase educational levels achieved by Hispanics, as they will ultimately comprise a large percentage of the labor force. More importantly, acquiring higher levels of education not only benefits the workforce and the nation as a whole, but provides individuals with opportunities for greater income and increased quality of life.   In the United States, education has been presented historically as the key to success, providing opportunities for advancement, but from a critical perspective, it does not stand alone as impacting one's success, particularly when race, class, and gender are considered (Anyon, 1980).

According to Sorensen (1995) Hispanics are among the most severely underrepresented groups in higher education. Their low educational attainment also means eventual underrepresentation in professional and graduate schools. Sociologist James Blackwell assigns educational attainment as a primary

prerequisite for changing power differentials in society and contends that in order

to instill change and elevate social status, minorities must have equal access to

educational opportunities (Wilson, 1997). In the United States, equal

opportunities for education are typically referred to within the context of access

rather than equity. Ideally, equal access to an equal education should mean

opportunities for all children to reach the same levels of education.

Unfortunately, history has proven that students of color typically occupy the

lower rungs of the ladder, simply due to hegemonic beliefs about intellectual

capability (Feagin, 1993).   McDermott (1997) questions how U.S. culture

continues to assign failure as part of Hispanics' traditional behavior. In his earlier

research he questions how "smart kids" get fooled into thinking that failure by

other children in school is going to help them. In subsequent research, he asks,

"How do 240 million people in the United States get fooled into thinking that

producing so much failure is going to help them?"(p.114) McDermott elaborates,

> As anyone who has ever filled out a school report card knows, the U.S.
> school asks how much better one child is doing than another. Culturally
> and institutionally it is the only question, and it spurs a fierce competition
> that leaves us with a school system that hands out credentials that mirror
> the sorting of the political economy: a few experts with access to the
> rewards of the system and a growing majority who eventually, thoroughly,
> and for all to see, fail. As a people, what are we thinking when we
> celebrate success? Do we know we systematically degrade the less
> successful as failures? A few points on this test or that--as if education
> were the Olympic games--are enough to separate a child, regardless of
> potential, from success. In such a system, it is those who interpret test
> results so harshly--test-makers, school administrators, competitive parents,
> college admission officers--who achieve school failure for the rest. (p.
> 114)

Within the context of this type of system, Hispanic students in general are left at a deficit in terms of equal educational opportunities, not based on their intellectual capabilities, but as the result of an exclusionary system designed to support the failure of some to counter the success of others. This ideology negatively impacts the educational progress of Hispanic students because it legitimizes the use of discrimination to create low educational attainment and eventual failure. For Hispanic children this failure is grounded in the concept of "deficit thinking" where blame is placed on the students themselves, their families, their home environments, and their culture (Valencia, 1997). Valencia (1997) posits that "deficit thinking" paradigms support the idea that students who fail in school do so because of alleged internal deficiencies such as cognitive or motivational limitations, or shortcomings socially linked to the student. Family is viewed as a deficit and is typically blamed for underachievement with total disregard to systemic factors such as school segregation, inequalities in school financing, and curriculum differentiation. Valencia (1997) notes that among scholars, educators, and policy makers, "deficit thinking" models have long been upheld to explain school failure among low-income minority groups.

In the educational system, models based on "blaming the victim" not only reinforce negative stereotypes and reproduce a system of inequality, but directly impact the self-perception of home environment and culture of Hispanic students, as well as their treatment by individuals working in the system.

Scholars such as Peña (1997) investigated the relationship between student achievement, practitioners' attitudes and expectations, and student culture. The results indicated that Mexican American students perceived themselves as did school personnel--different from Anglo students. Peña found that Mexican American cultural traditions were viewed by school personnel and other high-achieving Mexican American students as inferior and disadvantageous. Students who were underachievers valued their cultural traditions more positively than their high-achieving peers and became more resistant to learning if their traditions were marginalized in school. On the other hand, high-achieving Mexican American students demonstrated attitudes and behaviors distinct from their underachieving peers. According to Peña, Mexican American high-achievers earned social acceptance and achievement in school by complying with demands from teachers and administrators, and other requisites. These high-achieving students were also more interested in meeting school demands, which they perceived to be more important and personally satisfying, than in pursuing ethnic or cultural membership, which they perceived as embarrassing. In contrast, underachieving Mexican American students were generally less compliant and more resistant to school customs that consistently agitated and marginalized their own cultural traditions (Peña, 1997). As revealed in this study, conforming to perceptions of how those in the education system think one should be may require

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forfeiting cultural identification. Valenzuela's (1999) research in a Houston,

Texas high school reflects this type of exchange between teachers and students.

> While abandoning one's culture may seem appropriate to the Teacher, Principal, district-level Administrator, or state level board member for whom the worth of the dominant culture is simply self-evident, it is inherently alienating for Mexican youth whose lived ethnic experience requires that they retain some measure of competence across the varied contexts that characterize their experience. And it is especially alienating for the vast majority of youth who are not located in the privileged rungs of curriculum. (p. 264)

In Peña's study, as in Valenzuela's research, academic achievement rested

on the desire and ability of high-achievers to think and act "normally"; that is,

mimic or behave as White cultural norms or the school believed they should.

Negative perceptions of Mexican American underachievers emerged because their

behavior was seen as resistant and antagonistic, and their culture seemed

antithetical to the dominant culture of the school. In this case, Anglo culture was

accorded primacy in school while the Mexican American culture was deemed

secondary (Peña, 1997).

In related research, Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) examined educational

failure of Latino youth. They determined that academically resilient students

sustained high levels of achievement motivation, and performed well, despite the

presence of stressful events and conditions, such as those placed on students when

their culture was demeaned (Cabrera, 1999). Conditions included

marginalization, discrimination, feelings of alienation and isolation, economic

hardship, and unequal educational opportunities. Although in combination good

self-concept, good self-identity, perseverance, persistence, and family support created a recipe for success, for many Mexican American students, stressful events and conditions become too much to bear.

Mexican American students who do succeed, complete the K-12 system, and move on to post secondary education, are disproportionately low in number, yet within the context of this study, these successful students have a responsibility to share their knowledge with others progressing through the system. Section Two will present a series of studies highlighting the higher educational experiences of Latinas, Chicanas, and Mexican American females on their path to administrative positions as students, staff, faculty and administrators.

Mexican American Female Experiences in Higher Education
as Students, Faculty, and Staff

Section One provided foundational information crucial to understanding the current underrepresentation of Mexican Americans in institutions of higher education. Historic events within the education system functioned as major factors influencing the number of Mexican Americans and, therefore, Mexican American females represented on college and university campuses across the nation. The underrepresentation of this population at the undergraduate level will obviously result in smaller numbers within graduate programs that prepare students for administrative posts.

For Section Two, studies were chosen that represented the experiences of Mexican American women as Latinas, Chicanas, students, staff, faculty, and administrators. The following is an outline of studies included in the review of literature. The review begins with a study by Casco (1994) who discusses the pressures experienced by Chicanas while going to school, including their feelings of isolation and obligation to family. Gloria (1997) builds on this research with a study highlighting the value of providing Chicanas with a university-based support system that is welcoming, supportive, and culturally relevant. Significant predictors of Mexican American students' GPAs are discussed in a study conducted by Alva (1991). Estrada (1985) continues the discussion of Mexican Americans on college campuses with research on Texas Mexican American women's attitudes toward higher education and the importance of obtaining an advanced degree. Gandara (1994) adds to the discussion with a study in which she surveyed high-achieving Mexican Americans who held doctoral degrees for factors that determined their success.

At this point in the review, the focus shifts from highlighting student experiences in higher education to their experiences as faculty and staff members. Sierra (1990) and Gloria (1997) examine how and at what levels Chicanas are represented within academic ranks, while Martinez Rogers (1995) examines the career progress and job satisfaction of Mexican American females in academia. Adding to the discussion, Hernandez (1997) calls for universities to utilize tenure

as a way to acknowledge the existence and contributions of Mexican Americans. Robles (2000) examines the waning numbers of Latinas in academia as faculty and graduate students and Verdugo (1995) discusses how Latinos are alienated from academia. At the administrative level, Haro (1995) examines negative perceptions of Hispanics and how these perceptions can impact whether or not they are chosen for top-level administrative positions. Mata (1993) compares the roles of Anglo and Hispanic women as professionals, spouses and mothers. Esquivel (1993) interviews and surveys Chicano administrators in an effort to determine factors that most influenced their appointments.

A summary of studies is provided at the end of Section One, followed by the theoretical framework used for this study. The theoretical framework presented in Section Three provides a rich and contextual framework for understanding the use of Critical Race Theory as a methodology, which is presented in Chapter Three, and as a lens in the data analysis, which is discussed in Chapter Four.

<u>Higher Education Experiences as Students</u>

An important study by Casco (1994) examined, through narratives, the higher education experiences of Chicanas who attended a college or university during the 1950s. Casco used the information gathered from these narratives to measure the progress of the participants in higher education. Participants in Casco's study stated a need to be a part of the research due to its potential to

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better prepare future generations of Chicanas for college success. According to the findings, many of the experiences of Chicanas in higher education have remained the same over the years, such as conflicting feelings of familial obligations and isolation, and balancing academic and family responsibilities while also maintaining a job. Casco's study highlights the need to examine specific factors that influence Chicana retention on college campuses.

In her 1997 study, Gloria called for university energies to be channeled toward providing a university-based community or support system that is welcoming, supportive, and culturally relevant to Chicana students. The findings of Gloria's research revealed that, although university environments were perceived as supportive and friendly, for Chicana students support from close friends outweighed environment as a significant predictor for non-persistence. This evidence indicates that, in spite of a supportive campus environment, a university that is impersonal and lacking in cultural relevancy will not be as effective in retaining Chicanas. Access to other Chicano/Chicana administrators and faculty was considered important in decreasing feelings of isolation and alienation, thereby providing an environment that was perceived as welcoming and supportive (Gloria, 1997).

The supportive campus environment is also discussed in a study by Alva (1991) who examined the role of protective factors within the Mexican American population and the impact of these factors on a student's GPA. Findings revealed

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that the most significant predictor of the student's GPA was the individual's subjective appraisal of his/her own personal college preparation, as well as the perceived support of the school environment. Educational support from teachers and friends, plus a sense of control over one's academic future, also predicted high GPAs.

This review now turns to examination of complex factors that predict Mexican American women's academic success, beginning with their perceptions of the value of higher education.

Estrada (1986) conducted a study focusing on Mexican American women and their attitudes toward higher education as a means of personal, social, and economic advancement. Estrada examined how attitudes and other factors such as age, residence, income, and educational level affected the educational decisions made by these women. Findings revealed that obtaining a higher education was important on a personal level and also resulted in social and economic advancement. Participants in Estrada's study reported that their educational goals included obtaining a college education despite feelings that other priorities or responsibilities might interfere with their success. Half of the respondents reported receiving encouragement to attend college from early home and school experiences and identified their mother as the most influential person in promoting education. In addition, the women perceived their overall status as lower than that of men and Anglo women. It was concluded that the participants

in the study retained positive attitudes towards education and believed that a higher education led to general advancement and increased social status.

In a similar study, Gandara (1995) examined high-achieving Mexican Americans with doctoral level educations whose family backgrounds included low-income households with little formal education. The subjects in this cohort began school with Spanish as their primary language, were sons and daughters of farm workers or other unskilled laborers, and had completed doctoral degrees from the country's most prestigious institutions. Gandara's study revealed that the family's participation and contribution were influencing factors in their children's success. The subjects were asked, "Why were you so educationally successful when other Chicanos in your situation were not?" Responses included "Motivation, I wanted it badly," "The need creates a will," or "Why me? I think because I wanted it more than anybody else." Two-thirds of the participants felt persistence rather than innate ability contributed to their success, and most subjects saw themselves as hard workers who, like their parents, would never give up. To succeed, however, persistence had to be accompanied by educational opportunities.

<u>Experiences in Academia as Faculty</u>

With limited literature specifically examining the experiences of Mexican American female administrators, the studies used in the following two sections reflect the experiences of Latinos/as, Chicanos/as and Hispanics and are

intentionally used to mirror the experiences of Mexican American females. The

following three studies are used to represent the experiences of Mexican

American faculty members.

Sierra (1990) calls for a reexamination of Chicanas as students, teachers,

and scholars:

> All of these three factors, the different experiences, perceptions, and
> responses on the part of women, point to the fact that Chicanas have a
> leading role to play in the articulation of issues for the Chicano
> community within and outside the halls of academia.
> (p. 7)

Gloria (1997) reinforces Sierra's research by identifying Chicanas as a

"non-existent" or "invisible" minority in higher education. Gloria states, "even as

Chicanas reach unprecedented levels of academic achievement, the scarcity of

these women in higher education faculty positions, and in Chicano and Mexican

American studies programs will continue." Gloria elaborates on this

underrepresentation:

> The total population of Latinos has grown faster than other ethnic/racial
> groups. Unfortunately, this population growth is not evidenced in the
> admission or graduation rates of Latinos from colleges and universities
> across the nation, in particular for Chicanos/Chicanas. The alarmingly
> low percentages of young adult Chicanas with high school or college
> degrees underscores the need to examine carefully the factors and types of
> support systems that can positively influence their academic standing.
> (p. 1)

Robles (2000) supports this scholarship by examining the appearance of

growth in numbers of Latino/as in higher education as graduate students and

faculty members. Her findings revealed that the drop-off in the number of Latinas

in Bachelor's and Master's degree programs and the current number of Latinas in the academy become crucial for young Latina scholars. Leadership roles provided by current Latina faculty are multi-faceted, and can include sharing of information and career opportunities, establishing networks of scholarly support, providing research and instructional guidance, and avoiding the "adobe ceiling," (p.98) a term coined by Robles to describe the relegation of talented Latino women scholars and intellectuals to non-tenure track support roles in the academy when they have been denied tenure.

In her study, Robles focused on the numbers of Hispanic female faculty currently in academia and Hispanic female graduate students preparing for futures in academia. Although there appeared to be significant increases in numbers of Hispanic female faculty and graduate students, these data may not be as significant as they appear when juxtaposed to the rapid growth of the Hispanic population as a whole. Conclusions by Robles included recommendations for increasing the number of Latinos in higher education through enhancing recruitment and retention, increasing informational mentoring, showcasing research, collaborating on research projects, and working with outside organizations and public-service offices.

Robles further emphasized that it would be in the best interest of the nation and individual states to formulate policies designed to increase educational access and opportunity for all its current and future citizens. The health of the

economy would also benefit from the production by public universities of current

and future labor force participants. According to Robles,

> Without prompt action, the institutions of higher learning will fail to
> produce an expanding pool of trained and talented Latino labor-force
> participants-cum-future-taxpayers to replace the aging white labor-force
> participants and current taxpayers. Moreover, it is the young, ethnic-
> minority populations that will be the taxpaying supporters of the growing
> retirees. (p. 108)

Norma Elia Martinez Rogers (1995) addresses this underrepresentation by

examining the career progress and job satisfaction of Mexican American women

in the ranks of academia. An assessment of job satisfaction related to supervision,

salary, promotion, recognition, job security, working conditions, responsibility,

and relationships with colleagues was conducted. Martinez Rogers hypothesized

that Mexican American female academicians, compared to their white

counterparts, perceived a difference in treatment concerning promotion, job

security, and level of recognition, and experienced slower career progression and

lower salaries.

> Mexican American women who achieve advanced degrees will, in the 21st
> century, encounter low pay scales and limited advancement in academia.
> Academia will then lose these women to other industries, contributing to
> minority faculty shortages for colleges and universities. Opportunities
> need to be provided for minority women in higher education in order for
> them to succeed in academic careers (Martinez Rogers, 1995).

In his 1995 study, Verdugo named both racial stratification and

segregation as factors precipitating the differing treatment of Hispanic faculty

members. After completing his doctoral degree and publishing numerous refereed

scholarly works, Verdugo recounts the difficulties associated with securing an academic position:

> Ideologically, there is a pervasive belief that Hispanic faculty lack the necessary academic skills that would allow them to flourish in academe, that there is a lack of objectivity in their research, and that the topics with which they deal are irrelevant or only marginally important. (p. 103).

Ultimately, Verdugo acquired a high-salaried, non-academic position, a career path not tied to scholarly output, and affording him the freedom to pursue interesting research activities without the pressures associated with "publish or perish" (p. 107). Verdugo's personal experience solidified his belief that the rejection of minority scholars is a way to maintain the status quo in academia.

A study by Hernandez (1997) also supports this difference in treatment, and adds that American universities maintain self-imposed constraints including long-standing gender biases that ignore the contributions of Mexicans to American history (Hernandez, 1997). Hernandez proposes that institutions of higher education should employ Chicanas as tenured professors both within and outside Chicano studies programs as recognition and acknowledgement of contributions made by Mexican Americans. Hernandez notes that the inability or reluctance to hire Chicanas in tenure-track positions has worsened the situation in terms of representation. Hernandez states,

> Chicano Studies departments that have existed for ten years or more and still have not hired and tenured Chicanas are embarrassments to our community. Lip service. (p. 696)

Although Hernandez's study examines the employment of Chicanas in specific academic departments, this perspective is crucial in the evaluation of all higher education hiring practices. Academic departments that are unwilling to employ and tenure Chicanas contribute to the overall underrepresentation of Chicanas in the workforce. Hernandez (1997) criticizes hiring practices centered on the belief that only a small pool of qualified applicants exists, and states adamantly,

> In fact, Mexican Americans are not passive and will not accept Anglo domination, they do not plan to be ignored in academia or in any other entity. Their resistance to domination has taken on a variety of forms since the conquest, contributing to the maintenance and perpetuation of cultural patterns among Mexican Americans living in the United States. (p. 2)

Hernandez clearly supports efforts to increase the number of Chicanas as tenured professors within the ranks of academia. This proposed increase will not only benefit the faculty ranks but will allow Chicanas to be considered for administrative positions such as department chairs or academic deans.

<u>Experiences as Administrators</u>

The examination of higher education experiences of Mexican Americans and Mexican American females as students and faculty/staff in general can now be narrowed to include very specifically the experiences of administrators. The research cited in this section is limited to the experiences of Chicano and Latino administrators and includes one study specific to Mexican American female administrators. Although the following studies can serve to identify factors that

impact administrative appointments of Chicano/a administrators, they are not specific to gender. While the current research study posits that gender is crucial in identifying factors contributing to success, this researcher offers the following studies as a foundation to contextualize characteristics valued in the selection of Chicano/a administrators.

Haro's 1995 research, based on the limited number of Latinos in leadership roles in higher education, examined the appointments of presidents and academic vice presidents, and questioned if negative perceptions toward Latinos impact their selection for key leadership roles in higher education. Although Haro acknowledged that data exist on female and minority academic presidential appointments fewer studies have focused on numbers of women and minorities selected for the position of academic vice president. In his study, Haro interviewed various constituents involved in searches for presidencies or academic vice presidencies at selected campuses chosen because they were coeducational, 60% white, two- or four-year research institutions (private or public), and located in parts of the country where Latino populations were at least 9%. Haro contacted 130 individuals; of those, 96 agreed to be interviewed. Thirty-seven were involved in academic vice presidency searches and 59 were participating in presidential searches. Interview questions focused on academic preparation, experiential background, scholarly/teaching accomplishments, matters of style, and interview impressions. Findings revealed that faculty,

administrators, and trustees from different campuses expressed concerns about the

"style" of Latino candidates. An ambitious Latino was viewed as presumptuous,

contentious, and "lacking seasoning," whereas a white candidate with the same

qualities was seen and admired as having "drive and determination."   The style of

a candidate was also considered when determining qualities desired in a candidate

for a presidential position, such as public speaking skills. Interviewers felt that

candidates should be gregarious and friendly, have a firm handshake and should

be tall and attractive (p. 197).

Haro concluded that the selection of academic vice presidents and

presidents was influenced by underlying negative perceptions and stereotypes

based on gender and race that placed equally qualified female and minority

candidates at a disadvantage against non-minority candidates vying for the same

position.

> The data paint a disturbing picture for Latino candidates. They are held to
> a much higher level of preparation and achievement then are either white
> males or white females. The attitudes of several respondents reflected a
> perfunctory suspicion of Latino finalists for presidencies and AVP jobs.
> Some referred negatively to Latinos as "affirmative action products." A
> few people implied that Latino finalists may have been "coddled" or
> "helped" through their doctoral studies and then given "preferential
> treatment" in the tenure and promotion process. Unfortunately such
> attitudes were held by several influential search and screening-committee
> members who conveniently ignored the genuine accomplishments of these
> finalists. (Haro, 1995, p. 203)

Haro adds,

> While the appointment of Latinos to executive positions in higher
> education is improving, progress is still "painfully slow." Latino women,
> however, bear a double burden –being considered less desirable because
> they are women and people of color. In areas of the country were Latinos
> have, for demographic or sociopolitical reasons, begun to achieve
> recognition, opportunities might improve for them to serve as college or
> university executives. (p. 203)

The results of this study suggested that a glass ceiling exists for Latinos in

higher education, similar to Robles' (2000 p.98) concept of the "adobe ceiling"

that hinders the advancement of Latino women.

Focusing on gender, Zelma Mata (1993) examined perceptions held by

Anglo and Hispanic female administrators in institutions of higher education of

their multiple roles, including professional versus spouse, professional versus

parent, professional versus self, spouse versus parent, spouse versus self, and

parent versus self. Participants included 193 Anglo females and 41 Hispanic

females from 61 institutions of higher education in south and west Texas. Mata

emphasized that the multiple family and career roles held by women are

exacerbated by societal expectations. Marriage and parenthood were examples of

roles resulting in satisfaction and happiness but also causing extreme stress.

According to Mata, women in higher education leadership positions are not

immune to conflicts resulting from their roles as professionals, spouses, and

parents. Mata also cited Biklen who proposed that women who have chosen

careers as educational leaders find that their work is partly shaped by the constraints and contingencies of being female.

Mata further emphasized that little is known of the perceptions that Hispanic women administrators hold relative to their multiple roles of professional, spouse, parent, and individual, as minority women have been sorely neglected in research focusing on sex roles and family. According to Mata, data on the perceptions of Hispanic women administrators are vital to the recruitment of other Hispanic females into administrative positions and to explain their underrepresentation in leadership roles in institutions of higher education.

Antonio Esquivel (1993) conducted studies in 1979 and 1991 to identify factors that most influenced the appointments of Chicano/a administrators. Research questions included: "What does it take to be a successful Mexican American administrator?" "Is there a magic formula or a magic set of attributes that one must possess?" "Do you really have to distance yourself from your heritage and community in order to be a successful Chicano or Chicana administrator?" The 1,325 Chicano/a administrators who participated in this study were from a five-state southwest region. Findings revealed that possessing a doctorate (as a terminal degree) was very important for upward mobility. In terms of family, Chicanos/as whose mothers reached high levels of education held higher-level positions in administration. Physical characteristics such as height and skin color, appeared to be important, and a taller-than-average height and

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lighter skin color were particularly important in positions of higher visibility, such as university presidents. Other physical characteristics such as weight, eye color, and hair color were determinants for success.

Demographics of student population at an institution also proved to be important. It appeared that the administrative level of Chicano/as increased as the percentage of Chicano/a students decreased. Most Chicano/a administrators held positions in institutions where Chicanos/as made up less than 15% of the student body. Administrators who held higher-level positions were born outside the state in which they held their position, usually outside the Southwest. Educational level of one's spouse and mobility proved to be important factors in advancing within administrative ranks. Approximately three quarters of all spouses of senior level administrators had at least a bachelor's degree and approximately half had post-graduate degrees.

Esquivel (1993) concluded that during the past 25 years the number of Chicano/a administrators has increased dramatically from virtually none to more than 1,225. Data on gender revealed that 11% of all respondents in 1976 were female as opposed to 30% in 1991. This 15-year increase was not as dramatic or unexpected when considering a number of variables including increases in the Chicano/a population, in the number of institutions, and in the number of administrative positions in the Southwest.

Summary of Studies

Mexican American females in the higher education arena as students, faculty or staff members value higher education as a way to improve quality of life through personal, social and economic advancement (Casco, 1994). Students stated that their early home environments and mothers were primary influences in providing encouragement and promotion of higher education (Estrada, 1985). The overall academic experience was reported to be different for Chicanas than for Chicanos in terms of feelings of inequality. Sierra (1990) attributes this difference to the smaller number of Chicanas in academic ranks. Robles (2000) supports this underrepresentation through her study examining the waning numbers of Latinas in academia as faculty and graduate students. In fact Chicanas were referred to as the "non-existent" or "invisible" minority in higher education. Hernandez (1997) called for institutions to recognize the historic contributions made by Mexican Americans by hiring them as tenured professors both within and outside Chicano studies programs. Verdugo (1995) uses his experiences as a rejected scholar to analyze why Latinos are alienated from academia.

A welcoming, culturally relevant, and supportive campus environment was crucial in improving low persistence rates among Chicanos (Gloria, 1997). Alva (1991) cited school environment as an influential factor in student success

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and added the student's own self-appraisal of college preparation as a significant predictor of student GPAs.

In the ranks of administration, Haro (1995) examined the impact of negative perceptions on their selection for administrative positions as presidents and academic vice presidents. Mata (1993) also provided a gender-specific perspective by examining and comparing the perceptions Anglo and Hispanic women held relative to their roles as professionals, spouses, and mothers. In a study by Esquivel (1993), predictors for success of Mexican American administrators included educational levels of mothers and spouses, above-average height, light skin, and geographic mobility. Similarly, Gandara (1994) found that high-achieving Mexican Americans who possessed doctoral degrees felt that persistence rather than innate ability contributed to their success, yet maintained that persistence was insufficient without opportunity. A specific examination of Mexican American females in higher education by Martinez Rogers (1995) revealed a perceived difference between treatment of Mexican American females and their white counterparts in regard to promotion, job security, recognition, career programs, and salaries.

As demonstrated in the literature, identification with and maintenance of cultural beliefs allow individuals, particularly Hispanic (Mexican American) administrators, to establish themselves as vital links in society and maintain the "voice" of the community. Hispanics (Mexican Americans) who have maintained

more rather than less of their traditional values will more likely be involved and concerned with issues in their community.

Finally, the impact of a college or university environment and the nature of the learning environment are important in producing differences in a student's aspirations, self-confidence, and career potential.

<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

Studying the complex existence of Mexican American females requires a theoretical framework that critically examines the racialized reality of these women. This can be found in Critical Race Theory (CRT), which provides an infrastructure and critical lens with which to study this population.

With its foundation in Critical Legal Studies (CLS), CRT is a product of the early works of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman in the mid-1970s in response to the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1999). It was apparent to Bell, Freeman, and other legal scholars such as Richard Delgado and Kimberly Crenshaw, that many of the gains made in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s were regressing (Delgado, 1995). As a result, CRT with its goals of academic and social activism was created to counter the universality of the white experience or judgment as the authoritative standard. This standard was used to bind people of color and establish normative measures that directed, controlled, and regulated the terms of proper thought, expression, presentation,

and behavior. Comprehensively, CRT strives to eliminate racial oppression and achieve racial justice (Tate, 1997).

Delgado (1995) highlights three basic insights of this theory. First, the normalcy of racism within American society is seen as an ingrained feature of the landscape, appearing ordinary and natural to persons within the culture. Second, culture constructs social reality in ways that promote its own self-interest, specifically the self-interest of elite groups. Third, interest-convergence is seen as a way that white elites tolerate or encourage racial advancement for Blacks (people of color) only when also promoting white self-interests.

These basic insights provide a framework for studying race as well as the impact of class and gender on the lives of Mexican American females and other women of color. The following paragraphs define race in the context of a social construct, gender as a factor in the context of "triple oppression," and class as a construct of value based on social level (Segura, 1990).

<u>Situating Race as a Social Construct</u>

Race, according to Haney Lopez (1995), is "a very powerful mediating factor in every segment of our lives." It is defined as a vast group of people loosely bound together by historically contingent, socially significant elements of their morphology and/or ancestry. It is a social phenomenon, serving as the connection between physical features, faces, and personal characteristics. Haney Lopez proposes that race situates itself as "neither an essence nor an illusion but

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rather an ongoing, contradictory, self-reinforcing plastic process, subject to the macro forces of social and political struggle and the micro effects of daily decisions" (p. 192). He proposes that race must be viewed as a social construct, meaning that human interaction rather than a natural differentiation must be seen as the source of and continued basis for racial categorization. In essence, Haney Lopez considers race to be categories of difference that exist only in society and are produced by a myriad of conflicting social forces that overlap and inform other social categories. In the same sense Omi and Winant (1986) consider race to be fluid, rather than static and fixed, possessing meaning only in relationship to other racial categories and not existing independently.

Historically, science has formed a human typology justifying race in connection with physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, facial angle, jaw size, cranial capacity, brain mass, and brain surface fissures (Feagin, 1993). This typology, according to Haney Lopez, defined the process in which racial meanings arose and supported racial categories of "white, black, and yellow" based on three races (Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid) (Haney Lopez, 1995 p.194). Using the notion of race as an amalgamation, Haney Lopez proposes four facets of the social construction of race, presented below along with the application of these four tenets to explain the racialization of Mexican American females (p. 196):

Tenet 1: Humans rather than abstract social forces produce races.

Application: Mexican American females are situated as a racialized

community based on the use of Hispanic as a specific ethnic category in

the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Tenet 2: As human constructs, races constitute an integral part of a whole

societal fabric that includes gender and class relations.

Application: The Hispanic population in the U.S. remains evenly

distributed in terms of gender, but maintains diversity in terms of class.

Tenet 3: Meaning-systems surrounding race change rapidly.

Application: The heterogeneous characteristic of Hispanics and Mexican

American women invites fluidity in the meaning systems of race simply

based on skin complexion within the notion of "passing."

Tenet 4: Races are constructed relationally against one another, rather than

in isolation.

Application: The "us against them" concept is employed for Mexican

Americans and people of color particularly when vying for resources such

as equity in education.

<div align="center">Class as a Social Status</div>

For the purpose of this study, class will be explained using McLaren's

(2000) definition of class as "a position in society based on one's relationship to a

means of production and where a superior position exists based on the existence

of a subordinate position" (p. 12). The use of class in this theoretical framework

provides for in-depth deconstruction of identity in relation to societal status in the United States. According to McLaren, both class and race are conflated in western culture resulting in an implied imbalance of one person seen as "higher" than another. Class is identified as a measurement of what individuals are or have and is linked to possessive individualism, which focuses on types of persons rather than on social conditions, or on one's relationship to the means of production.

McLaren's definition of class illustrates the typical relationship between identity and societal status, which currently links one's identity to a measurement of what an individual possesses. As a consequence, African Americans, Latinos, and other marginalized and racialized groups are perceived as the "subaltern" class or "underclass" and are morally marked in such a way that undesired behaviors become associated with members of these groups (McLaren, 2000).

GENDER AS STATUS

For the purpose of this study, race, as presented by Haney-Lopez (1995) and Omi and Winant (1986), class, as explained by McLaren (2000), and gender, using Segura's (1990) concept of "triple oppression," can explain the complex reality of women of color, specifically Mexican American females. Race as a social construct, class as position in a stratification system based on production, and gender as a social identifier, form the reality Segura (1990) refers to as "triple oppression," a term describing the unique class, race, and gender subordination of

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women of color. The cumulative effect of the interplay of race, class, and gender places women of color in a subordinate social and economic position relative to men of color and to the majority of the white population (Segura, 1990).

Segura argues that, even though class is the baseline whereby political and social privileges are differentiated, "it cannot explain fully the variations in the status and power of different groups in our society," in particular racial and ethnic minorities.   According to Segura, class and race limit access by women to economic and political power, leaving them subordinate to men in each class category and racial ethnic group. This comprehensive notion of "triple oppression" proves to be crucial in examining the complex realities of Mexican American women as members of a racialized group, a subordinate and disempowered class holding minority status.

<div align="center">Voice through Narratives</div>

The use of CRT as a theoretical framework integrated with Segura's concept of "triple oppression" allows the researcher to initiate the use of "voice" in this study through narratives.   These narratives will function as vehicles to counter hegemonic myths and stereotypes about Mexican American female administrators and explain factors that have impacted their academic and professional successes.

The qualitative nature of CRT proposes the use of narratives to relay multiplicities of existing realities, as well as to understand the interactions of these

realities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In the production of these narratives, the concept of "voice" is used within the critical race tradition to convey viewpoints different from those held in dominant mainstream culture. Delgado (1995) contends that the existence of the dominant group is contingent upon the marginality of out-groups, such as people of color, whose "voice," perspective, and consciousness have been suppressed, devalued, and abnormalized. Stories, narratives, and encounters from groups on the periphery are important in establishing truths for members of dominant mainstream culture and for creating bonds that represent cohesion, shared understanding, and meaning for members of the out-group. These narratives present a reality counter to the stories created by dominant mainstream culture, in which a superior position is seen as normal in relation to out-groups, who wish to subvert this shared reality. Delgado (1995) proposes that stories, parables, chronicles, and narratives are powerful means to destroy this type of mindset.

For the purpose of this study, a CRT lens was used in the formation of the literature review, the data collection, and the data analysis, and reflects the Critical Race Theory framework integrating race, class, and gender within the concept of "triple oppression." Chapter Three, Methodology, describes the theoretical framework used to support the design of the study, the methods used in data collection, the data analysis, and the examination of lives of the research participants.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Chapter Three presents the research methodology and rationale for using a CRT framework in the design of the study, the data collection, and data analysis. An explanation is also offered to highlight the value of using CRT to study Mexican American female administrators by means of CRT's qualitative methods of interviews, narratives, storytelling, and counter-storytelling.

The purpose of this research is to create narratives, stories, and counter-stories relating life experiences and professional challenges of participants from data gathered in recorded interviews. Information derived from examination of the data is crucial in constructing accounts of achievement and success of these women. It was the intent of this study to highlight their successes as a means to later identify and name strategies and factors that may assist Latinas in the future as they face the obstacles inherent in their pursuit of academic achievement.

Overarching Question

The research question used in this study is as follows: What life experiences and professional challenges have impacted the educational attainment and administrative positions of Texas Mexican American female academic and student affairs administrators?

CRT as Qualitative Methodology

CRT as a post-positivist qualitative research method is applied in this study because it encourages the use of parables, stories, narratives, counter-stories, and revisionist histories to rewrite current hegemonic ideology concerning marginalized groups (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999). As a qualitative method, CRT is valued as a vehicle to establish "voice" for racialized and marginalized communities such as the participants in this study. According to the literature, CRT refrains from proposing a specific methodology, yet embraces the use of qualitative methodologies such as interviewing, storytelling, and narrative inquiry (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Qualitative researchers make sense of and find interactions between personal stories gathered through this type of methodology (Glesne, 1999, p. 1). According to Glesne, in this process of sense-making, the researcher becomes the main research instrument as he or she observes, asks questions, and interacts with research participants (Glesne, 1999, p. 5).

One of the merits of conducting a qualitative study to examine the lives of Mexican American female administrators is that it is exploratory, leaning solely on the limited amount of literature written about this group. With this information, the researcher then seeks to listen to informants and build a picture of who they are based on their own ideas, thus increasing the amount of relevant literature available (Creswell, 1994, p. 21). Another benefit of using a qualitative methodology is that it allows the researcher to function as an advocate or an

interventionist, taking a position on an issue revealed through their research (Glesne, 1999, p. 120).

Use of CRT as Qualitative Method

Critical Race Theory had its start in the mid-1970s with the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. Its outgrowth from the field of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) was a move from Bell and Freeman to appropriately include race as part of CLS's critique of mainstream legal ideology (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The importance of CRT fell not only on its questioning of the status quo, but its use as an intellectual and social tool to deconstruct oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruct human agency, and construct equitable and socially just relations of power (Ladson-Billings, 1999). In essence, CRT works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating other forms of subordination to include gender, class, and sexual orientation (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Basic Tenets of CRT

CRT begins with the idea that

1. Racism appears normal in American society;

2. Dominant culture constructs realities in ways that promote its own self-interest and more specifically the interest of elite groups (Delgado, 1995); and

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3. Interest convergence is seen as a way that White elites tolerate or encourage advancement of Blacks (people of color) only when they promote White self-interests (Delgado, 1995).

CRT as a qualitative methodology is relatively new in its use outside fields of law, including those fields that have traditionally utilized positivist types of paradigms such as those in education. This is an example of what Lather (1986) proposes is a shift in researchers'understanding of what constitutes research and scientific inquiry. Lather (1993) suggests that post-positivist discourses used in qualitative methods lead to increased use and acceptance of research methods that are interactive, contextualized and humanly compelling, inviting participation in the exploration of research issues.

CRT provides a powerful tool in understanding how the subordination and marginalization of people of color are created and maintained in United States society (Villenas & Deyle, 1999). Through its primary goals of social activism and racial justice, CRT presents an opportunity for questions to surface concerning societal and educational treatment of communities of color and, for the purposes of this study, Mexican American females.

CRT in Education

Included in post-positivist discourses such as CRT are new paradigms reflecting how research should be conducted in communities of color. Previously, the theories and belief systems dominant in education relating to people of color

have been premised upon political, scientific, and religious theories which relied

on racial characteristics and stereotypes about people of color that support

legitimating the dominant ideology and related political action. Tate (1996), as

well as other critical scholars, has called for a change in the way educational

research is conducted in communities of color. Tate questions how cultural

pedagogy is viewed and interpreted in the construction of knowledge, and how

this knowledge is used to construct the realities of communities peripheral to

dominant mainstream cultures. Solorzano (2001) borrows from initial CRT

tenets, and questions traditional claims made by the educational system and its

institutions toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race, neutrality, and

equal opportunity. Solorzano (2001) also builds on Delgado's foundational tenets

of CRT and proposes five themes specific to education:

1. The centrality of race and racism and its intersectionality with other

   forms of subordination;

2. The challenge of dominant ideology;

3. The commitment to social justice;

4. The centrality of experiential knowledge; and

5. The transdisciplinary perspective.

These themes support Tate's (1997) proposition that the historic treatment

of education and equity for students of color, as well as its role in providing

experiential knowledge of race, class, and gender should be challenged in

educational discourse (p. 199). In CRT, this experiential knowledge is transferred and validated through processes such as the creation of narratives and storytelling. Although these techniques are valued within a qualitative CRT framework, opponents, particularly in the legal arena, challenge the use of narratives and storytelling as a reliable and verifiable process, questioning the factual objectivity of personal accounts of racism and fictional stories about racial dilemmas (Parker, 1998). Solorzano (2001) states that because CRT is committed to social justice as a liberatory or transformative response to race, class, and gender oppression, in education, the experiential knowledge of students of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination.

<div align="center">Use of CRT to Study Mexican American Women</div>

CRT is employed in the current research to examine the life experiences of Mexican American female administrators. Delgado's tenets and Solorzano's perspectives of CRT provide an infrastructure with which to study Mexican American women as a racialized and marginalized group of people who have experienced a history of oppression and discrimination that is reflected in society and educational institutions (Omi & Winant, 1986).

Institutions of higher education reflect a system founded on the principles of exclusion (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). CRT questions this exclusionary system by deconstructing institutional practices that support the marginalization

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of people of color. CRT can explain the underrepresentation of Mexican

American women in higher education institutions as students, faculty, and

administrators, because it illuminates traditional claims made by the educational

system and its institutions toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race

neutrality, and equal opportunity (Solorzano, 2001).   Based on the premise that

racism is ingrained in United States society, as suggested by Delgado (1995), this

researcher has concluded that racism is also present within institutions of higher

education.   Based on this premise, the researcher can also conclude that Mexican

American female administrators experience racism and discrimination in

institutions of higher learning simply based on their presence (albeit in small

numbers). With these assumptions forming the infrastructure of this study, the

researcher will then focus on an examination of life experiences and professional

challenges of the participants in order to illuminate variables that impact their

lives.

<div align="center">CRT Embraces Narratives</div>

> Narrative that focuses on the experience of outsiders empowers both the
> story-teller and the story-listener by virtue of its opposition to the
> traditional forms of discourse (Montoya, 1995, p. 537).

Narratives in qualitative research serve as representations of a story or

encounter (Glesne, 1999). They reflect lived experiences, cultural values,

traditions, and the history of a group. In this same sense, narratives and

storytelling as embraced by CRT function as vehicles to relay information about a

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person or group and their experiences with systems of oppression. For example,

Olivo (1995) relays information to the reader about his grandfather's encounter

with discrimination during World War I. As a soldier traveling in Texas by train,

Olivo's grandparent was not allowed to enter a restaurant when the train stopped

because he was Mexican American. A sign posted outside the door of the

restaurant read "no coloreds or mexicans allowed." The telling of this story

transformed this experience into "voice." For Latinas, "voice" has been a

powerful tool of oral traditions, passing family knowledge from one generation to

the next (Bernal, 2001). Gonzalez (1993) explains her realization that the

tradition of relaying her own experiences and rich history through the practice of

storytelling within her family influenced the development of her personal

character.

For the purpose of this study, the concept of "voice" is used to empower

the research participants, otherwise known as storytellers. The researcher has

chosen to interpret interview data into narratives to maintain a semblance of

permanency of "voice" presented through the "written word." According to

Quintana (1990), the "written word" used by the researcher has the power to

revive and liberate, as well as the potential to blind, imprison, and destroy. The

epistemological boundaries of researchers are fuzzy at best when they attempt to

interpret rather than report about cultures unlike their own. Many times cultures

are represented within a western academic context and are not contextualized in

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cultural relevancy, as seen in the "voices" of the participants, but rather

represented through the eyes of the researcher

(Scheurich, 1997). Quintana suggests that one way to eliminate this form of

misrepresentation is through the liberating force of writing as the medium by

which to voice concerns. She supports the concept of the written word as a tool

powerful enough to enforce value systems, and to represent, dictate, control, and

categorize.

Harris (1995) proposes that "voice" can be used to:

1. Speak for a political faction, unifying and empowering many voices,
    as long as contradictory voices remain silent;

2. Rewrite the story and eliminate the silence; and

3. Address "gender essentialism" as "one" speaking for "all."

In this sense, "voice" dictates the complex realities of those being studied.

Critical race theorists argue that it is essential for researchers to

acknowledge the multiplicity of realities that exist in order to better understand

specific manifestations of interactions in these realities (Ladson-Billings & Tate,

1995). The use of "voice" within this study is meant to convey viewpoints

differing from those of dominant mainstream culture (Delgado, 1995). Writing

then serves as the vehicle for demystification and self-representation through

"voice." The realities of the research participants in this study also will be relayed

through narratives as a means by which to establish "voice."

<u>Research Design</u>

This study was conducted in four phases. In phase one, a pilot study was conducted in fall of 1998 as a project for an Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Methods course taught by Dr. Douglas Foley at the University of Texas at Austin. The pilot study was a preliminary examination of the literature related to Mexican American females in institutions of higher education, and will be summarized in Chapter Four.

In phase two, Mexican American female administrators at four institutions in the University of Texas System were contacted.   The location of the four institutions in south Texas, with its large Mexican American population, afforded increased potential for identification of a participant pool consisting of Mexican American students, faculty, and administrators (Apodaca, 2001). Names of prospective participants were collected through recommendations from colleagues, coworkers, and faculty mentors.

In phase three, interviews were scheduled and conducted during spring and summer of 2001. Interviews and observations took place in participants' offices or in an adjoining conference room. In addition to interviews collected at each of the four institutions, a focus group was held at one campus. Three of the five confirmed participants were able to attend the focus group. The initial intent of this researcher was to conduct one focus group at each participating institution; however, due to the scarcity of administrators fitting the criteria of the study and

the complexities of scheduling common two-hour gatherings, the plan to hold subsequent focus groups was abandoned.

Phase four of the study consisted of transcription and analysis of the audiotape interviews. Critical race theory framed the analyses to relay value and "truths" of the narratives (Delgado, 1995). Pseudonyms were assigned to participants to ensure confidentiality.

<u>Participant Selection</u>

Participants consisted of 14 Mexican American female administrators. Each held a position at one of four University of Texas schools in South Texas. This group consisted of one vice president, two assistant vice presidents, three deans, two acting deans, four directors, one chair, and one coordinator. Ten of the participants held doctoral degrees, three had master's degrees, and one held a bachelor's degree. Participants ranged in age from 33 to 54. At the time of the study, 10 reported being married, two had divorced, and two were single. All but two administrators had between one and four children per family. With one exception, all participants reported having been first generation college students, and all self-identified as one or more of the following: Hispanic, Mexican American, Mexicana, Chicana, or Latina. In terms of religion in either their upbringing or their current status, 13 administrators identified themselves as Catholic and one as Methodist. Thirteen administrators were born in the United States in one of the following towns: Del Rio (TX), Donna (TX), El Paso (TX),

Laredo (TX), San Antonio (TX), San Benito (TX), Weslaco (TX), Los Angeles

(CA).   One participant was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. All of the women held

an administrative position in one of the following universities: two in University

One, three in University Two, six in University Three, and three in University

Four.

> University One (UTEP) reported 95 Hispanic administrators, or 39.9% of the total (238), 48 Hispanic tenured faculty, or 16.8% of the total (285), with a 69% Hispanic student body, or 10,588 out of the total (15, 224).
>
> University Two (UTB) reported 52 Hispanic administrators, or 62% of the total (83), 30 Hispanic tenured faculty, or 39.5% of the total (76), with an 88% Hispanic student body, or 2,781 out of the total (3,157).
>
> University Three (UTSA) reported 39 Hispanic administrators, or 24.5% of the total (159), 32 Hispanic tenured faculty, or 13% of the total (246), with a 45% Hispanic student body, or 8,498 out of the total (18, 830).
>
> University Four (UTPA) reported 20 Hispanic administrators, or 40.8% of the total (49), 43 Hispanic tenured faculty, or 20.7% of the total (208), with an 83% Hispanic student body, or 10, 695 out of the total (12,760).

Names and contact information were collected from university websites.

Contact was made via electronic mail, and phone calls were placed to each

administrator to obtain her consent to participate. Participants received electronic

mail cover letters explaining the intent of the study (see Appendix C). With one

exception, all individuals who were contacted agreed to participate. It is worth

noting that all participants made extensive efforts to accommodate the interview

schedule despite their busy schedules.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was developed based on the research of

Patricia Gandara (1995) and Antonio Esquivel (1993). Questions from Gandara's

study *Over the Ivy Walls* were used with written permission (see Appendix A,B).

Both these studies were replicated to develop an interview guide (see Appendix

D), which the researcher followed while conducting the interviews. The selected

survey questions were tested in a pilot study and a focus group prior to the

interviews. As a result of the pilot study, the researcher was able to identify a

broad selection of questions that focused on culture and gender. Using the list of

questions produced from the pilot study, the researcher was then able to identify

specific questions for the interviews. Each interview was conducted with the

intent of using the interview guide strictly as a way to steer the questioning.

Questions were asked chronologically, beginning with early childhood

experiences through professional life challenges as administrators. This process

allowed the interviews to evolve into *platicas* (discussions) about a specific topic

included in the questioning or other related subjects. When a discussion strayed

from the intended question, the researcher redirected the questioning. The

researcher also used the technique of backtracking to recover information that was

omitted during the *platica.*

The use of summary charts (see Appendices, E-L) at the end of each

interview proved to be a valuable strategy to review, summarize, and focus the

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information collected from the participants. At the conclusion of each

conversation, the researcher invited the participant to complete the summary

chart, which gave each administrator the opportunity to self-identify as well as to

list three experiences or professional challenges that each woman saw as having a

significant impact in her life. Participants were also asked to list the most and

least rewarding aspects of their jobs, and any other factors affecting them as

administrators.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection took place over a three-month span during early spring and

summer of 2001. One two-hour focus group and in-depth interviews were audio-

taped and transcribed to allow for data interpretation and analysis and for themes

and commonalities to be extrapolated and categorized.   As the interviews were

completed, the researcher left the interview site and recorded field notes to

capture her perceptions and thoughts (Glesne, 1999).

The interviews allowed the researcher to interact with the subjects. It was

assumed that the researcher possessed attributes similar to those of the

interviewees and was familiar with the problem of the study as well as the study's

audience (Behar, 1996). Interviews were inductive, which allowed participants to

relay their experiences without pre-conceived conclusions (Glesne, 1999). Field

notes were used to establish a portrayal of the participants and their environment,

while maintaining their individual "voices."

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Data Analysis

Major themes and life experiences were identified and categorized from in-depth interviews and focus group interactions. The categories used in the interview guide provided structure and logic to the findings. Using a CRT lens, data were analyzed to determine commonalities among the participants' and the researcher's professional challenges and life experiences as Mexican American female administrators working at institutions of higher education in Texas. According to Behar (1996), subjectivity and the positioning of the researcher herself as a participant in the fieldwork opens the researcher to self-reflexivity and the reproduction of that which is being studied.

Methodological Limitations

The limitations of this study included the small number of Mexican American female administrators holding administrative positions in the University of Texas System schools (Apodaca, 2001) and the even smaller number of Mexican American female administrators available for this study. As full-time students, mothers, and administrators, both participants and researcher were constrained by limited availability within demanding personal and professional schedules.

Establishing Trustworthiness

To a great extent, validity in qualitative methods hinges on the skill, competence, and vigor of the person conducting the fieldwork. Lincoln and Guba

(1985) state that the researcher is the instrument in establishing validity. Lather positions validity as "an incitement to discourse" (Lather, 1993). Discourse in the social sciences offers validity as the problem not the solution; however, qualitative practices such as member-checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation are practices that have been implemented in an effort to resolve the problem of validity without exhausting it. Triangulation is defined as the use of multiple data collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators and/or multiple theoretical perspectives. Peer review and debriefing are external reflections and input on the researchers work and member checking is the sharing of interview transcripts, analytical thoughts and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure their ideas are being represented accurately (Glesne, 1999). Study participants Dr. Zapata, Ms. Chavez and Dr. Massiate participated in peer review and member-checking.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Critical Race Theory was used to create a framework to examine the life experiences and professional challenges of Mexican American female administrators holding academic or student affairs positions at one of four institutions in the University of Texas System. Their self-reported professional challenges and life experiences were explored. Data were gathered through a focus group and in-depth interviews. The sample group was drawn from recommendations from colleagues, coworkers, and faculty mentors. Data were

analyzed using an interpretive race-based perspective, and themes and

commonalities were extrapolated and categorized. Member-checking,

triangulation, and peer debriefing were used to establish trustworthiness. The

researcher sought to collect data that clearly report on the life experiences and

professional challenges of the participants. Chapter Four provides a summary of

the pilot study and presentation of the data, Chapter Five reviews the data and

provides an analysis, and Chapter Six includes conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

<u>Overview</u>

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study, *An Examination of The Life Experiences and Professional Challenges of Mexican American Female Academic and Student Affairs Administrators at Four Institutions of Higher Education in the University of Texas System.* The following excerpts from platicas (conversations) and recuerdos (memories) were collected in four stages from 14 participants. Using an interview guide based on the work of Gandara (1995) and Esquivel (1993), combined with additional gender-specific questions, the researcher constructed an infrastructure with which to guide this inquiry. Data were collected through a focus group, interviews, and summary charts, which were used to relay the participants' professional challenges and life experiences as higher education administrators. Prior to its use with individual participants in the main study, the interview guide was utilized in one focus group at one of the four chosen institutions, allowing the researcher to focus on questions relevant to the study and those deemed important by focus group participants. The researcher then scheduled interviews with the research participants. Profiles and emergent themes were developed based on experiences of the participants. Findings of these interviews follow.

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The overarching story of these administrators is that of serving as cultural bridges and translators for Hispanic youth in the higher education system. The metaphor of bridges was used by the researcher to present a distilled profile of Mexican American female academic and student affairs administrators as participants of this study. This profile represents women who have overcome struggles within the educational system through personal strength and wisdom, and desire to mentor and help others. The goal of the researcher was to present the stories of these women in a context incorporating race, class, and gender.

Findings

The data in this chapter are organized in four phases: 1) Phase I - pilot study, 2) Phase II – identification of participant pool, 3) Phase III – interviews, and 4) Phase IV – transcription and analysis. The data in Phase I are integrated into a comprehensive summary of the findings, including the pilot study and data from the current study. The data in Phase II are presented under pseudonyms with corresponding quotes to convey participant's stories in their own voices. Phase III consists of three categories: 1) Family, including demographic and biographical information, 2) Gaining Respect, including processes and procedures by which participants accrued respect, and 3) Making a Difference, including advocacy activities. The data presented in Phase IV correspond to the above three categories and follow the emergent themes, which are: 1) Family, 2) Gaining Respect, and 3) Making a Difference.

The theme of Family includes a description of each participant's actual membership in a role within the family structure. The Family theme also includes factors that impacted or influenced the values, traditions, and norms of each family, such as home environment, childhood neighborhood, socioeconomic status, religious practice, language, experience with discrimination, parents' academic achievement and educational values, parental assistance with early schooling, and persons who influenced the participants' educational goals. Family also includes first generation college student experiences as well as family support.

The theme, Gaining Respect, refers to the need to feel competent, to set work standards higher than those of peers or coworkers, and to reach unprecedented educational levels. This theme also includes institutional support, personal experiences in higher education administration, experiences with racism or discrimination in the academy, maintaining cultural values as a professional, feeling welcomed, and perceptions of leadership style.

The theme, Making a Difference, includes the need to serve the community, specifically Latino students and students of color, by changing negative perceptions and beliefs about educational capabilities of these marginalized populations. Strategies used to make a difference include emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance, the use of language and physical appearance to identify with students and debunk cultural stereotypes, and

mentoring and service within the community. This theme also includes the value of Hispanic female administrators, location and quality of service to students and constituents, as well as advocacy and student recruitment.

<center>Research Question</center>

As presented in Chapters One and Three, this dissertation studied Mexican American female administrators and the challenges they faced as students and professionals within the educational system. The research was guided by the following question: What life experiences and professional challenges have impacted the educational attainment and administrative positions of Texas Mexican American female academic and student affairs administrators?

<center>Participants</center>

Participants ranged in age from 33 to 54. Each held a position at one of four institutions in the University of Texas System in South Texas. This group consisted of one vice president, two assistant vice presidents, three deans, two acting deans, four directors, one chair, and one coordinator. Ten held doctoral degrees, three held master's degrees and one a bachelor's degree. Ten were married and four were divorced, and/or single. Participant birth orders included one only child, seven eldest children, two youngest children, and three middle children, with total number of children in the family ranging from one to nine. All but two participants had children of their own, ranging in number from one to four. With one exception, all participants reported being first in their family to

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receive a college degree. One participant was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, while the rest were born in South Texas towns. At the time of the study, all participants were residing in south Texas near their institutions of employment.

Most participants were second generation Americans whose parents were born in the United States. Two sets of parents were born in Mexico and emigrated to the United States from the Mexican states of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, and Monterrey. Parents born in Texas were from the cities of Del Rio, Donna, Weslaco, San Antonio, and one participant was born in Phoenix, Arizona.

All participants self-identified, selecting one or more of the following ethnic identifications: Hispanic, Mexican American, Mexicana, Chicana, or Latina. Several participants mentioned that they were flexible in terms of self-identification, depending on the situation and the specific time in their lives. However ethnic identification appeared to be important to all participants.

Part of self-identification included life roles. Participants used terms such as bilingual, bicultural, conduit, binational, leader, mother, mentor, teacher, family member, administrator, colleague, scholar, learner, and change agent to describe their life roles (see Appendices E-L).

<div align="center">Strategies for Analysis</div>

In Phases III and IV, the researcher used two types of analyses. In Phase III an inductive method was utilized to determine commonalities. The positioning of the researcher as an interviewer and self-reflective informant validated the

qualitative methods, such as interviewing and storytelling (Behar, 1996). In

Phase IV (presented in Chapter Five), the researcher developed general

conclusions for each subcategory for the three emergent themes of Family,

Gaining Respect, and Making a Difference. Phase IV also included an analysis of

each emergent theme using the multiple processes of member-checking, peer

debriefing, and triangulation to validate the findings and analyses as a trustworthy

rendering of participant realities.

The following data are now presented in three categories 1) Family, 2)

Gaining Respect and 3) Making a Difference.

Category One: Family included data about the family network presented in

four subcategories: 1) family-included the actual structure of the family, early

home environment, childhood neighborhood, socio economic status, religion,

language, and discrimination, 2) valuing education included father's and mother's

grade completion and attitude towards education, parental assistance in schooling,

influential persons in setting educational goals and academic achievement of

siblings, 3) educational attainment included first generation college students, and

college as an opportunity, and 4) support as defined in terms of family roles and

spousal support.

Category Two: Gaining Respect included two subcategories: 1) gaining

respect in terms of institutional support, experiences as administrators in higher

education, experiences of racism or discrimination, rejection of family values as a

way to succeed, and existing challenges, and 2) administrative experiences included leadership style, power and experience as a Mexican American female.

Category Three: Making a Difference involved three subcategories: 1) culture which included: language use, physical appearance or skin color as a factor impacting academic or professional success (Esquivel, 1993), 2) mentoring as a way to provide mentees with information for survival as students and professionals, and 3) service, meaning service to students and the Hispanic community as well as student recruitment.

Category One: FAMILY:

"nope, that might be good enough for Lyndon Johnson but it's

not good enough for you."

Familia (Family) was defined by membership in the family structure as wife, daughter, granddaughter, mother, sister, aunt, comadre (sister friend), or madrina (godmother). Structural components such as socioeconomic status, level of academic achievement, geographic location of home, religion, language use, and experiences with discrimination greatly impact the established values of the family structure. The family established a strong foundation upon which to pursue dreams, aspirations, and higher levels of education (Chahin, Villareal, & Viramontez, 1999). Thus, the role of family in the lives of these women studied was of utmost importance to the broader community fabric of emotional and spiritual support. Family and extended family members were viewed as a

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network, a structure of support and empowerment, and a source of strength in the pursuit of educational attainment. This family strength and network provided a foundation for achievement, as well as an infrastructure for educational attainment and success, ultimately, making a difference in the lives of others.

The level of education achieved by parents was insignificant when measuring the value of education within these families. Though not formally educated, parents were seen as intelligent and possessing great wisdom. Mothers, more than fathers, were verbal about educational support, although fathers proved to be equally supportive. Parents had very high expectations for their children. Mothers were viewed as having the greatest impact on educational goals, yet participants also acknowledged the influence of their fathers, teachers, and siblings.

Home environment. With the exception of two individuals, participants grew up in small towns, rural communities, or suburban environments in South Texas. Two non-native Texan participants now claimed communities in South Texas as their hometowns. These communities possessed small-town characteristics such as familiarity with other residents, awareness of town politics, and close involvement with the local school district. It also provided as sense of community and family unity, which established a strong support system. Dr. Camacho noted, that she was raised in a small-town, Donna, Texas, where she was born in the local hospital next door, and came home. This is where she also

lived and graduated from high school. Ms. Chavez was born in Los Angeles but now claimed San Antonio as her hometown after her family relocated there when she was 13 years old. Dr. Campos was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, but her family relocated to El Paso, Texas, when she was a young child. Although many of their small home communities have become sprawling cities, small town feelings still permeate participants' childhood memories. Participants recalled that "knowing everyone in town" and being politically astute about the local power base served to enhance their interactions with hometown residents.

Neighborhood. The ethnic or racial makeup of participants' neighborhoods was predominantly Mexican American. Nine participants said they lived in Hispanic-dominant communities, four reported a mix of Mexican and Anglo residents, and one described her community as Latino, Anglo, Armenian, and Japanese. Dr. Castillo remarked on the ethnicities within her neighborhood:

> At the time I was growing up, it was primarily more Hispanic but the Anglo population at the time were definitely the people in power. Today, it is predominantly Mexican American. The Anglo population has pretty much left the smaller communities.

 The limited diversity of this community contributed to the notion of "us against them." Although residents were friendly and assisted each other, they were also aware of the existing power structure. Dr. Camacho recalled knowing, even as a young child, that while the Mexican American population was significantly larger

than the Anglo population, Anglos held the reins of political control within her community.

Socioeconomic status. A low-income status in childhood was reported by more than half of the participants. Poverty was the status described by one participant; seven reported a low-income status; one a lower-to-middle class status; three, middle class; and one, middle-to-upperclass. Dr. Castillo reported that her experiences growing up in poverty left her feeling disappointed by her family's socioeconomic status, which often limited their financial resources: "We were considered poverty level." Examining their experiences in retrospect, other participants described their poverty or low-income status as a state of being rather than a state of need or want:

> (Ms. Refugia) We were very low-income but I was not aware of it when I was growing up. We owned our own home. It was a two-story house. We never wanted for anything, so I did not realize that we were actually poor.

Many families much like participant's families along the Texas/Mexico border experienced significant changes in socioeconomic status after the family relocated to the United States from Mexico. The move not only directly impacted their income level but created challenges in adjustment to life on the Texas side of the border (Treuba & McLaren, 1999). Sharing her family's experience with relocation, Dr. Campos relayed that her father's limited English skills prevented him from obtaining work in the United States that was similar in responsibility to the jobs he held in Mexico:

> My dad was very well educated in Mexico. He had very, very good
> positions. I think our socioeconomic level was very good. My older
> brother and sister were in private school and I think we were very well off.

The family moved to the United States because her mother felt that in the long run
it would benefit the family:

> My mom wanted to come back to the states, but my dad could not speak
> English so when we came he couldn't find jobs at the same level as those
> in Mexico. There were nine kids in the family. So I guess it varied,
> initially we were quite well off and then (when) we decided to come to the
> states, our status was low income. When we applied for college we
> definitely qualified for financial aid and work-study.

> Religion. Catholic religious practices proved to be a main component of

the family structure in terms of traditions, rituals, spiritual beliefs, and family

celebrations.

> (Dr. Campos) Religion actually played a major part in my family in many,
> many ways. We grew up in a Catholic family, going to church every
> Sunday, going to catechism every single day or whatever day of the week
> we were supposed to be there, I was a member of Las Inesitas, Las Hijas
> de Maria, the whole bit.

Cultural events such as baptisms, quinceañeras, weddings, special blessings, and

funerals were incorporated into the lives of many Latinos through the Catholic

Church. Dr. Campos noted, "I was baptized and married in the church, I baptized

all my kids, and still very active in the church." All participants except one

reported being raised in the Catholic religion, and still self-identified as Catholics,

yet as adults they varied in commitment to practices of the church.

> (Dr. Morales) I know that when I went to Notre Dame I had different
> views on Catholicism and now I don't go to church every Sunday but I did

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get married through the church. I was baptized through the church. It is important, but I just don't go every Sunday like my mom does.

One participant identified herself as Methodist and continues to be active in her church community.   Some participants continued to practice their religion faithfully just as they did growing up within the family, while others chose to practice alternate forms of spiritual expression. Dr. Castillo's experience with the Catholic Church was ingrained into the fabric of her family.   Her family went to church every Sunday and made other visits throughout the week to attend meetings and get involved in the church at a greater level than simply attending services on Sunday mornings.

> (Dr. Martinez) We were practicing Catholics, my mother more so. As my sister and I were growing up we were practicing Catholics through the Youth Group in the church, there was a special organization for girls, Hijas de Maria. I was in that throughout high school.

In many communities the church was the focal point. For many women it presented an opportunity to socialize with other women, and provided a network system of information, resources, financial assistance, and community news. Dr. Camacho felt that, beyond the rituals within the church, her parents gifted her with a sense of spirituality that has remained with her family for a lifetime.

Dr. Massiate described her family as devout Catholics. Her parents incorporated evening mass into their daily activities and supported the church by

offering cleaning services. Her sister's service to the church as a nun, which was considered prestigious

plus the family's many friends from religious orders solidified their connection to the church. This connection provided a relationship that exceeded religious rituals and practices. In essence it was a crucial component to a lifestyle that embraced family, community and solidarity. One among varied ways the church achieved this was through an integration of the Spanish language within the church.

      <u>Language.</u> Spanish was reported as the first acquired language of 10 participants, all of whom also self-identified as bilingual (fluent in both English and Spanish). Seven reported Spanish as their first language and English as their second; three identified themselves as bilingual; three reported English as their first language with Spanish as their second; and one reported English as her only language. The knowledge and use of the Spanish language was highly valued by those who spoke only English or both languages while growing up. Participants who learned Spanish as a second language and those who did not speak English noted parents' concerns that their children would be subjected to punishment for speaking Spanish at school (McLemore & Romo, 1998). Participants recalled memories of school personnel purposely humiliating and degrading children who tried to speak Spanish at school. Dr. Castillo relayed that her teacher overcame this obstacle by   incorporating Spanish into her curriculum thus, ensuring her

students were exposed to the language. Dr. Castillo viewed this action as progressive at a time when other educators were shunning the use of Spanish in the classroom.

Despite the variations in self-identified language use, all participants reported understanding Spanish to a degree and speaking it in their daily lives. Parents, relatives, and other individuals continued to speak to participants in both languages. Fluency in Spanish and English was perceived as a highly valued skill and strength. Those who were skilled primarily in the use of English emphasized the importance of knowing Spanish and mentioned wanting to learn Spanish for themselves and for their children. They felt that knowing both languages enhanced their capacity to communicate with residents of communities in which they lived and worked.

Dr. Morales reported that her family's experience with Spanish was very similar to that of many Mexican American families. Her elementary school years included the use of Spanish, but when she reached sixth grade, Spanish was no longer tolerated, and she and other children were discouraged from speaking the language: "When I went to sixth grade we were not allowed to speak Spanish in the hallways. We couldn't say anything in Spanish in the sixth grade."   This situation presented a dilemma for these women as children, causing them to feel as if they were living in two different worlds.   Once they stepped through the

door of their childhood home, many children were expected to embrace the language of their family, grandparents, and community members.

As was often the case for many other Hispanics, Dr. Casillas recovered her lost Spanish as an adult during and after college, and with practice and time she was able to become more fluent: "When I got into college and much later, I began to recover and became more fluent in Spanish through practice." Thus, participants in the study generally reported being bilingual and highly valuing bilingualism in English and Spanish, even though many encountered opposition to their use of Spanish in school.

Discrimination. Besides discrimination based on use of Spanish, participants reported many other encounters with discrimination. These encounters were well documented within the participants' families through storytelling, which usually described accounts of direct, covert, or secondhand discrimination. Parents relayed personal or ancestral accounts in which rights were denied or opportunities missed due to their status as Mexican Americans. Dr. Zapata learned of discrimination at family gatherings, where conversations were filled with accounts of how an immediate or an extended family member experienced or overcame a discriminatory situation. She recalled an experience involving blatant discrimination at school:

I was always aware of discrimination because of the uniqueness of San Felipe and Del Rio. First of all the school district was very poor and everything

we had we scratched for or raised ourselves. We used to play football in Hondo. We would have to get dressed in our uniforms before we left because in Hondo they did not let Mexicanos use public restrooms. We would go play in Devine and they would throw rocks at our buses and call us Mexicanos, Mexicans, dirty Mexicans and other derogatory names.

Mexican American families in the small communities grew tired of having their rights denied, and many times functioned as activists to instill change (Meier & Ribera, 1993). Dr. Zapata also spoke of going with her mother and some friends to integrate the local swimming pool:

In 1954, right after the Supreme Court decision, my parents decided that we should integrate the swimming pool, because Mexicanos did not go to the swimming pool. So they must have talked about it with several families and I remember I went with another young boy and two other girls and our mothers took us to the municipal swimming pool.

A few decades before, in that very same pool, her father, who was very fair-skinned, was allowed to swim in the pool, on the pretense that he was white. It was about 1927 or 1930 and he had been allowed to go in, them thinking that he was white. All the Anglos in the community knew he was Mexican. So they got out of the pool and he swam and stayed in the pool until closing time all by

himself. All the Anglos were just around the pool talking about how there was grease floating on the surface of the water, but he just continued swimming.

Dr. Morales remembered that many non-Hispanic parents enforced a disassociation from the "Mexicans." They discouraged things such as being escorted to a dance by a Mexican or joining the mostly Mexican cheerleading squad. "I remember trying out for cheerleader, but the white girls did not try out because there were too many Mexicans on the squad and their mothers did not want them to hang around with them."

Dr. Castillo recalled that discrimination and prejudice did not cross her mind much while growing up: "Growing up, I don't remember thinking of those issues although at the time I am sure that they were there." However, she did remember distinctly how discriminatory practices against the use of Spanish contributed to the denial of her community's connection with a part of their ethnic identity. Dr. Campos reflected: "I think now as I think back there was a lot of discrimination. With your language goes your culture and a respect for your values and beliefs and everything else and that wasn't there."

When my parents tried to enroll my sister and I into school, they said that the school was only for English speakers, not Mexicanos and if we don't know English and spoke only Spanish we would have to go to the school across town. I remember my mother telling my sister and I in Spanish, don't you dare open your

mouths and let them hear you speak Spanish because you will have to go to the other school y no tenemos carro y como te voy a llevar y no van a hablar. At the time I already had two years of elementary so I knew some English, but my sister was just starting school. She did not know any.

Dr. Camacho recounted a time when she felt motivated to succeed in order to demonstrate her equality to peers.

> (Dr. Camacho) I was aware of discrimination, I guess from my own internal observations. I recall an experience when I was in junior high, I was in the girls' restroom, I heard two white girls talking about me. They said, "Melinda is so wonderful, she is almost like us." I always felt that I would prove to them and me and everybody else that I was just as good if not better. I think that was my driving force.

Dr. Camacho recalled knowing that the differences in power were significant enough that Mexican Americans were in fact the wrong color to maintain any form of power:

> In terms of subtle discrimination we did not measure up to what the Anglos perceived to be the people in power. We were still the wrong color regardless of education or what your occupation was.

At times during the interviews, the participants recalled events of discrimination in retrospect or as afterthoughts. As experiences of discrimination were discussed, a common theme emerged linking discrimination to power struggles, and, in many cases, the act of discrimination produced resistant and resilient attitudes of determination as a way to conquer injustices. In the Mexican

American community, discrimination often spurred a need to succeed and supersede social expectations of achievement. Participants felt the need to return to home communities to help provide opportunities for advancement in order to counter unfulfilled opportunities resulting from discrimination.

<u>Valuing Education</u>

Father's grade completion and value of education. Participants spoke of their fathers with respect and reverence. Although not as verbal as mothers, fathers were still influential in setting educational goals. They were identified by their daughters as intelligent, hardworking, and supportive, and saw the value of a good education as a means to a better quality of life and greater opportunities. Despite each father's level of education, he provided for his family as best as he could and modeled the behavior of a self-educated person. Daughters were given full encouragement by their fathers to pursue education and continue on to higher levels of education (Wilkinson, 1999). Educational levels of participants' fathers ranged from completion of the third grade to completion of a master's degree. Most had attended and completed high school.

In every instance, the father was a strong presence in the family. Thirteen of the total 14 fathers held a high school diploma or a general education development diploma (GED). One father completed college and held a masters degree. Fathers also had a higher level of educational completion than did mothers. Ms.

Refugia told of her father's experience with blatant discrimination as he attempted to complete his high school education:

> My father's father died at the age of 50 of a massive heart attack. He was second to the oldest, but he was the most responsible and had to take care of the family business. He was assured that when he went back to school and passed the senior exam that he would be eligible to graduate. He did go back and passed the senior exam and they said, "you missed too many days."

Ms. Refugia's father eventually completed his high school education with a GED. For some fathers, the GI bill provided access to completion of a GED diploma. Ms. Chavez noted, "My dad completed his eleventh year and he was drafted into the service; through the GI Bill he went back for his GED." She recalled her father's stories of military experiences and his attempts to obtain his GED diploma. However, for reasons unbeknownst to Ms. Chavez, her father never completed his degree.

Dr. Morales believed that the successes of her parents, aunts, and uncles were due in large part to the inspiration of her grandparents--migrant farm workers whose work ethic and aspirations to achieve were imparted to their children: "I think my grandparents from both sides of my parents were real pioneers." In their early years, both of Dr. Morales's parents were also migrant farm workers who eventually earned master's degrees. She noted, "My parents were migrant workers. My mom was born in Arkansas and my daddy traveled to California."

Although the educational levels of participants' fathers were significantly higher than those of mothers, both mothers and fathers from all but one

participant maintained blue collar, laborer, or service occupations. Dr. Castillo

recalled, "My dad was a 'jack-of-all-trades.' He knew how to do everything.   My

parents sang on the radio in L.A.; my father was the stunt man for Rudolph

Valentino." Fathers provided for their families while holding occupations such as

a deliveryman, jeweler, butcher, civil service employee, vending machine worker,

farmer, lumberyard worker, maintenance man, and office manager.

> (Ms. Chavez) My dad did a variety of things, but he was always a blue-
> collar worker. He did, what I remember most, he worked as a delivery
> person; he worked with coffee vending and working the big coffee
> machines he would go to different places and set up the big coffee
> machines and deliver coffee to different businesses.

Many times fathers had to make do with whatever type of employment they could

find. Dr. Castillo contended that the jobs taken by her father may not have been

the best, but they helped support the family. Ms. Refugia noted, "My father was a

farm laborer, he was a foreman, he managed crews that went out and did the work

and made sure they were treated fairly and received their pay."

Father's attitude toward the value of education

Despite low levels of formal education and laborer status, fathers filled the

family home with intellectual endeavors, high expectations, and a sense of value

for formal education. Sons as well as daughters were encouraged to succeed in

school and strive for unprecedented levels of education that would afford them "a

better life" and more opportunities than their parents had. Fathers were supportive

and promoted their children's educational goals. Dr. Apollonia recalled her

father: "He was always so proud of me, you know. He never said, 'I think that's great. You should continue.' He just always sort of non-verbally let me know that he was very proud of me." Participants perceived their fathers as role models for self-education:

> (Dr. Zapata) My father was really amazing. He developed his own method of calculations. He was one of those people who could do calculations and did not have to write anything down. I think they would call that the new math now. He figured it out himself.

Participants also relayed childhood memories of their fathers as avid readers who encourage their children to strive for the highest levels of education. Ms.Refugia was inspired by her father and his love of reading:

> He used to say, "Mija, you get an education, get you your degree, get a good job. That way if you marry a bastard you can leave him and not worry about it." He died when I was in high school. He and I used go to the library every week and I would check out little girls books and he would check out history, philosophy and politics, religious texts and we would read them and then the following week we would check out some more.

Dr. Zapata remembers her father as a man of high intelligence:

> Both of my parents were avid readers, my father much more than my mother, but daddy went to work at 6 o'clock in the morning and he came home at 6 o'clock at night. So he would get up at 3:00 a.m. and read. I remember he wanted to know everything first hand so he read *Mein Kampf*," (it was available in the U.S.,) because he wanted to know what Hitler said. He read Marx's manifesto; he read Plato; he read Cervantes; he read Don Quixote; he read it in English and then he decided he wanted to read it in Spanish so he read it twice. He read Gandhi and he would do this from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. He was also well read in all areas of public affairs.

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Dr. Zapata's father promoted self-education and encouraged his daughters to seek a higher understanding of their world: "We always had new magazines and of course newspapers in the house, so it was a very interesting way to grow up there in the barrio of San Felipe in Del Rio." Thinking back to her childhood with a Mexican American father who not only supported his daughter's educational endeavors but actively pursued knowledge, disturbs Dr. Zapata when she compares her experience to stereotypes and myths of Mexican men as uneducated, lazy, and apathetic (Pearl, 1997) because the Mexican male in her life was one who modeled wisdom and intellect:

> We had no paved streets; we had a septic tank because the city would not put water lines out or a drainage system out to that part of the community. I think we now call those places "colonias." I did not realize that at the time. And yet I had this phenomenal upbringing with big ideas and conversations. My parents were news junkies before we even had a television.

Dr. Campos spoke of her father with great affection: "He had a very, very positive attitude and he often talked about the value of education." Dr. Campos' father was educated in Mexico, but when he relocated his family to the United States, he was forced to take menial jobs due to his unfamiliarity with the English language. Despite the language barriers that deterred him from acquiring jobs that matched his intellectual capabilities or educational attainment, he maintained high expectations for his children and himself. "He modeled the value of an education. He was always reading. He was always talking about an educated person speaking many languages and knowing a lot of things." He spent many

hours reading and modeling behaviors that Dr. Campos now relays to her own

children and students, while also stressing the benefits of education.

Dr. Massiate and Ms. Refugia felt that both of their parents were

influential in helping them achieve their educational goals, but emphasized the

role of their fathers.

Dr. Massiate described her father as having modeled behaviors of quiet thinking

and self-education:

> I think my dad was a very quiet, sweet and intelligent man. I learned from
> him about "quiet thinking." I learned that you try to maintain stability by
> reading and maintain an internal world of thought and that was important
> and you develop yourself and read a lot.

Ms. Refugia also remembered her father's positive role in her life and relayed

with sadness his passing when she was in high school: "My father instilled in me

at a very young age, and there was no question about it, I was going to get an

education and do great."

Dr. Casillas spoke of her father's support of her decision to attend a

college outside of her hometown:

> My father was very supportive. He never denied me even going away to
> school because I was the first one in my family and the first one to leave
> home, a very pioneering effort on their part to let me do that and not say
> "no you can't."

Although these fathers enforced high educational attainment, participants also

recalled relatives and friends whose parents wanted their own children to remain

close to home for a variety of reasons. These women also acknowledged that

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daughters sometimes chose to remain close to the family home to assist with care taking of siblings or extended family members such as abuelitos (grandparents).

Mother's grade completion and value of education. Mothers were referred to in terms of endearment such as "mom," "mommy," "madre," "madrecita." Mothers were also referenced with reverence and respect and were considered to be very strong women. Mothers of the participants acquired lower levels of education than fathers, ranging from third grade to high school. One mother completed high school and another completed her master's degree. Ms Refugia recalled, "I think my mother's highest grade was seventh grade; she was very, very intelligent especially when it came to math and numbers." Mothers were the primary caretakers of their children, assisting them with homework and encouraging them to pursue education as a pathway to success. Dr. Castillo noted, "My mom stayed home and took care of all us kids." Participants were aware of their mothers' own unfulfilled dreams of pursuing an education, yet even when mothers spoke of their unfulfilled dreams, they did so in such a way that their children still felt supported, as if the mother's dreams would be fulfilled through the daughter's accomplishments.

Low levels of formal education limited employment opportunities for mothers (Valencia, 1997). In most cases, their primary occupation was that of housewives, although some ventured outside the home and sought employment in

business offices, food service, production plants, restaurants, bakeries, retail sales, and in schools.

> (Dr. Camacho) My mother had several occupations. She was a store clerk, and then she worked at an insurance company as a secretary before she actually became my father's bookkeeper and receptionist while they had their own business. She did the books, answered the phones and did all the secretarial work.

Dr. Castillo recalled her mother's artistry, creativity, and survival skills:

> My mother was a very ingenious woman, and an artist. For Easter she would paint coffee cans with beautiful eggs and stuff them with that grass and would make these wonderful handles with hangers. Oh we were so embarrassed! Everybody else had this plastic straw. Now you see them and you see how much they cost. The thing is that Mexicans are very artistic and very entrepreneurial. When you cross the border you see these people selling these trinkets, or flowers made out of whatever. It's survival; we're survivors. That's part of our thing too in terms of the movement, the survival movement. How do we survive in this environment to give the best to our children and to the community?

Dr. Castillo believed this survival instinct to be valuable in the current era as the Hispanic population becomes more visible in relation to political and national issues: "There are opportunities but how we engage in those opportunities and have others in our community be a part of that will determine whether or not we will be left behind. This is our era."

Mother's attitude toward the value of education. Participants stated that their mothers encouraged educational attainment for their daughters. Dr. Castillo stated, "The notion that Latinos don't want their children to be educated is bunk." Mothers were very positive and much more vocal about their support than fathers.

They continuously stressed the need for their daughters to pursue a higher

education so that they could experience a better life and increased opportunities.

> (Dr. Massiate) Well, I think my mother felt terribly hurt that she
> did not get an education. You see it was as though she had it and it was
> taken away from her. You can imagine the bitterness that she felt, but she
> was happy for all of us. She was very intelligent too. My parents had real
> high standards and they were really pushing you all the time.

Encouragement was offered by mothers even if they were unsure of the logistics

of obtaining a higher education. Dr. Martinez stated that her mother was a very

strong supporter of education. Although she did not have much education herself,

she believed an education was the only way her children could avoid becoming

farm workers. Knowing that the college admissions process would be a

challenge, mothers offered their daughters what they could through emotional and

spiritual support. In many cases, mothers had specific ideas about the college

their daughters should attend:

> (Dr. Zapata) My mother had tunnel vision. She wanted me to go to UT
> Austin. To her that was the most prestige school in Texas and that was
> where she wanted me to go. On one occasion, when I was getting ready to
> go to college, I was invited to Southwest Texas and when I came home,
> that was when Lyndon Johnson was Vice President and so Southwest
> Texas was getting a lot of publicity. My parents asked me what I had
> thought of it. I said it seemed like a nice place. They asked me if I wanted
> to go there and I said I think I would. Then my mother said, "nope, that
> might be good enough for Lyndon Johnson but it's not good enough for
> you." So they were pretty supportive and the other thing was I think they
> felt that the racism in Texas would never change and the best hope was to
> leave Texas. So they did look at other options for me in other states.

Dr. Zapata not only recalled tremendous support from her parents, but also knew first hand the difference that parental involvement could make in the education of children.

> At the time that I was growing up it was a unique situation because the school district that I went to was a school district created by the Mexicanos after the Sanvatierra vs. Del Rio Independent School District case. The Mexicano parents seceded from the Anglo School District and formed their own. Many of the teachers were relatives, school board members were relatives, and local church members were all involved. Probably one-fourth of the teachers and administrators were related in some way or were compadres to the families.

Like many Latino parents in their community, Dr. Zapata's parents knew that establishing their "voice" would make a difference.

> Mommy and daddy were very active in school activities as we three girls went through school. They assumed leadership roles in the school. They were always there, and very supportive. I think mother was President of the PTA.

Dr. Zapata also noted that both of her parents worked full time, but still chose to be involved in community issues to help bring about needed changes.

Parental assistance in early schooling.

Parents and older siblings made an effort to assist younger members of the family with homework and other school projects. The family culture encouraged members to assist each other to achieve and be successful. These collaborative efforts provided a strong educational support system. Ms. Chavez spoke of her family's involvement in her sister's activities:

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> Mom and dad were always very good about assisting with projects or allowing her to participate in organizations. They were supportive in whatever she wanted to do. They attended all the parent functions, and were active in the PTA; they sold candy, and collected for food drives. Whatever was needed they did.

Even with parents and siblings available to help her, Ms. Refugia developed the autonomy to function on her own when it came to completing homework assignments, a skill she appreciated:

> My mom pretty much tried to help us with homework as much as she could. Daddy was working a lot so he didn't have that much of an impact unless we felt that he could help. If there was something we could ask him he would take time to help us but for the most part it was my mother.

Dr. Camacho always knew that family assistance was available, but she also enjoyed the challenge of completing assignments on her own: "They would have helped, if I asked. I never asked and they did not push it on me. They left it to me to be responsible enough to take care of it." If parents were not able to assist with homework, they were still involved with school activities such as PTA, fund-raisers, and music programs, always helping where they could.

Person or persons most influential in setting educational goals. High expectations were reported by participants as part of the family culture. Dr. Morales elaborated, "The expectation of going to college was always there from my mom and dad. I had some good high school teachers, but I don't feel that I was more affected by them than my parents." Participants reported that in many cases, the influences on their educational goals were not unlike those in other families whose daughters were also encouraged to pursue education. Dr. Zapata stated, "I

would say my mother and father very early on placed a high importance on education. College was a non-negotiable, very high expectations were set, and the assumption was that we would succeed." In some instances teachers and older siblings were also seen as key influences, but in all cases, parents exerted the most significant influence on participants, often combined with their own personal determination to pursue higher education. Dr. Casillas explained, "colleagues, friends, and my family were always supportive, my parents not knowing the where-with-all or understanding the processes, yet still not telling me 'no.' I felt that was very supportive." Although both parents were recognized as having the greatest influence, overwhelmingly mothers were named as the individuals offering the greatest support.

Drs. Martinez, Apollonia, and Camacho reported that their mothers were at the forefront of their achievement. Drs. Martinez and Apollonia very simply stated that their mothers were the persons who most influenced their educational goals, and Dr. Camacho elaborated:

> I think my mother wanted us to go to college, but she never really knew the extent that we could achieve, in terms of wanting to continue. I was self-driven, self-motivated. There was something that I saw in people with certain degrees and I wanted that.

Siblings. Dr. Massiate's father provided tremendous support, but she also reported that her older sister influenced her toward the field she would eventually pursue, which was psychology:

My sister, she was the third girl, she was about nine or ten years older than I was. She was giving me books about Carl Jung and Freud to read when I was 10 or 11 and I was really enjoying that even though it was more complex than I could understand. I really enjoyed the idea and I always knew from that age of 12 that I wanted to pursue psychology.

While most participants emphasized the influence of their parents, Drs. Camacho and Campos felt that their own personal motivation, augmented by the support of family members, helped them achieve. They each reported being self-driven as a direct reflection of familial support and self-awareness.

(Dr. Casillas) I was a migrant worker and throughout those experiences I knew that I did not want to do that and I figured out that the only way to not do that was through education, so that was internal, that I set those goals.

Although participants most often gave credit to their families and themselves for encouragement to achieve, some also identified teachers as encouraging their aspirations. Dr. Campos noted, "I was an A student. I graduated valedictorian of my class just because I loved to study and I loved school." Teachers were also mentioned as persons who influenced participants as they developed their educational goals:

Some teachers kept telling me. "You're a good student. Keep going. I'm here to help you," and they were interested in me and I think when a child feels interest and you're encouraged by several people you'll go on.

Participants reported having been told by mothers, fathers, and teachers that they were "college material."

(Dr. Zapata) In the fourth grade I had a wonderful teacher that just encouraged me to keep learning. She gave me the impression that she thought I was smart and that I could do things. It encouraged me even

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though I didn't know what college was. I think it was just the encouragement.

Educational Attainment

First generation college student. A first generation college student was defined as a student who was first in her family, including her parents, to obtain a bachelor's degree. All participants except one described themselves as first generation college students. Some participants had relatives who had obtained a degree, but because the participants were the first in their immediate family to hold a bachelor's degree, they were identified as first generation.

> (Dr. Apollonia) In my immediate family, my uncle, my mom's brother, was the first. He preceded me. He was an A&M graduate, in engineering. So he would be the first in my extended family but in my immediate family it would be me.

Graduating from college elevated one's status and was considered a major accomplishment for the family and the immediate community.

> (Dr. Campos) I consider myself first generation. I am the third from the oldest and I am the first in the family to get a degree and then all of my sisters obtained a degree, not my brothers but my sisters did. They kind of followed in my footsteps.

First time college was recognized as an opportunity.   Although many participants stated that their parents expected them to attend college, they also relayed incidents in which they actually heard and came to believe that college was an opportunity for them.

> (Ms. Chavez) I can't remember a time when college wasn't something of an expectation of my parents of us, even though my mother did not

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graduate from high school, neither did my father. It was always an expectation that we would go to college.

Even if the expectation was not verbalized, various influential individuals helped them believe that they were intelligent and capable of achievement and success. Most participants reported an expectation by their families that they would go to college. Dr. Camacho, Dr. Martinez, and Ms. Refugia remembered learning about college in their homes. They received words of encouragement from their mothers, who always expected their daughters to go to college and would include the topic of college in discussions with their children.

Dr. Campos remembered the expectation of college attendance being discussed most of her early years and believed that her experience with early intervention inspired her to initiate a mother/daughter program at her institution of employment: "I think that for me the very first time I started hearing about college was in high school…. I started the mother/daughter program here at the university because I felt that young people need to begin hearing about college and thinking and planning and making that as a goal at a very early age." Dr. Campos felt that an early intervention program such as the mother/daughter program would encourage mothers to discuss many topics with their daughters, including higher education. College attendance was an existing expectation for almost all participants. Although in some instances the message was non-verbal participants felt support and encouragement from parents and family members to pursue a higher education.

The pursuit of higher education and obtaining advanced degrees extended
into the years when participants entered into marriage relationships and started
families. Support was still provided from parents, siblings, friends and more
importantly by their spouses. Most of the women in this study were married with
children and reported the need for a supportive spouse in order to be successful
both academically and professionally. Spousal support of educational goals was
of particular importance to these women. Support was defined as verbal and
emotional support as well as sharing of household chores such as cooking,
cleaning, washing, and caring for children.

> (Dr. Massiate) I was taking 18 hours that last semester when I was having
> my first baby. I couldn't even sit down and take the final exam because I
> had just had the kid and I was so sore and I was doing everything that I
> could to get through school. He would baby-sit while I went to class so in
> that way he was supportive and I got to finish my degree.

A high value was placed on having a husband who was not intimidated by his
wife's accomplishments and who supported her educational goals.

> (Ms. Chavez) My husband is very supportive of me pursuing my
> doctorate. That is what I'd like to do next. He definitely knows that it's
> something we want for our children. We are going to have in our
> household, education as a priority.

> (Dr. Campos) My husband encouraged me to go to school and to continue
> going to school. He supported me by taking care of the kids. When we
> first got married I basically was not working. It was the first time in my
> life that I had stopped working. I started working when I was in the eighth
> grade. I had my kids and was going to school and was not working for
> some period of time and he encouraged me to continue especially my
> doctorate. He said, "I'm not sure I can do that but I know you can do it."

Dr. Campos believed that her husband was her ultimate supporter because he kept

his promise to support her educational goals, by taking care of the children, and

even agreed to relocate the family to another state where Dr. Campos was to begin

her doctoral studies.

> I had been accepted to a doctoral program, I had a fellowship and we
> basically filled up our car, our camioñeta, and we took off. Then I went to
> school, our three kids and my husband. He resigned his job as a court
> interpreter and we left to school. It was a little bit of a struggle initially
> with him not having a job because he said, "Let's go," but he found a job
> at the university. So he supported me in any and every way and up to this
> day he always looks out for me to make sure that I am doing well.

She also relayed that many of her friends had to delay or stop their programs of

study because their husbands required more of the wife's time than she could

provide while also going to school.

> I had a number of my friends that had to quit school at every level. Their
> husbands wanted them to be there to do this or that. Their husbands
> wanted it all. So a spouse is a key either impediment or supporter of your
> success and I had a very supportive husband very definitely.

 Dr. Campos was adamant in attributing her success to her husband's support.

Family roles. Family, as defined by spouse, children, parents, grandparents, and

extended family, always came first even while participants were in the midst of

their educational pursuits. A family identity as mothers, daughters,

granddaughters, sisters, wives, friends, or comadres, were important life roles for

these participants.

In terms of support, family was cited as one of the three most significant life experiences or challenges.   Major family challenges included maintaining a balance between family and work, with family responsibilities and motherhood as primary activities. Dr. Campos found it necessary to reconfigure the management of her time to balance career and family, which required much "soul searching" to prioritize her long-term goals and commitments. As a result, she shifted her focus, allowing quality time with her family while maintaining her career. In the interviews, the researcher posed the following question to participants: "Did you wait to get married or start a family because of your education?"

> (Dr. Campos) No my children weren't delayed. I mean I was pregnant five months after I got married. I never ever used any sort of contraceptives. Part of that was my Catholic upbringing and part of his Catholic upbringing. He had been in the seminary for a number of years and I knew I wanted a family. I didn't want to not have kids and I knew that I could go to school at the same time. In fact, we worked it out that way. My first child was born I think when I was a sophomore, maybe the beginning of my junior year, my second child 13 months later. My daughters are 13 months apart. Then I started teaching and started working on my master's degree right away and then I had my third child which was a boy and then I finished my doctoral degree and I had my last child at that time. So it was a combination of career and family simultaneously.

The choice between family and career was never a dilemma for the participants. They either had children while pursuing their studies or postponed their education.   In either case, they placed family responsibilities before their educational pursuits, even after they continued on in school while raising a family. Participants found that placing their families first garnered them

emotional and financial support from immediate and extended family members, thus reinforcing their choice.

Family support was listed as a positive experience in relation to educational achievement. Participants defined support as activities such as babysitting or completion of household chores, offered by spouses or other family members. The death of a family member was listed as a significant life experience that impacted one participant in her role as an administrator. Although divorce impacted one participant's professional life, she felt the event also increased her inner strength and personal growth. Ill health and diseases such as cancer were also cited as life-changing experiences.

Summary of Category One: Family

All participants grew up in what they considered small towns and communities, with traditional characteristics such as two-parent households with children and close associations with other residents. They reported income levels ranging from poverty to working class, with the exception of one woman from a middle-class neighborhood. Parental levels of education included completion of grades one through 12, with the majority of fathers reaching high school, and mothers attaining lower levels of education. Both parents of one participant held master's degrees and were employed in the local school district.

Although their levels of educational attainment were low, mothers were considered to be the strongest proponents of high levels of educational attainment

for their children. Most mothers were employed as service workers or housewives and were cited as most influential in terms of verbal and emotional support.   In most instances, participants reported their fathers as supportive of their educational goals, even though they were less verbal than mothers. Parents also provided living models of learned behavior and encouraged rich intellectual home environments. Fathers proved to be avid readers and proponents of self-education. Catholicism and use of the Spanish language were two elements that shaped and molded traditions and rituals that were carried out by families throughout the year. All but one participant claimed Catholicism as the religion practiced by the family. As adults, participants practiced their chosen religion less than when they were young, although they still self-identified as Catholics. With one exception, participants self-identified as first generation college students.   Families placed high value on succeeding in school and expected their children to pursue higher education. The family was also cited as a major influence of the educational goals of all participants and was also the main source of hearing about college.

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Category Two: GAINING RESPECT:

Not bare teeth ambition

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Gaining respect was defined by participants as the need to demonstrate competency, to establish and reach unprecedented educational goals, to work

harder and longer hours than anyone else, and to balance family and career responsibilities. Participants measured ways in which they gained respect through institutional support, overall experience as Mexican American female administrators, professional environment, experiences with racism and discrimination in the workplace, and acceptance of and respect for their culture within higher education.

Participants reported that life experiences more than personal challenges impacted their roles as administrators. Maintaining a balance between family and keeping abreast of technology, in addition to fulfilling personal and professional goals was challenging. An example of a personal challenge was the belief that participants' achievements should surpass those of others. Some participants were faced with the dilemma of deciding between accepting higher professional positions that required relocation, or choosing to remain in the area to avoid displacing the family.

Some participants expressed disappointment over the scarcity of Latinas in the profession who could serve as role models, and the slow pace of progress to increase their numbers. Participants were also challenged by the need to be more productive and excel in their profession in order to be recognized, but were hindered by the breadth of job-related responsibilities and time constraints. They reported being forced to compete for resources, work long hours, and contend with political and budgetary constraints, double standards, and low salaries.

Institutional support. Institutional support was very important to the participants

in their efforts to be more effective in their current positions. The researcher

asked participants if they believed their institution of employment supported their

efforts to succeed professionally. Ms. Refugia replied, "First I had to prove

myself. Once I proved myself I had all the support." To a large extent, this

support depended on the resources available to the administrators, as well as on

decisions made by upper administration. Ms. Refugia added, "I have been

supported by my immediate supervisor and by my president, who is also the

person that I report to. I cannot say that I have been supported by the entire

institution." Participants were also asked to evaluate the level of support they

received, in terms of funding, flexible work schedules, and professional

development opportunities. Dr. Morales responded, "I feel supported. We just

don't have a lot of financial resources, so even though I would like to get

professional development there is not much money for me to do that kind of

thing." Dr. Campos questioned the lack of support for advancement within the

profession: "I don't know that they do anything special for me to make sure that I

am successful." She mentioned that her institution offered a mentoring program

for faculty, but not for administrators:

> They started a mentoring program primarily for professors to mentor
> faculty along the way. But for administrators, how do you become a
> dean? Who helps you become a dean? Who helps you become an associate
> dean and who shows you the ropes? There is really nobody.

The lack of mentoring opportunities for administrators or aspiring administrators increased Dr. Campos' own desire to mentor others: "There is really nobody that is going to take the time to mentor you and bring you along."

The participants reiterated that, as administrators, they needed the support of faculty, staff, and other administrators. They were willing to do the work and, when necessary, would log in hours beyond their normal schedules even into the evening. Dr. Diaz noted, "…If that's what it takes then that's what it takes. If that's when parents are home then maybe that's where we need to be, in the homes talking to the family." As women, participants sensed a greater lack of support. Dr. Diaz continued, "I think that the only reason you make it is because you work hard, you present the facts and that's why you're still there." In general these women believed that support should be an institutional effort and a commitment to serve and support all faculty, staff and students.

Rating experiences as administrators in higher education. Participants were asked to rate their overall experience as administrators at various institutions and describe how each institution may have shaped their careers. Over the span of their careers, some participants felt supported and welcomed by specific institutions, while their employment at other institutions was a negative experience, resulting in feelings of isolation and disappointment (Casco, 1994). Participants were asked to rate their experiences as administrators on a scale from one to five, with five being the highest or most positive experience.

(Dr. Martinez) I had a very good experience and I had a lot of opportunities to do a lot of things and I would have to say a five, although a part of me says there is still a lot more to be done. So to say a five means I have done it all. I want to say five because it has been wonderful. I think that I have had a lot of good opportunities yet I think that there are a lot more things that I could do.

Support was defined as a sense of feeling welcomed, included and valued. A general feeling of support was reported by all participants.

(Dr. Zapata) In my experience I would say probably a five. I never really set the goal of being an administrator. If the opportunity was there I made that decision at that time and I said this is the right thing for me in my life so I think it has been very good. My nose to the grindstone, I am a very hard worker. I'm working all the time and I love it. So I think by the feedback that I get and the support and actions by people I feel that I am very successful.

Overall, participants rated their institutions high (four or fives). They all felt that, in general, their institutions supported them. Dr. Zapata reported that serving as an administrator exceeded her expectations:

Even though the work has been exhausting and tough, I have found it very rewarding. It is a creative process. I have thus far really not experienced any negatives. I thought I would experience negatives. I thought it would be far more unpleasant than it has turned out to be. I am an Interim Dean and of course by definition that is less. When you are an Interim you feel that you have more freedom and at the same time there are limitations on what you can do, but I have experienced all the freedom and none of the limitations.

Experiences of racism or discrimination

In general participants' experiences were positive. However, they reported some incidents of discrimination. The researcher asked specifically about racism or discrimination in the workplace.

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> (Ms. Chavez) I feel that at my former institution I experienced more instances of discrimination than the other Hispanic who was a male administrator. I don't know if any administrator did it intentionally but what we found was that other non-Hispanics were most comfortable working with Hispanics that were in service positions as administrative secretaries, housekeepers, and physical plant workers.

Participants believed that mere expressions of commitment to change by institutions were the greatest obstacle to eliminating discriminatory practices. Dr. Morales noted, "I think that is why I left my former institution exasperated, because there was always lip service to diversity, and I was expected to do all the work."

> (Dr. Morales) My challenges here have been with white males challenging my authority and my position as Dean of Students, and they just try to attack it. I haven't had personal contact with them so I can't figure out what other reasons there would be for them to show disregard for me. How can you hate me if you've never worked with me, never once had a personal conversation with me, and yet you show this disregard for me personally and professionally? What else can I do?

> (Dr. Camacho) Yes, I've felt discriminated against, even those who knew me and seemed to be supportive were the same people who did not know who I was professionally. People have perceived me as a secretary. There are people in the community who saw a Mexicana and did not know who I was and treated me like a second-class citizen.

Rejection of family or cultural values in order to succeed

Individuals from non-mainstream backgrounds often believe they must sacrifice or reject their traditional cultural values to assimilate into the dominant community. Participants in this study recalled feeling pressured to reject family or cultural values, but chose not do so. Dr. Castillo stated, "I never did reject what I valued in my culture and family. I was very clear about who I was and

that's why it becomes important. This is who I am." Dr. Morales added, "I am too Chicana to let that happen." Dr. Apollonia asserted, "I have always made myself at home and I think I am good at accommodating my values to organizational values and promoting my agenda in a way that I can be successful." Overwhelmingly, participants reported that they did not reject their cultural values in order to succeed. This sense of pride stemmed from home environments where culture was respected and self-pride was stressed.

Parents were seen as instrumental in instilling in their children a sense of pride in their cultural heritage. Dr. Campos credits her father:

> My dad in particular infused in us such a great pride in our language and our culture from a very, very early age that I don't ever remember wanting to reject my language or culture. He infused us with a tremendous amount of self-respect and value in who we were and our ancestors. I mean he used to talk about these great wonderful civilizations, magnificent civilizations of the Aztecs and the Mayas and where we came from. Not once did I ever think I wanted to be something else.

Existing challenges

Participants were invited to share what they felt were challenges that existed for Mexican American female administrators. Participants believed that they as current administrators were in the best positions to pass on knowledge and effective survival skills to future Latina administrators. Participants offered their views on the types of challenges that existed in administration. The opportunity to advance in the profession was viewed as one of the most significant challenges.

> (Dr. Apollonia) We are always relegated to the bottom. We may be put in the pool but that doesn't mean that we will make it. So even in terms of

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the glass ceiling if we can break sections and go through a crack it would give someone an opportunity to go above and start competing with the rest of the folks. The challenge is finding ways to provide more opportunities for Latinas to be able to show what they are doing and to have the experiences that make them competitive for future administrative positions. Many times we are put in the pool but we are not selected.

Another major challenge appeared to be gender equity. Dr. Apollonia spoke to this issue: "Sometimes organizations are not accustomed to having Hispanic or Mexican American leaders, especially if they are women." Evidence of this was noted in salary inequity. Dr. Apollonia added, "salary, perks and benefits, and access to information will always be a challenge." Dr. Zapata believed her culture to be an asset as well as a challenge, particularly in conversations: "You have to be forceful and have enough integrity in what you are saying and still continue to be heard and yet do it in a way that's congruent to yourself and your culture." The challenge is "to be who you are without losing yourself in the process of leading."

> (Dr. Zapata) I've never suffered from a poor self-image. I have always been blessed with a lot of love, a lot of affirmation, a lot of success. I've certainly never felt intimidated or even less. On the contrary I grew up with a sense that being Mexicano was being better. So that cultural identity was an asset and was part of my upbringing. It wasn't an inferiority complex. So now I have to figure out how to interject myself in conversations or strategy sessions without losing myself. That is the challenge. I believe most Mexicanas, Latinas are substantially group focused. They are more philosophical and ethical in advancing professionally than when you are just going looking out for yourself and seeking to advance.

And to this end, the lack of role models and being first generation caused great concern for many participants. Working in the field of education confirmed the

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reality that the Hispanic population, and Hispanic women in particular, often are

left behind academically.

> (Ms. Chavez) Beliefs about college being too expensive, stereotypes
> about how much money it's going to take, and how much time is a major
> challenge. It is about education and educating people about making the
> commitment, the investment, and role modeling, getting out there and
> being active. I've tried to do that by going and speaking to different junior
> highs and high schools.

Balancing a professional career and a family was the biggest challenge for Dr.

Morales:

There is a terrible burden between having a professional career and having a

family life. I tell people that I work and then I go home at five o'clock and I do

leave at five o'clock. I have a young family, but at five o'clock I become mom. I

have to leave and I am not going to give that up. That is why I have to do more in

the time that I am here. So I will be at every board meeting and I will be at the

things that I am asked to be at. I cherish my family and always choose them over

my job; it is a hard thing to balance.

Dr. Martinez felt that the lack of mobility and shortage of administrative positions

contributed to the challenges she and the other participants faced:

I think some of the challenges for an administrator in general is the lack of

opportunities or openings and when you do find an opening you've got to be

mobile and for a woman sometimes that works and sometimes that doesn't work.

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Since I already have roots here it is more of a challenge. In fact I chose not to be as mobile.

Dr. Massiate saw as another challenge the commitment to Mexican American females preparing to be future administrators: "It is important for us, when we make it, to turn around and say, 'here, here is a helping hand for you to make it,' to pull them up the ladder." Dr. Massiate noted that part of helping them up was getting them into the higher education system:

It's not just in increasing the retention of these young women. It starts with getting them here; it's an SES financial aid problem. These little girls 18 and 19 years old are applying for school, they are ready to do the paperwork and apply and get accepted and they've made good grades all their lives but when push comes to shove there is just not enough money to send them.

However once they are ready to attend a college or university their greatest deterrent is how to finance their education:

If they do not know enough about financial aid, nobody approaches them or their award doesn't come, they think they are going to create a burden for their family so they are the ones that get cheated. They are the hope of the future. The female Hispanic, Mexican American girls that we have, the 18 year olds are the ones that we have to get through school because they will continue on.

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<u>Administrative Experiences</u>

<u>Leadership style and power</u>. As administrators, Mexican American females face

challenges based on preconceived ideas, myths, and stereotypes about who they

are and how they function as leaders. This section reports the responses of

participants to questions concerning their leadership styles in their roles as

administrators. It should be noted that this line of inquiry was well received by

participants, who all seemed eager to discuss the topic. Leadership was defined

by positive interactions with staff, students, and colleagues. Participants used

terms such as "inclusive," "democratic," "collegial," and "team player" to

describe leadership styles.

One participant stated, "Being Mexican American helped me in being a

leader because my leadership style is different. I am honest, straightforward, and

passionate in what I believe." Yet another participant stated:

> As a Mexican American female administrator there can be mistrust of you.
> You can generate fear. They think OK, what is her agenda? The way I
> establish a power base is through data. They can't argue with the data.
> When you are willing to risk everything to get your position across you
> establish power but this can also be seen as a threat.

> (Dr. Campos)   I like teamwork, I try to be as positive as I can, I'm very
> open, very friendly. When I come and ask something I expect the answer
> to be there, although I am very nice about it." People have said, "She is
> nice but when she wants something you better have it. Part of the reason is
> that I put a lot of demands on myself and they see that and so I also expect
> it from them.

In her leadership role, Dr. Apollonia believed she could be democratic but was willing to make unpopular decisions for the betterment of the department and the college, which took precedence over trying to please everyone:

> I have learned in this position more so than before. If you are the boss you have to make some tough decisions. Not everybody is going to like your decisions and yet I need to move toward the betterment of the department, of the program and the college because that is my responsibility.

Ms. Refugia described her leadership style within a mentoring model. She guided her staff but allowed for some autonomy as a way to experience success:

> I let people have successes on their own and if somebody is not up to the challenge I will try to give them challenges that I know that they can meet to boost their confidence and hope to bring them along.

Dr. Zapata believed she possessed the characteristics of a great leader: "I think that I am an inspirational leader, very politically astute, and I think that I treat people well." Ms. Chavez and Dr. Morales noted the importance of providing staff with an empowering, inclusive, nurturing environment to foster their growth and professional development.

> (Ms. Chavez) You are only as good as the people that work with you. What I like to do is to empower the individuals that are working with me, to find out what their gifts are, what they are good at, and give them the tools and show them how.

> (Dr. Morales) Democratic and charismatic, that's how I describe myself. I think that my skills rely on dealing with people on a one-to-one basis. I don't think that I determine outcomes for people; I just include them in the decisions.

> (Dr. Campos) A leader has to be a visionary and to some extent I would describe my own leadership as always having that larger vision. As you put yourself out there people will naturally want to follow you. Not that

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you are going to necessarily communicate to people that you are a leader. I feel that you do that by your actions. Your actions speak for themselves and so I guess in describing my own leadership style it is very collaborative, very empowering to others.

Dr. Casillas and Dr. Martinez felt that providing their staff with the freedom to experience decision-making on their own increased success. They used descriptors such as "inclusive," "nurturing," and "supportive." Dr. Casillas noted, "I give a lot of autonomy to folks."

> (Dr. Martinez) I have evolved from thinking that I have to do everything and that I have to have my finger in everything. I think my leadership style is wanting to be a mentor and teacher to others. So I see my leadership style to be more of a facilitator than a manager of things. If you hire good people and turn them loose they will do a good job.

Dr. Casillas experienced difficulty working with faculty members who tended to view situations from a faculty perspective alone and not from her perspective as an administrator.

> (Dr. Camacho) I try to be inclusive of my faculty. I speak to my faculty; there are some faculty that are damn hard to deal with because they pretty much have closed the door on me and have not given me a chance, but you still have to work with them. So, I just try to do my very best.

Dr. Massiate developed her own style of leadership that she termed no-fault management:

> The idea is that you don't focus on blaming anybody when there are mistakes in the office. Everybody focuses on doing a better job. We are all in this together and blaming somebody doesn't help anybody.

This leadership style also entailed working successfully as a collective body:

> We never scream or holler. Nobody gets upset. We always try and see what we can do. Every time a mistake is made we say what can we do so this mistake will never happen again? It really seems to work.

When mistakes were made, the group discussed ways to avoid making the same mistake again.   Dr. Massiate also tried to establish a calm, stress-free environment, which she found to be a prime atmosphere for helping her staff recall information and check their work for accuracy:

> You have to provide an environment where they remember and they can be calm and they can check their work accurately. The first thing I noticed when people started getting stressed: they couldn't remember anything.

Perception of leadership style. Participants were asked to describe how other individuals, such as staff members, coworkers, subordinates, and others with whom they interacted, perceived their leadership styles.

> (Dr. Zapata) I did one of those leadership style inventories where you have four different people analyze you. You have a superior, subordinate, peer and non-work person. What was interesting about it was the degree of congruence between the way I saw myself and the way others saw me.

Some participants expressed confidence in knowing that their leadership style was seen in a positive light. Dr. Castillo felt that her efforts to be effective might have been misinterpreted by faculty, or others resistant to change, as overbearing or "bossy":

> I think it is a real perception. I think that it is true. I am not afraid to say what I think to the president, provost, and the faculty. I try to inspire confidence. I think that is very important. Trust and confidence, sometimes that is hard to do when some kind of change is taking place.

Drs. Casillas and Massiate believed that, at some level, positive perception of leadership style depends on the approval or acceptance of the authority figure by subordinates, rather than on professional competence and skill. Dr. Casillas noted, "If they like me, they think that I am great. If they think that I have not done well, they will think that I lack the ability to lead."

> People that are here at the university might not know me but I think that the reputation is that I have high standards and I am smart and I am fairly easy going, but don't push me. They say, "Don't corner her or try to put her down."

Administrative experiences as Mexican American females. The administrative experiences of the Mexican American women studied were reported to be significantly different than those of other females, and White or Hispanic males. These experiences were reported to be different simply based on racial identity and gender and preconceived ideas about their persona. Consequently they felt they had to consistently earn respect which superceded even race or gender:

> (Dr. Diaz) The fact that you are an administrator, a Mexican American and a woman makes it different. For example when you walk into a boardroom and it is filled with white males, when you walk in you should have already earned their respect. You earn their respect by your reputation and you can earn your reputation by what you do in the classroom and what you do in research and the way you conduct yourself.

Factors that impacted Mexican American females and made their experiences different from those of non-Hispanic females and males included the multiple challenges of race, class, and gender. Dr. Apollonia adamantly confirmed that her

experience as a Latina administrator included challenges such as the proverbial

"glass ceiling":

> If you want to be an effective leader you have to earn the respect of those around you because if you've earned their respect and then you can walk into the boardroom, they see someone they respect despite your ethnicity or gender. Then they will recognize this is who I'm dealing with. When hiring, it won't be a woman and it won't certainly be a Mexican American woman. There is still that "good old' boy network" or I don't care what you call it. Sometimes the hiring practices are unfair and demeaning and disappointing. We are dealing with human nature and for a Mexican American woman to gain the respect of all others; your reputation has to be intact. You work hard, harder than anybody; you're always there and conduct yourself appropriately. If you earn their respect their hands are tied.

Ms. Refugia expressed the need for Latinas to collectively discuss these

differences in treatment: "I think there are differences. The Mexican American

woman or the Latina does not gather around and talk about problems they have.

We tend to be very resourceful and get the job done and not complain." Dr.

Apollonia's observations on the differences that Latinas bring to an administrative

position included a focus on being driven by mission rather than career:

> I think that the kind of emotional intelligence that it takes to do this job is pretty abundant in Latina administrators. One thing has to do with our own motivation and that there are very few Latinas that I know who are bare teeth ambitious. Most of the ones I know, and I include myself in that, tend to be mission driven, that is, we want to do the work well and our motivation is more about achieving something and a being a part of something that we are committed to.

Ms. Chavez believed that retention was significant in her experience as an

administrator, and noted that an absence of role models may have a limiting

impact on the number of Hispanics entering the field of higher education. "We need role models so we can get people excited about giving back to their communities. The eastern and northern schools are attracting them [Hispanics] there so they can diversify their staff to attract even more minority students."

Dr. Campos witnessed low-performing administrators being rewarded by promotion, which affirmed her belief that women were treated differently:

> Even though I think I have been very successful, I have done a very good job. I know that other people have other opportunities I have not had. It's interesting some people that are really bad administrators, they are bad and in order to get rid of them they are going to give them something else that is even better. I don't know that they would even do that for a woman and much less a Hispanic woman.

Dr. Morales agreed with this sentiment and added that inequality in treatment created challenges for Mexicanas and made their jobs more difficult. Dr. Campos relayed her experience at a dean's council meeting where the under-representation of Hispanic females was noticeable:

> When we have deans' council, males sometimes invite directors or the registrar's office because they are going to report on something. I have thought maybe they bring these people because it would look really bad if the vice president, who is a white male, meets with the deans and they are all white males and then you have one Hispanic female. But most of the time they invite one of the assistant vice presidents. She is a white female and at least there is a female there. I almost think maybe they invite a few people to come so it won't be so obvious.

Summary of Category Two: Gaining Respect. Participants believed they gained respect through their work ethic, which, compared to that of coworkers,

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often included more effort and longer hours. This drive to excel was also evident in the participants' efforts to attain unprecedented educational goals and balance work and family. Participants also felt the need to seek opportunities for professional development in order to feel competent in their field. Professional advancement was considered to be a major challenge, particularly when mobility was not an option, and obligations to immediate and extended family outweighed the need or desire to relocate. Institutional support sometimes seemed to be lacking in terms of availability of resources and flexible work schedules. There was a strong feeling among participants that, at the institutional level, a support structure for these women, either formal or informal, did not exist, forcing them to rely solely on individuals for support.

Mentoring was believed to be important, although the scarcity of Latinas in the system limited the availability of mentors. Even with limited support, participants rated their overall experiences as administrators as positive.

Experiences of racism and discrimination in the work place represented the inequitable treatment of these women. Some participants stated that at times they felt like second-class citizens.

Participants insisted that they would not reject their cultural values in order to succeed. They saw their cultural values as a source of their effectiveness and strength. Parents helped them feel proud of their cultural heritage and instilled in them a responsibility to serve their community.

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Challenges faced by these women included lack of academic and professional opportunities, unequal salaries, the difficulty of being direct and decisive while still maintaining integrity, balancing work and family, lack of mobility, and shortage of administrative positions.

Leadership styles were described as collaborative, nurturing, passionate, and democratic. A majority of participants expressed the need to establish a nurturing environment in the workplace for themselves and their employees to allow for learning and growth. Another strong component of leadership was the need to be productive as a collective body and to create a helping community in which assistance was reciprocated.

Participants believed that the administrative experiences of Mexican American women were different due to pressures on them to gain respect and position themselves as advocates for other Latinas and for students in general. These women were primarily mission driven and consistently placed the needs of their students before all else. As women, they believed that their experiences brought a Hispanic perspective to the table, allowing for a new and fresh viewpoint.

<u>Category Three: MAKING A DIFFERENCE:…</u>

<u>doing what is right for Hispanic students</u>

Participants believed that improving educational paths for aspiring young professionals contributed to a better future and a new generation of leaders.

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Opportunities to promote positive change and serve as role models to other females and persons of color were seen by participants as enhancing their self-satisfaction and personal growth.

Participants considered themselves to be change agents who, in their roles as administrators, had the opportunity to impact the lives and educational levels of young Latinas and Latinos through advocacy, mentoring, role modeling, and welcoming environments. Participants believed that they made a difference by bringing to the forefront issues such as gender equity, effective leadership style, mentoring, and quality service to students. This service was defined in terms of advocacy, activism, mentoring, role modeling, recruitment, and retention.

One of the most effective strategies in making a difference reported by participants was an innate awareness of culture and the use of cultural identification to impact administrators and students.

<div align="center">Culture</div>

Cultural relevance was reported to be an important characteristic that contributed to the success of participants in their roles as administrators, specifically those related to persistence, determination, ambition, and hard work. Participants saw culturally relevant work environments as providing a sense of connectedness, community, and belonging.

> (Dr. Diaz) As a Mexican American administrator the most effective way to go through this world is to accept the fact that you are different. The minute that you accept it and acknowledge it you will be able to say, "Yes,

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I'm different and yes I'm going to approach things in a different way and this way may not go with the flow."

Participants believed that a work ethic developed out of hard work, efficient work habits, and persistence helped them overcome systemic obstacles.

(Dr. Castillo) Coming from a humble background with family responsibility, I always had to work hard. I had challenges when I was young, so for me the situation gets more and more exciting because I had to fight all my life. So I know how to fight the battles and maybe that's an advantage as a minority that you know how to fight the battles because you've been fighting all your life. You learn how to fight differently because you know how to strive. Striving is different growing up, and not being handed everything makes you serious but it also makes you enjoy life more. You get more out of life because you have had to fight for it so you appreciate it.

(Dr. Diaz) Whether it was grapes back then and now it is representation in higher education, it is a good fight. It is empowering seeing and knowing our history, the history of having to fight. It is just a different battlefield but the same war. But it's a whole different set of rules and now you need an education to fight it. Before you could get by with your sweat. Not anymore. Now you need your education.

Service to the community, as well as the need to be courteous and respectful to those for whom she worked, were characteristics instilled in Dr. Zapata by her family and her cultural upbringing:

The value of "servicia," being of service, and the values of being courteous and respectful, genuinely warm and inviting have a lot to do with my own success over the years in dealing with a variety of people.

A combination of skills and positive characteristics helped Dr. Apollonia in the

application of knowledge and decision-making:

> What has helped me is my ambition, hard work, commitment, intelligence,
> energy, spontaneity, and a good sense of humor. What has also helped me
> is the ability to apply knowledge to practical situations and the acceptance
> of ambiguity in a job like this. Everything is not black and white and you
> have to interpret and take the hard knocks if your decision is not quite or is
> not what somebody thinks it should be.

Cultural characteristics involving family were major components for other

participants. Cultural values such as care, concern, work ethic, and establishment

of relationships within the family carried over to coworkers:

> (Ms. Refugia) A good work ethic I guess would be a cultural
> characteristic. Trying to maintain a good balance in life is a cultural
> characteristic even though I work very hard and long. I don't put family
> second to my career. It has just managed to work out.

> (Ms. Chavez) I am in my culture and in my position it is more than just a
> job. It's a relationship that you have engaged with your fellow coworkers
> and that they are not just the program coordinator or the office
> administrator, they are the mom or the dad, the sister or the grandma, and I
> think that comes from who I am and from my culture and upbringing.

Collectively, participants were keenly aware that the concept of family played an

important role in their work environment:

> (Dr. Campos) Cultural characteristics include the whole idea of going
> back to family. Having those close relationships with family. I try to
> develop a similar environment as an administrator with the people that I
> work with here. The idea that we support each other, that we help each
> other, that we are going to work as a team really comes from my own
> cultural background and experiences. I think the whole idea of valuing
> other people and empowering other people is reflective of a family where
> you try to help one another and empower people and guide them along and

I think the kinds of things I do now are reflective of my own cultural experiences.

(Dr. Martinez) I think a cultural characteristic was the entrepreneurial spirit and the kind of work ethic that we saw in our parents. They tried very hard to make something of themselves and their family; they took the initiative, and wanted to do something.

<u>Language</u>

Participants also identified with their culture through the use of language. All placed a high value on knowing Spanish; those who were not fluent in Spanish believed in the importance of learning the language themselves and teaching their children to speak Spanish. The ability to speak two languages, live in more than one culture, and relate to the students and families they served proved to be a valuable asset to participants. Dr. Castillo noted, "Language and living in a bilingual, bicultural, binational environment and coming from a large family believe it or not has helped me deal with all types of personalities." Dr. Zapata added, "The cultural characteristic of being bicultural is itself an asset." Spanish was used by participants in varying degrees, depending on the situation, and as a way to better relate to students or their parents. In her duties involving student discipline, Dr. Morales spoke Spanish with her Spanish-dominant students to establish an environment in which they were comfortable and could better explain their actions:

I do most of my student hearings in Spanish. Actually I go through the preliminaries with saying "This is the process and this is what we will be doing." Then they say "me puede confesar in Español?" "Ay, pero si."

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> Then I just change to Spanish, because it is just more comfortable for the student and I want to be sure that nothing is being miscommunicated.

Participants currently used Spanish in their homes, as a form of communication, an effort to maintain the language or as a secondary language while practicing English. It was often mentioned by participants that speaking Spanish was highly valued and participants tried hard to have their own children speak the language. Spanish was also used enthusiastically by these administrators in their daily duties. They believed that speaking Spanish with their students helped create a welcoming and receptive environment. For some participants, speaking Spanish reinforced their sense of pride and distinction. Dr. Zapata relayed that her ability to speak Spanish had been beneficial to her, and her fluency in both English and Spanish consistently provided opportunities for advancement.

Ms. Chavez stated, "English was our primary language." She was not fluent in Spanish and felt that her Latinaness was occasionally questioned when other Latinos learned she could not speak the language. She believed, however, that she was indeed bicultural and that not speaking Spanish did not make her less Latina. She valued the language and expressed the desire to take Spanish classes, because she remembers situations in which she regretted that she was unable to converse with Spanish-speaking parents or students. Dr. Castillo was glad she had learned Spanish at a young age because it was easier to learn: "I can now

handle and manage them [English and Spanish] both in reading, writing, and speaking."

 Physical appearance or skin color as factors in academic or professional success. Another component related to culture involves expectations by others of how Mexican American women should look. Participants reported that having brown skin was occasionally helpful to them; at other times, it was not. In most cases, skin color was beneficial if an employer sought to hire an individual of Hispanic descent, but appearing "too Hispanic" caused others to be uncomfortable and therefore was detrimental. Dr. Castillo believed there were times that her fair complexion served her well, but also cited incidents of discrimination based on her skin color: "I think that being blanquita [fair-skinned] in some situations helped me a little bit.   I couldn't pin point it, but I think it opened a few doors here and there." She added that other Hispanics sometimes commented on her perceived good fortune in avoiding negative racial incidents: "I've had a few people say to me, 'Oh you've been lucky, you've never felt discrimination.'" While Dr. Castillo felt that her fair skin actually freed her from some discrimination, she added, "The assumption is that just because you are lighter things are easier for you all the time." Dr. Apollonia agreed that other people often held preconceived ideas of how Mexican Americans should look questioning her racial or ethnic identity based on her skin color: "People would ask me what I was and they would say, 'Are you French?' No. 'Are you Italian?'

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'No, I'm Mexican, Mexican descent.' 'Oh, but you don't look it.'" Ms. Chavez

commented that not only her skin color but also her stature influenced the way

others judged her professional accomplishments:

> My resume is packed full of experiences and education and sometimes I
> think that there are people who take a double take when they see me, like
> oh you have done all that. I feel that a lot when I go to national
> conferences, when you look around the room and you are the only dark
> person.

Dr. Camacho was keenly aware of her role as "the cute token Mexicana" who was

hired because she provided a comfortable addition to a predominantly white

university, while Dr. Massiate's response, though humorous, relayed

misperceptions of Mexican Americans even in terms of the "right" color of skin:

> The doctor told me to have my liver checked because my skin was
> too yellow and I said, "Look, twenty-six years ago the Mary Kay
> cosmetics lady told me 'Your skin is very yellow, you have to use this.'" I
> told my mother, "If my skin was yellow because I had a liver problem I'd
> be dead by now, wouldn't I?" I said, "Look, my mother is this color, my
> daughter is this color, I am this color, it's the way I am."

These types of situations provided examples of how the experience of being a

Mexican American female administrator was unique. Participants reiterated on

many occasions the importance of having other Latinas as mentors because they

felt they could directly relate to their own experience.

<div align="center">Mentoring</div>

Mentoring was reported by participants as being important for relaying

information about strategies to use to effectively maneuver within the system. Dr.

Morales stated, "I think mentors have been through it and you are getting advice

on how to survive, how to overcome obstacles, and how to approach obstacles."

> (Dr. Campos) I think really everyone needs and deserves some kind of mentor. Just by looking at the number of people that I have mentored and the feedback that they have given me on how they have grown personally and professionally, I keep thinking I wish I had had somebody like that for me. It is very important, you open doors for people more than anything else. That's very important when you can advise someone--this is the way you can do it--this is the way you should do it--let me give you some advice. I have had some of these experiences and I think it is critically important.

Participants saw mentoring as a way to lead young Latinas on to educational

success and completion. Dr. Zapata offered an example:

> A couple of years ago, during the summer I was walking through the hall. There was this young Mexicana sitting on the floor by the pay phone and she was crying her heart out. I stopped and I said, " What is the matter, mija?" She said, "Nothing, ma'm." I said, "Is it school or is it a man?" She looked at me and said, "It's a man." I said, " Yea, we all go through that." I talked to her for a little while and I got her a hot chocolate and one for myself. I came back and gave her the hot chocolate and said, "Look, there is nothing that chocolate can't fix." I had a lot to do, but we had a conversation and then I gave her my card and I said, "Look, here is my card just in case you ever need to talk to me. The most important thing that I want you to keep in mind is that no matter what else is going on it can not keep you from finishing school." I don't think the fact that I was Latina was the key reason that I did that, but she was a Mexicana. I found, for example, the word "mijo" and "mija" is magic. I can approach any Chicano or Latino kid by saying "What is the matter, mijo?" or "What is going on, mijo or mija?" and it immediately changes the whole nature of the interaction.

Participants realized the importance of their roles as advisors, mentors, and

ambassadors for the entire Latino community. Ms. Chavez described her reaction

to a motivational speech given to students by a Latina administrator:

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I was getting a little emotional, I was thinking when I went to school in '84 or '85, if a Hispanic woman would have gotten up and talked to me with such strength I think that, although I did well in college, I would have done so much better. I think that I would have taken her up on it, going to talk to her because there was such strength in her. I think that is one of the things that I would like to be in a couple of years, to speak with that much strength and confidence. I consider myself a good public speaker, but I like the strength and I see that strength in her and I see that strength in my mother, but she is not that articulate. It's the strength that comes out doing things. I admire that and I think how inspirational, whether she realized it or not, she impacted me as a role model and what a difference that can make in many people's lives.

Participants believed that mentors were a critical factor for advancement:

(Dr. Diaz) In the different places that I've taught I've had mentors who were White females who took me under their wing and taught me a lot. Although I think this was good I do feel that we need Mexican American mentors. We're going to have good administrators, mediocre administrators, and bad administrators, and they will be either men or female with any ethnic background. Now I think it is time we need representation whether it is good, mediocre or whatever. We need it; we need more Latinas, more Latinos because the time has come, and the opportunity is there.

<u>Service</u>

The value of Mexican American female administrators within a university or college administration lies in their presence. They can provide an unprecedented place at the table of discussion and establish an avenue by which the "voices" of Latino students and the Latino community can be heard. Although in the educational system historic obstacles have often stifled these "voices," Mexican American female administrators offer a new perspective. They not only allows these voices to be heard but also amplifies them. The few Latinas

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who currently hold administrative positions can remind other constituents at the

"table" that Mexican American female administrators play an important part in

addressing the needs of Latino students.

> (Dr. Castillo) We bring a voice that has not been there. With diversity for example we represent a place where students can come and talk to someone of their own background and be able to interact. You represent the community, you bring in new ideas, new thoughts. Concepts that maybe people have never even thought about. You think more globally about the needs or issues or aspects that have never been in the conversation. It is a voice that needs to be at the table.

Participants felt that the institution should reflect the community it serves both

within the ranks of administration and in the student body.

Service to students and the Hispanic community.

> (Ms. Refugia) It seems pretty obvious to me that you should try to attain equal representation in your administration, faculty and support staff as the student body and communities that you serve. Cultural understanding is important. Recognizing the importance of Ash Wednesday or use of language that many of us share including the same history and stories as the people we are serving is important.

Students seeking a connection with the institution often find it by interacting with

individuals with whom they identify.

> (Ms. Chavez) Everybody needs someone that they can identify. As a female administrator and as a former Hispanic student it makes a difference when you can look and see a woman in that role. Someone who perhaps has birthed children, served as a mom, a wife, a sister, a grandma, or an aunt. If you look at Hispanic families or Mexican American families, at the root of every Hispanic family is the mother. Being a mom is for me 90% of what I do, that is important, it goes into everything that I do. It's important to me and I think it is important to them because that's probably the way they were brought up and they can still get their master's and still get their doctorate and they can still have a full-time job, it can be done. That is significant and is more impactful then seeing a man in that

position. I want to see someone like me, because then I can identify and I can say it can happen.

> (Dr. Campos) I think we bring a dimension that males can't bring. I think there is more of a nurturing dimension that women bring to the profession. I think it is a different perspective in the way one views life and the work that we do. I think that we also serve as role models for lots of other women and in a university setting you serve as a role model to lots of young people and I think that they need to see examples of what are the possibilities for them. If they are never looking at women that are in critical positions, then I do not think that they can envision themselves as being there as well.

In their service to students, these administrators believed they functioned as

critical role models for the administrators of the future.

> (Dr. Massiate) There are few little premises or "if" statements. If in fact Hispanics are the way of the future and if in fact in ten more years the whole state is going to be Hispanic, right now we are 25% of the state, it is going to be much higher and the whole state is going to look like San Antonio pretty soon. Of the Hispanics, who's going to achieve who are the ones that are going to do it? The females are going to do it. They are going to have to keep it all together and therefore they're the promise of the future. Here is an example with the largest institution in San Antonio, a Hispanic Serving Institution. The picture for females is the same at the graduate level as it is at the undergraduate level. It's the same story. We say we want to increase the graduation rates of students and we want to put Hispanics through the Master's and Doctoral programs. Well they are sitting right at your back door. Get the females because they are ready to go. Encourage them to aim high, don't let these females go (they will always underestimate what they can do) if we can get them to understand to aim high because you will be able to do it, don't listen to what your little voice says, aim high and believe me you are going to make it.

This type of commitment to Hispanic females and the Hispanic community served

as the foundation for administrator's choices to serve the communities in which

they lived and worked.

Location of residence and work service. Participants chose to live in the general area of the institutions in which they were employed. Most participants reported having made a conscious decision to serve the community in which they live, and specifically serve "their people"--the Hispanic population.

> (Ms. Refugia) I was living in the Dallas area. What attracted me to this area was that I have roots here although I am not familiar with them and I wanted to become familiar with them. The suburb in which we lived in the Dallas area was very white bread. Everybody was from the same educational and socioeconomic background no matter the race. I wanted my son to experience language and the Mexican American culture and the border culture.

> (Dr. Campos) Why have I chosen this location? I am here for a couple of reasons. One reason, of course, my family is here and family is critically important to me. Yes, I have had opportunities to go just about anywhere, I have been recruited from everywhere and I have refused, in fact essentially turned down, several jobs that I applied for but I finally decided not to leave. In part it is definitely family. The other thing I decided is that you can do everything that you want being here, it doesn't matter what people think of it, I can still do everything that I ever wanted to do and still be here. Also, I guess because I made a commitment to this community, when I went to work on my Doctorate I made a commitment to come back to this community and be able to use my knowledge and my skills and my experiences to make a difference here. It was a personal commitment that I made. I think people stay partly because of family. I mean what do I want to be doing in Ohio? That was the first job I was offered I think in Ohio. It's not where my people are, it's not mine, I don't know, I'm very committed to making a difference where there are large numbers of our "gente." Not that I cannot work with other people but the majority of my time I want to invest in making a difference here.

> (Dr. Morales) "…Doing what is right for Hispanic students. If I want to serve Hispanic students, I need to be at a Hispanic Serving Institution. I need to be at a place where I can encourage people to accomplish their goals, to aspire for more.

Quality service to students. Some participants were specific in their advice on

how to serve students:

> (Dr. Diaz) Well, I think the best way to serve students is in the method of recruitment. I go to recruit in the inner city schools. I am going out there and giving them my card, shaking their hand, and I am telling them, learning is a lifetime effort but why? I ask them "why do you want to be educated?" Is it about graduating from high school? Is it about graduating with your bachelors? "No," all of those things are great and you need to do them, but learning is a lifetime process. And then I ask them, "why is high school not enough?" I tell them if you want to reach the American dream that means that you should be able to pay for a nice apartment, buy a nice car, wear nice clothes, have money in their pockets, be well respected, be a role model for your family, brothers and sisters and friends. I tell them to call me and that I will help them through the admissions process. I hand carry their paperwork to the admission office. I want to do this because I want them to have one place that they trust, they can pick up the phone, call me and I talk to them and I help them. Their parents have come with their students to see me here and evidently they feel comfortable because they have come to see me. I don't send them anywhere, I tell them what to do and they can turn in everything here and I process it for them. They really need that one-stop shopping, so I am trying to provide one-stop shopping for them here.

> (Dr. Martinez) I encourage students to advocate for themselves, even if it means sometimes disagreeing with institutional policy. I think that is what our role is. There were a lot of people who advocated for me and who helped me and therefore it is a cycle. I particularly like to advocate for students that I believe cannot advocate for themselves and who do not understand the system. I help them navigate the system, because someone helped me along the way. I say we are not here to hold their hands; we are here to put our hands around them, if that is what it takes. We are not going to lower standards because that is not going to help them. They ought to be able to work within the standards that we have. If it takes putting our arms around them and building a net to hold them up, we will do that, this is what our role is in this institution. When I see the parents, I see my own parents who did not know. My mother did not know anything about school, she only knew it was a good thing. She did not know what a counselor was or a principal was or how to walk in the front door. And probably would have never walked in the front door and I don't think that she ever did. I remember when I was initiated into the National Honor

Society my parents were so proud, they got all dressed up because it was at the conference room at the bank. Who goes into the conference room in the bank? Nobody but the rich people in town.

Student recruitment. Student recruitment was viewed by participants as important and germane to increasing the numbers of Latino students in higher education. Dr. Diaz encouraged recruitment in the community by identification with culture.

> In order to have representation we need to educate ourselves and be representatives of our community. We of all people are the ones to deliver this message because we understand the culture and we can make a difference. We know where we have to make changes and we also know how to approach our people. You have to be you and you have to just be a friend and you have to know how to bring out the pride because we're a very proud people. We need to penetrate los barrios, we really do, we have a lot of work to do and we need to get more and more people educated so that we can have more administrators. There will never be support, trust me, you just have to do it.

Summary of Category Three: Making a Difference

Participants believed that their occupation afforded them the unique opportunity to function as change agents. The potential to improve the lives and educational paths of young Latinos and other students of color brought the participants great personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Participants agreed on the importance of culturally identifying with students and the community they served. Their roles as change agents and the qualities and skills they possessed established transformational leadership with the ultimate goal of making a difference in the lives of students. They also felt that growing up in an ethnic

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community and understanding what it is to struggle helped them to persist and equipped them with the strength to take on life's battles, often using different strategies to compete successfully. Some of the cultural characteristics mentioned by the women included a strong work ethic, ambition, commitment, intelligence, energy, spontaneity, and a good sense of humor.

The notion of family was carried by participants' into their work environments as relationships. They emphasized the importance of helping others and empowering them to achieve.

The use of the Spanish language in the work environment, particularly on campus, allowed participants to better serve students and parents who were also Spanish speakers.

Participants were also disturbed by preconceived expectations of them based on their "Mexicana look." They felt they were often misjudged by others who correlated level of education and professional position with dark or light skin color.

Mentoring was reported as a significant factor in the process of guiding young Latinas through the educational system. As Latinas, identification with students helped to develop positive attitudes among students and instill in them the belief that they too could be successful. Interacting with other Latinas as colleagues promoted a sense of networking, solidarity, and community. Participants believed that their presence on campus and in the boardroom allowed

their voices to be heard and their opinions considered. There was strong agreement among participants that students experiencing their own struggles could be comforted by knowing and identifying with other individuals who understood the complexities of their existence at an institution of higher education. Young Hispanic women were cited by the participants as having the most potential to be future leaders within the Hispanic population, while, at the same time, still being in need of assistance in areas such as mentoring and financial aid.

Based on the desire to mentor and assist the youth of their culture and community, participants purposely chose to work at institutions in Hispanic-dominant communities. Typically these locations were in their childhood communities or current residential areas. In many ways, the women of this study carried out their personal mission to reach back and "pull up" their younger counterparts, to serve them, help them succeed, and ultimately make a positive difference in their lives.

This chapter presented comprehensive data that were categorized into three sections entitled Family, Gaining Respect and Making a Difference. The data collected through a focus group, interviews and summary charts were used to extrapolate commonalities and themes about participants life experiences and professional challenges as Mexican American female administrators. These data

were then used to conduct an analysis that is presented in Chapter Five along with

the overarching story conclusions, profile and summary of recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

OVERARCHING STORY, SUMMARY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,

ADMINISTRATOR PROFILE, MEXICAN AMERICAN FEMALE

LEADERSHIP MODEL, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESEARCH

PERSPECTIVE AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE ADMINISTRATORS.

<u>Introduction</u>

This study examined the personal challenges and life experiences of

Mexican American female administrators in four higher education institutions in

the University of Texas System.   The examination was meant to be a sample of

the overall yet limited number of Mexican American females occupying academic

and student affairs administrative positions, ranging from presidents to

coordinators.

As the Hispanic population continues to increase, states with large

Hispanic populations, such as Texas, will feel the greatest impact. There is

growing concern that this increased growth, coupled with reported low levels of

academic achievement, will result in this group becoming a largely undereducated

workforce (Gandara, 1995).   Hispanic women as part of this group have proven

themselves to be a promising force to counter this underachievement

(Opportunity, 2001). As such, the present cadre of Hispanic women serving as

academic and student affairs administrators in the higher education system has the

potential to positively influence the academic achievement of others from marginalized communities through their functions as mentors and role models.

This study was founded using a conceptual framework that promotes culturally relevant leadership, combining the qualities of leadership, service, and cultural identification. The use of critical race theory as the methodological and theoretical lens allowed for the challenges and experiences of these Mexican American women to be examined from the perspective of race, class, and gender, with the intent of reproducing similar successes in the lives of future administrators and Latino students. The development of this study was a product of the researcher's own professional observations and academic experiences as a student and administrator within the higher education system. The lived experiences and personal challenges of the researcher initiated an interest in examining the experiences of other Mexican American female administrators in order to extrapolate commonalities and themes.

The use of critical race theory (CRT) as a qualitative methodology (Delgado, 1995) proved to be useful in the study of people of color in the United States (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999), allowing the researcher to address race and class as factors impacting educational access and administrative success, as well as to embrace social justice as a product of the research findings. CRT provided an appropriate infrastructure with which to study the life experiences and professional challenges of the Mexican American women of this study, inclusive

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of race, class, and gender. The data collection procedures of CRT methodology, such as interviewing, provided a sound vehicle for collecting the life stories of the participants.

The researcher was also interested in reviewing the history of social and educational oppression and discrimination experienced by the participants (Omi & Winant, 1986). Aida Hurtado (1996, p. viii) proposed that the single means to dismantle oppressive practices is through dissection of the social structure. From this foundation, the researcher proposed to deconstruct the present social structure reflected in the higher education system by relaying the experiences and challenges encountered by the women studied. This deconstruction was presented through personal-professional accounts offered by these Mexican American female administrators and was manifested as stories to counter mainstream perceptions of their academic achievement and professional accomplishments. This study attempted to be proactive and present the "true" voices of the administrators in contrast to previous accounts by well-intentioned "outsiders" (Paredes, 1993, p. 74) that tend to reinforce myths and stereotypes about Mexican American women, around such issues as upbringing, professional intentions, and aspirations. A goal of this study was to represent the participants' authentic, yet not all-encompassing, "voice" which exists as part of a greater system of stratified power (Hurtado, 1996, p. 12), within which women of color maintain less power than, and are therefore subordinate to, white females and males.

Chapter Five consists of eight sections: 1) overarching story, 2) summary of findings, 3) conclusions, 4) leadership profile, 5) Mexican American female leadership model, 6) recommendations, 7) research perspective and 8) advice for future administrators.

<u>Overarching Story</u>

The overarching story of this study is one of persistence, strength, maintenance of culture, and success, despite all odds. It is a story that parallels a major event in the history of Mexican Americans living in what are known as the confiscated territories of the southwestern United States. This event was the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1849, which, along with annexation of the current southwest by the United States, San Miguel and Valencia (1998) propose to have significant impact on the history of subordination and current treatment of Mexican Americans, signaling the beginning of decades of persistent and pervasive prejudice and discrimination against people of Mexican origin residing in the United States. Initially, the treaty guaranteed the maintenance of the Spanish language and rights of citizenship to all those living in the confiscated territories (Valencia & San Miguel, 1998). However, promises of guaranteed citizenship and language rights went largely ignored, engendering sentiments of betrayal, resentment, and mistrust among Mexicans living in the newly acquired territories (Hernandez, 1997, p. 969). The treaty's provisions were violated by Anglo oppressors, who labeled Mexican

Americans as unworthy of honest and fair treatment (Rendon, p. 64). This ideology of conquest, domination, and superiority, perpetuated by dominant Anglo society, was reflected in the treatment of Mexican populations (Menchaca, 1993). Prevailing sentiments of Mexican American inferiority were reflected in the education system. For example, segregation as a social norm was used to address the schism between Mexicans living in the territories and Anglos claiming "true" citizenship. Segregation was incorporated into the education system and used to segregate Anglo and Mexican children, affording Anglo children educational advantages while providing children of Mexican descent inferior school structures and curricula. Language use in schools also became a vehicle for discrimination and segregation. As a response to this segregation, Mexicans built their own escuelitas (little schools) as a form of resistance and to guarantee the education of their children.

This study uses the signing of the treaty and the intended cultural cleansing, specifically the policing of use of the Spanish language, to demonstrate a strength and persistence that continues to exist in the participants of this study namely as direct descendents of Mexican citizens living in the confiscated territories. In this same sense, participants in this study demonstrated through use and maintenance of the Spanish language a strength and persistence that they incorporate into their current professional positions. The identities and roles of these participants as women and administrators are consistently being

renegotiated, yet they retain qualities of strength, perseverance, and persistence through their lived experiences and professional challenges relayed through stories and their reproduction of success. They have gained unprecedented levels of education; they are the bridge to status for themselves, their families, and their communities; and they have learned and translated the language of higher education, historically only discernable to the monolingual elite and spoken by the power brokers, their families, and privileged insiders. In this sense, these women's lives parallel those of their ancestors who gained strength through adversity.

In essence the Treaty of Hidalgo confiscated the southwestern territories and attempted to render Mexicans powerless; however, in actuality, the treaty resulted in a display of their solidarity and strength. Like their forebears, the women in this study have succeeded in their endeavors, despite circumstances. Their history of subordination has not stifled efforts to achieve social mobility through education, but in fact has redeemed the Chicana, Latina, Azteca, and many daughters to come. The trials that Mexican Americans have encountered and overcome are reflections and reproductions of strength, courage, hope, persistence, and integrity. These character traits are prominent in the Mexican American women who struggle and succeed despite their circumstances. They function with the politically astute knowledge that arises from subordination through resistance. This resistance currently manifests itself in translating the

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elitist language of higher education and bridging the gap through the value of cultural relevancy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These women, as did their ancestors, have dealt with an innately oppressive education system and still made a way for themselves, their families and the Hispanic community.

<div align="center">Summary of Findings</div>

Findings were categorized within the following three emergent themes: Family, Gaining Respect, and Making a Difference. These themes assisted the participants in building an infrastructure with family as their strength and their foundation, gaining respect as their approach, and making a difference as the ultimate goal.

Successful Mexican American female administrators proved to be well adjusted in cultural identity and grounded in family, a strong work ethic, and the passion to make a difference. They surrounded themselves with support systems that included family members and friends who responded positively to their pursuit of advanced degrees. Professionally, they embraced institutions that supported the needs of Hispanic students, and, for this reason, chose to serve in communities where large Hispanic populations resided. Their cultural identification with the Mexican American culture was considered a source of pride. Although participants and their families experienced discriminatory or disappointing situations based on their race or ethnicity, still they embraced their culture in a way that expressed their pride of heritage. Though unwanted,

discriminatory situations functioned as incentives to achieve. Discrimination, potentially a barrier, spurred an interest in countering evidence of underachievement by moving individuals and their family legacies forward, almost as a way to prove worthiness. As a result, resistance toward acculturation provided a strategy for success. Use of the Spanish language by the participants proved to be one form of resistance and relayed to students and parents an interest in identifying with the culture. Even administrators with limited Spanish proficiency were viewed as allies, simply because they tried to identify with the culture, thus demonstrating a form of care and concern.

Conclusions

Using the three categories of 1) Family, 2) Gaining Respect, and 3) Making a Difference, major conclusions were also drawn:

Category 1: Family

Participants felt the need to create their own opportunities, and their families served as the strength and support to create community and accountability. Completion of a college degree was an accomplishment for the individual and the family, as well as for the entire community. Religion and religious practices guided the rules of conduct for the family; language provided a sense of solidarity, community, and a strong sense of identity, and discrimination was a continual challenge.

Category 2: Gaining Respect

The theme of Gaining Respect included institutional support, campus climate, and the sense of being welcomed, and played a significant role in the overall effectiveness of the administrators. Although discrimination continued to be a challenge, it appeared evident that higher education supported the acculturated Latino, and the role that family played was important in the lives of these administrators. Their family environments created a culture of success that was easily incorporated into office structures, and the nature of higher education allowed participants to maintain a level of political understanding that translated into community activities.

Category 3: Making a Difference: The category, Making a Difference, included the existence of a power structure that rendered these participants different in terms of culture and existence. Relaying power differentials to mentees proved to be important to participants; mentoring proved to be a desire rather than a need; maintaining cultural identification was important in retaining power; and cultural identification allowed administrators and students to connect within a network of Latinos.

Family

The family as a foundational structure provided a place wherein pride in ethnic identity was nurtured and intellectual growth promoted. To participants in this study, family and the condition of the family, namely socioeconomic status,

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parental participation in education, and early childhood influences, were significant in producing successful administrators. Within the family structure, participants learned valued skills such as budgeting, time management, communication, and social skills, which could be applied to their current administrative positions (Velez-Ibanez, 1996).

Most participants grew up in small towns or cities that reflected the qualities of closely knit communities in which family, extended family, and friends served as each other's resources and social networks. Although the childhood socioeconomic status of the majority of participants was that of poverty level, the women felt they lacked nothing in terms of resources. What was considered poverty in the economic sense felt sufficient and normal to the participants, primarily due to the creativity and resourcefulness of their parents. This type of environment created a sense of community, accountability and worthiness.

Parents were named as the main supporters of the participants' academic pursuits, and academic achievement prevailed as the common denominator among the women. Participants pursued advanced degrees and excelled in their fields of study. They indicated a strong connection to family, especially as their source of support. Mothers in particular were well accustomed to offering encouragement and emotional support to their children. The level of formal education possessed by both mothers and fathers did not necessarily limit their intellectual capacity to

learn and relay knowledge, wisdom, and understanding about the world and its power differentials to their daughters.   Mothers proved to be the most influential persons in setting educational goals and were more verbal in their support of education than were fathers. Although fathers offered their own sense of support and influence, they presented it in their own unique way. Home environments were nurturing and modeled autodidactism, a thirst for knowledge, and educational empowerment. Fathers encouraged their children to pursue education and a higher sense of learning through modeled behavior, such as frequent trips to community libraries, and an abundance of reading materials in the home incited a quest for knowledge. Even with rich familial foundations, these poverty level Mexican communities with limited resources were viewed by outsiders as antithetical to the production of academically successful children (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999, p. 428), and seen as least ideal from a mainstream perspective. Even with socioeconomic challenges, the two-parent homes of these Mexican American females as they grew provided a sense of accountability and social structure that was intellectually stimulating, a context not uncommon in these largely Mexican households and communities. In retrospect, participants knew that their upbringing was different, and expressed an appreciation for the efforts their parents made to instill the value of education in them at a very young age.

Education was also prophesied within families as the gateway to a better life, yet participants knew, directly or indirectly, of the realities of limited

opportunities and felt the need to create their own opportunities. Although

education was promoted as the key to success and social status, participants knew

that more than gaining an education was necessary to succeed. It would take a

"good" education in addition to persistence and determination.   Explaining the

success of Mexican Americans who completed postgraduate degrees, Gandara

(1995) revealed that family support and individual persistence were the factors

that contributed most to academic achievement. As administrators, participants in

the present study viewed the educational system as a vehicle that allowed them to

influence policy and rise to a level from which they could positively impact those

Latino students coming up through the system. For these women, education was

truly the catalyst that made them independent, granting them an opportunity to

obtain influential positions.

As first-generation college students, participants knew that their

accomplishments not only impacted their families but the communities in which

they lived. What their parents lacked in formal education, they made up for in

intelligence and wisdom. Parents sacrificed to provide their children with the best

opportunities. For their families and communities, the enormity of obtaining a

higher education was relayed through one participant's story.   She recalls the day

after graduating with her bachelor's degree:

> My father was a farm laborer; he worked very hard in the fields to support
> his family of five. He was very happy when I graduated from college.
> The day after graduation when he went to his regular job out in the fields
> where other farm workers were harvesting crops he lifted his hands and

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shouted "Mija se graduó" ("My daughter graduated") and just then all the farm workers started to cheer.

The achievement of this individual and her family proved to be an accomplishment for the entire community--for the "gente." Her graduation sparked family celebration, as well as celebration by the farm workers as a collective community. One of their own had reached a level of education rarely seen in their community. This in essence reflected the overall sentiment of participants as first-generation college students.

Religion and religious practices played a major role in the establishment of rules of conduct within the family. Religion was intertwined within each participant's family structure and guided the family through important cultural and traditional celebrations and events. Religious affiliations grounded the family within the community and established connections to a larger circle of individuals, including extended family and friends. Catholicism was the overriding religion of all but one participant. The Catholic Church provided a venue for social interaction and a social structure for family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances (Trueba, 1999). It provided women with organizational, social, and leadership skills. Organizations within the church for young women, such as Las Inesitas and Las Hijas de Maria, introduced them to social structures that were respectable and acceptable and instilled a sense of community. Providing other types of service to the church, such as maintenance or membership in altar societies, also contributed to the network within the church environment. The

church's role in family events and rites of passage took center stage in ceremonies such as baptisms, weddings, quinceañeras, funerals, blessings of homes, and first communions.

Use of the Spanish language both within and outside the immediate family was also a key component in establishing the sense of cohesion and community experienced by participants. In Mexican American families and culture, language was and is not only an identifier but also a binding source for members of the community. For the Hispanic population, use of Spanish represented a sense of solidarity and cultural identity (Marin & Marin, 1991). The ability to speak Spanish was of great value, proving to be an asset in personal and professional interactions, and providing an additional means of communication that not all administrators possessed. The ability to connect with the community was significant to the participants in their service to their institutional constituents, particularly Spanish-speaking students and their parents. Language provided a cultural bridge to the community and a connectedness within families. One participant shared an example of her connection with students through the use of "mijo" or "mija," terms of endearment used in claiming a student as a son or daughter and therefore members of the family:

> I found for example, the word "mijo" and "mija" is magic. I can approach any Chicano or Latino kid by saying "What is the matter, mijo?" or "What is going on, mijo or mija?" and it immediately changes the whole nature of the interaction.

The use of Spanish by the administrators indicated an understanding and familiarity with the culture and the shared experience of being in higher education. Thus, it is not surprising that one participant considered her lack of fluency in Spanish to be a disadvantage to effectively serving her Spanish-speaking students and their families. Moreover, she felt humiliated and embarrassed that she was not able to communicate as she wished, knowing she would be better able to assist more students if she spoke Spanish fluently.

> They see me and automatically start speaking to me in Spanish and I feel ashamed when I tell them I don't speak the language. I am very confident in who I am and my credentials and I don't think that not speaking the language makes me any less Latina, it just makes me less effective.

This participant vowed to reclaim the language and, in doing so, reclaim a part of her identity and connection to extended family members and her community. These strong cultural values set forth by Spanish speakers were a part of the identity development of the Chicana administrator in her personal life and in her role as administrator. Pride was taken in identifying with culture through religious practices and the use of the Spanish language, although not in an idealistic sense. The participants were also aware that cultural identification came at a price, as the limited number of people of color in administrative ranks proved to hinder understanding of differing cultural orientations.

Discrimination proved to be a continual challenge in the lives and familial experiences of the participants. Discriminatory acts and events were numerous and consistent, both as a present reality and a recollection of the participants'

experiences as former students and young administrators.   Within the family, sharing of encounters with and accounts of discrimination through stories helped participants understand that discrimination should not serve to deter achievement of their goals and dreams. Even armed with this knowledge, participants still found each occurrence of discrimination startling, and almost unexpected. Participants held to the expectation that, along the way, they would experience either racial or gender discrimination, or both. Although the women viewed discrimination as an obstacle, it did not function as a deterrent, and further fueled the need to press on and achieve their goals.

Summary for Family

Participants believed that obtaining a higher education degree was an opportunity for the entire family to rise to a new level of academic achievement. Family support was crucial to this task. Although academic achievement was highly valued by all the participants' parents, being first-generation college students posed some logistical problems in terms of processes and procedures necessary for matriculation. Overall, participants felt the need to create their own opportunities both as students and professionals. The women's accomplishments were seen as beneficial to their families, as well as to their communities of origin and present communities of residence. In a cultural context, these same families and communities were instrumental in infusing characteristics that assisted in the

women's success.   Positive characteristics were also gained through community

and religious cohesiveness and accountability, as well as through the solidarity

created by family rules of conduct and language. Although participants felt

supported by their families, this support did not absolve them of discrimination

experienced as students and professionals nor of the feeling that they had to exist

in a state of double consciousness (Dubois, 1903), in which all actions and

conditions were neutral as to gender or race, as well as from the perspective of a

administrator who identifies and is identified as Hispanic.

<div align="center">Gaining Respect</div>

Gaining respect was the approach used to reach the goal of serving all

students. Adequate schooling, overcoming stereotypes, being academically better

than peers, working harder and longer hours were the best approaches used by the

participants to gain respect and maintain integrity in their professional and

academic careers. Putting in longer hours and going beyond the call of duty were

common practices for these participants. The need to serve students, particularly

Hispanic students, was a primary goal whether or not institutional support had

been provided. The participants appeared to be driven more by a common

mission than by career advancement.

Although all participants ranked their institutions highly in terms of their

overall administrative experiences, the most successful administrators felt their

achievements were due in large part to the support provided by their institution,

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which allowed them to surpass the traditional list of services to students. The women were able to gain respect by reaching out to Hispanic youth within the community, at times personally visiting the families to explain admissions procedures to prospective students and their parents. Understanding that family support was very important in the matriculation process allowed these administrators to develop additional opportunities to assist potential students. With support from her Dean, one participant proposed a "one-stop-shopping" admissions process, which she developed. She would ask students to deliver or mail all documentation to her office (admissions and financial aid applications, etc.), after which she would review the paperwork for correct order and deliver it personally to the appropriate office. Although she was aware that some non-Hispanic colleagues viewed this process as "hand holding" and detrimental to the student, she felt that the matriculation process should not be an obstacle course. She believed that students would have ample time to learn the process throughout the length of the semester, and her immediate goal was to make sure that applicants met the established admissions deadlines. Her one-stop-shopping process was welcomed, well-respected and embraced by her Dean due to her commitment and success with students. Ultimately her attention to culture increased her effectiveness, which became a widely spread sentiment. It was not uncommon for these women to go beyond their job duties or work longer hours to serve the "whole" student.

Campus climate and institutional welcomeness played significant roles in the participants' ability to become successful and effective administrators. This support also allowed them to feel that the rhetoric used to attract them to a particular campus was not simply "lip service." Although the participants adapted to most administrative environments, they were most successful on campuses that supported their efforts. A welcoming environment was defined as a place that embraced the participants' gender, ethnicity, and race, as well as their cultural practices, and maintained an open, non-resistant attitude toward expressions of cultural practice and celebration. This in itself was perceived as a level of respect from the institution.

As women of color, the participants had learned and acquired strength through adverse experiences in the education system and viewed a lack of institutional support as an additional obstacle that they would overcome creatively. Despite the level of institutional assistance, participants continued to network and create their own additional infrastructure of support. Although institutional support was preferred, it was not necessary in order for these women to excel and be effective as administrators. Even so, they expressed a need for mentors, preferably Latinas, who could identify with their experiences, provide a much-needed support system, and serve to enhance the welcoming environment on campus.

Even if participants felt supported by their institution, all participants

reported at least one incident of discrimination by other faculty or staff members

unfamiliar or with limited interaction with these women. Unfortunately,

discrimination in their work environment was expected, and stories of prejudice

and discrimination were shared among colleagues through descriptions of such

encounters, relayed with disbelief. Even at institutions hosting large populations

of Hispanic students, support and respect for these administrators still remained a

challenge. In these instances, the assumption could not be made that the

participants received institutional support simply due to the institution's

geographic location within a largely Hispanic community.

> The participants recalled that, as new administrators trying to adjust to a new environment, they realized that the assimilated Latinos were the most welcomed in administration and that their own efforts to fit in were futile unless they abandoned their sense of cultural identity. They reported feeling at times as if they were living in a "double state of consciousness" (Dubois, 1903), in which validation through recognition by peers was of utmost importance, and maintaining cultural identity meant living in two worlds--balancing identification with two cultures and two value systems. Dissonance occurred as a result of having to choose between their culture or mainstream culture. Participants recognized the dilemma of retaining one's own cultural heritage while knowing that relinquishing it in favor of assimilation would allow them to be better accepted and perceived as successful (Gandara, 1995).

> Many times Latinos will renegotiate their identity in order to accommodate and survive within the system. According to Vasquez (1997), higher education as an institution supports the acculturated Latino, both as student and administrator, through its lack of culturally sensitive policies and practices. The comfort level of non-Hispanic administrators determines the acceptance of Hispanics, and the levels of acceptance appear to be higher for Hispanics of lighter skin color who can "pass." This success was believed to then lead to social mobility and economic

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power in the United States, which were more readily available to those who were "guera" (white) in skin tone.

The perception of darker-skinned women was that fairer-skinned administrators were better respected and experienced less discrimination than those who were not considered "gueras" or who could not "pass as white." One Latina felt that this belief should be dispelled: "I've had a few people say to me, oh you've been lucky, you've never felt discrimination. The assumption was that just because I am lighter things were easier for me all the time."

 Participants were hesitant to conclude that maintenance of their culture negatively impacted their current positions; however, they knew from life experience that others sometimes felt uncomfortable with who they were in general, particularly when they spoke Spanish with other Spanish speakers.   If non-Spanish speakers believed themselves to be the topic of such conversations, a hostile environment could result. As supported by Esquivel's (1993) research, the reality was that the level of acculturation and phenotype affected the success of Mexican American administrators.

Cultural understanding of the importance of family also affected the success of these administrators. Their roles as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, aunts, and Godmothers were crucial components of their identities, and they often more closely identified themselves within the context of one of these life roles, rather than that of administrator. Strong feelings of family obligation and responsibility were common among the participants; particularly those whose family members lived near a participant's institution of employment. As a reflection of their highly valued family structure, participants indicated that they tried to organize their administrative offices around a familial model that

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offered a nurturing, inviting, and professional environment, demonstrating their

feelings of responsibility toward peers and office staff. For these participants, the

family environment founded a culture of success in which learning was

encouraged, cooperation was essential, and a connectedness to a collective body

of individuals created a sense of obligation, respect and responsibility to other

members of the family. This connectedness was easily transferred to the

workplace, wherein a communitarian structure was created, rather than the

individualistic environment so often prominent in American mainstream culture

(Garcia, 2000, p. 242). This familial environment, held in high regard by the

Latino community, provided strength and created an infrastructure that allowed

individuals to achieve personal and communal success.

> A communitarian type of environment also provided individuals
> opportunities for personal growth, professional development, and
> advancement. One administrator developed her own management style
> that included a "no mistakes" office structure, allowing for a low stress
> environment and (cooperative) community responsibility for errors, which
> ultimately resulted in fewer mistakes in the workplace. Familial traits
> such as support, accountability, care, understanding, concern, and
> communal responsibility assisted in making her office successful.
> These familial values were reflected in many of the participants' office
> structures. When asked about one administrator's leadership style, a staff
> member indicated that her administrator's behavior included fairness, care,
> and concern for individuals within and outside the office. She added that
> the administrator presented her expectations to the staff with clarity and
> professionalism, while also encouraging a relaxed environment.
> Administrators expected their office staffs to perform at high levels, while
> showing concern toward the well-being of each employee and promoting a
> philosophy of "family comes first." As an example, staff members were
> often allowed to bring their children to the office if childcare was
> temporarily unavailable, and covered workloads for each other if family
> obligations required absence from the workplace.

The treatment of their employees as family members, offering support and encouragement yet maintaining professionalism, were common among participant experiences. Special attention was paid to a worker's personal family needs. The personal strengths of these administrators made them compassionate and persistent, holding high expectations for themselves and those around them. This behavior earned them respect and their leadership styles allowed for professional growth yet remained structured enough to be efficient.

Working in a campus environment and in the higher education system involved a certain level of political astuteness (Sierra, 1990). Although the participants created nurturing environments within the workplace, outside the office they proceeded with caution, as these same nurturing qualities when exhibited at board or committee meetings (e.g., fighting for student rights) could be perceived as "too aggressive," labeling the administrator as a "troublemaker." For Latinas, maneuvering within the political power structure was complex at best. Challenging the system could earn the administrator a level of respect, yet often at a cost. Administrators who chose not to challenge policy, issues, or the system were not taken seriously and were viewed as having little to contribute. Yet, unwillingness to challenge the power status quo was perceived as weakness, often resulting in lessened value within the system. Effectiveness and respect as Mexican American administrators was heightened when the participants were in positions to contribute to the greater public discourse and were consciously aware

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of what was going on around them. On the other hand, challenging the system

could also be detrimental to Latinas if they were then perceived as troublemakers

or militant. However, maintaining an intellectual curiosity to challenge the

system when things were not working out gave these administrators the upper

hand. If nothing is said about deficiencies in the power structure, silence then

becomes indicative of agreement. Non-spoken thoughts sometimes can do more

harm than spoken words. One participant relayed her experiences with

challenging the system:

> I come from a humble background. With family responsibility, I always
> had to work hard. I had challenges when I was young so for me the
> situation gets more and more exciting because I had to fight all my life. So
> I know how to fight the battles and maybe that's an advantage as a
> minority that you know how to fight the battles because you've been
> fighting all your life. You learn how to fight differently because you know
> how to strive. Striving is different growing up and not being handed
> everything makes you serious but it also makes you enjoy life more. You
> get more out of life because you've had to fight for it so you appreciate it.

Another participant stated,

> Whether it was grapes back then and now it is representation in higher
> education, it is a good fight. It is empowering seeing and knowing our
> history. The history of having to fight, to serve, is just a different
> battlefield but the same war. But it's a whole different set of rules and
> now you need an education to fight it. Before you could get by with your
> sweat, not anymore, now you need your education to fight.

Participants felt that they touched the lives of many students, both Hispanic and

non-Hispanic, making their administrative experiences positive in nature. They

were mission driven and intent on using their administrative positions to

positively impact students and the community. The participants realized that they

functioned as a bridge for students of color as well as those interested in accessing higher education.

Summary for Gaining Respect

For the participants in the study, earning respect and establishing integrity seemed to be a never-ending struggle. Fellow administrators doubted the competency of these participants until they personally interacted with them on a project or committee. Yet, even in these instances of familiarity, discrimination was still a continual problem. The service of participants as administrators was met with challenges centered around ineffective diversity initiatives, limited resources, and the scarcity of Latinas in the system to serve as mentors, role models, and members of a supportive network.

Establishing the concept of familialism within the office structure was an important factor in providing participants with a support system that helped them perform in an often hostile environment. Participants were keenly aware of the politics of higher education and felt they needed to pass on this knowledge to their mentees while providing a cohesive familial environment. As reported, the experience of being a Mexican American administrator was noticeably different compared to that of all white or African American administrators, and was true for both ethnicity and gender. Despite differences in experience, these participants were effective due to pride in their culture and ethnic identification with students. In the process of gaining respect participants established an

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environment of care, concern and protection familiar through their own familial experience.

<center>Making a Difference</center>

The ultimate goal of these administrators was to make a difference. Their reward came in knowing that they made a positive impact on the lives of those who might not otherwise have had an opportunity to pursue higher education. Many times those individuals included siblings, extended family, and other members of the Hispanic community. Making a difference meant giving back to the community in which their people (Hispanics) lived and worked. It also meant maintaining close and strong connections with family and friends, being a role model, and commitment to their communities of origin (Hurtado, 1999). The participants understood the importance of being a role model and mentor, activities that were second only to their life roles as wives, mothers, sisters, aunts, and Godmothers. Fulfillment came in knowing that gaining a higher education degree raised communities and families to a higher status. There also existed a sense of fulfillment in understanding that, despite obstacles, their struggles made someone else's way a little easier, and that those they assisted might in turn reach back and help someone else. In this way, the community as a whole benefited from the accomplishments of a few.

A key element in understanding the identity of these women was the acknowledgement that differences in the power structure rendered them different.

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As one participant stated, "We need to notice that we are different and that we will be treated differently. Once you've acknowledged and understand that, then you can go from there and be effective." Hurtado (1999) supports this difference in power and determined that the amount of power was based on one's proximity to the power base. Power exists in a relational context to the greater social structure (Hurtado, 1999, p. 3). Women of color generally do not maintain an intimate relationship with those in power. With this understanding, women of color can then begin at a realistic starting point and become empowered.

The important message of empowerment then lies in awareness of power dynamics. Knowing the importance of their experience as students and administrators, participants function as role models to help their mentees understand the power differentials that exist. "Once they understand that they are different and will embark on the higher education system differently as students or administrators, then they can concentrate on contributing. Then they will be equipped to survive" (Chahin, 2003, interview). They will need to create their own opportunities in order to succeed. They need to understand that, due to race, others will see them as representing the entire population, and balancing the weight of their people on their shoulders will feel like a tremendous responsibility. The higher education system overwhelms Hispanic students, and teaching them how to be adaptive contributes to their survival. One important component to this adaptation is the help of a mentor.

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Mentoring for and by Latinas proved important for administrators in the educational pipeline. Mentoring appeared to be a desire rather than a necessity, although successful administrators had in some form or fashion someone who provided guidance, support, and advice in both their professional and private lives. These individuals were many times of another ethnicity, race, or gender. Although non-Hispanic mentors were helpful, participants stated that they would have preferred Latinas as mentors.

The participants wanted to be mentored by individuals with whom they could share ideas and concerns and who could specifically relate to their experiences. They all expressed the need for more Latinas in their ranks. Within this context, the most important aspect of mentoring, other than creating a path or building a model to follow, was helping their mentees comprehend the power differentials that exist in a system that has been hostile to Hispanics in general (Valencia, 1997, p. 4). Through their life experience, these administrators knew that children from Hispanic communities are raised to persist and persevere even in a social system in which they are consistently denigrated. Yet, many times they are overwhelmed by a social system that supports their subordination through social norms reflected in various forms (Pena, 1997). Unfortunately, children take these social cues to define their existence. These administrators saw their role as countering the negative messages with the knowledge that true power lies in the strength from their cultural foundation, which was instilled by their families, and that high academic achievement is a result of high expectations.

Maintaining cultural identification proved to be an important component in the maintenance of power, solidarity, and empowerment. Participants who

continued to celebrate family rituals and cultural events, and used the Spanish

language, felt more empowered and better equipped to take a stand. Cultural

identification provided grounding in life philosophies and perspectives.

Remembering where they came from and the struggles endured by their families

and ancestors provided the participants a level of "conscientia" --a consciousness

where one understands his or her negotiated existence in a greater context within

the power structure (McLaren, 2000, p. 143).

Participants reported that physical appearance as well as cultural

identification proved to be important to students in relating to other Hispanic

students or administrators. Their students benefited by seeing these women in the

higher education system who, as role models, resembled themselves and other

family members. This familiarity and placement of themselves in the same

context allowed students to contemplate possibilities for their own future

(Valverde, 1998). Physical appearance was the most immediate indicator of

identification as students tried to make connections and was also utilized by other

Latinas in establishing networks. As Latinas sought connections, appearance was

a primary indicator for identifying with other Hispanics, although, with the

heterogeneity of the Hispanic culture, other indicators were relevant, such as last

name, use of the Spanish language, and identification with the Hispanic

community.

Summary for Making a Difference

       Knowledge of the power structure and sensitivity to differences helped these participants perform effectively, while knowing power dynamics contributed to their survival. Participants felt more effective when they were able to offer the best quality service to students, colleagues, and the institution. As a mission driven group, individuals felt compelled to offer high quality services and opportunities to students, their families, the Hispanic community, as well as to future generations. Strong self-expectation led to going above and beyond the call of duty to accomplish this goal. Service through various avenues, such as matriculation, mentoring, role modeling, and providing one-stop-shopping for students within a cultural context, were just some of the strategies these participants used to make a difference.

Social and Cultural Capital

Social and cultural capital was gained through the early educational and childhood experiences of the participants, allowing them to acquire skills, knowledge, and language, and establish networks which they incorporated into their current administrative positions. A study by Velez Ibanez (1996) supports this notion of gaining cultural and social capital through familial experiences. He concluded that Mexican American women are central figures within Mexican American cultural practices and serve as key informational sources for larger social and cultural exchanges within the family.

Musial (1999) utilizes Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) definition of cultural capital and defines it as the capacity to be culturally literate, knowledgeable, and fluid, both in language and custom. Brown and Davis (2001) add to this definition a related theory of social capital in which social reproduction, like economic capital, can be accumulated and duplicate itself over time. They posit that social capital is a type of resource that is socially reproduced, such as in the possession of knowledge, accomplishments, or formal and informal relations and networks. Through these means, one can gain entry and secure social rewards, such as status and privilege, as well as positions in social circles, professions, and organizations.

The participants in this study maintain resources through the distribution and reproduction of social networks, of which they are products, and continue to reproduce social and cultural capital in their roles as administrators, mentors, colleagues, and members of the Hispanic community, as demonstrated by their role as gateways to higher education for Hispanic students in the educational pipeline.   In this sense, Goddard (2003) proposes that academic success is influenced by personal characteristics and dispositions, and that members of schools, families, and communities have access to various forms of social support that can facilitate their academic success.

The presence of these women in the higher education system as policy makers and "voices" for the Hispanic community is significant particularly in

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light of the need to ensure the education of a growing Hispanic population. Perna

(2000, p. 5) adds that social and cultural capital as resources reflect an

individual's expectations, preferences, tastes, and uncertainty about college as an

investment. Musial (1999) states,

> If educators refocus their energies toward the development of social
> capital networks rather than individual capacities, the ultimate goal of
> developing an educated citizenry may not be so illusive. From the
> beginning of a child's education he or she will view knowledge attainment
> not so much as an individual commodity but as part and parcel of a
> community network of residence, benefits, and responsibility for others (p.
> 114)

Ultimately, institutions of higher education will benefit from the presence

of Mexican American female administrators, not only as gateways into the system

but also through their role as support systems for current students. Institutions

may find that making schools of higher education welcoming places for Hispanic

faculty, staff, and students is fiscally beneficial, logical in an economic sense, and

can provide a support system for the largest growing minority population. For

marginalized communities, education is and will continue to be a springboard to a

higher socioeconomic status.

Immeasurable benefits are seen in the cultural and social capital that these

women bring to higher education and instill in their Hispanic students. The

presence of these women on university campuses can create networks for other

Latinas and Hispanic students in general, and can transfer into the support systems

that institutions have struggled to establish. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992)

propose that institutions have the potential to establish themselves as conduits for the production and transmission of social capital to Hispanic students.

Another component of cultural capital is use of the Spanish language. Musial (1999) states that language is an instrument of communication providing a richer or poorer vocabulary and a more or less complex system of categories. The capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures, whether logical or aesthetic, depends partly on the complexity of the language transmitted by the family and the school. In this context, the linguistic capabilities of these participants and their maintenance of the Spanish language, both within and outside their work environments, provide linguistic capital, thus increasing their value and importance to the Hispanic community.

These women's early childhood experiences established a foundation for their cultural and social capital. Although they encountered systemic obstacles including discrimination and prejudice, they succeeded in establishing networks and relationships that provided opportunities for exchange of information and facilitation of collective goals. Although this study's recommendations target Hispanic women, they are offered from a perspective of empowerment rather than a model of deficit (Valencia, 1997), and continue to hold institutions of higher education responsible for the hiring and retention of Mexican American female administrators. Even faced with obstacles in their administrative and faculty positions, such as the "adobe ceiling" (a term coined by Robles [2000] to reflect

the Hispanic parallel of the "glass ceiling"), the participants in this study survived by means of cultural maintenance.

The leadership model presented in this study clearly demonstrates the cultural and social capital gained through life experiences and professional challenges of the participants. Social capital was gained through parental involvement and support in setting educational goals, networks among families, extended family, church activities, pride in ethnic identity, use of language, and knowledge of cultural norms.

Leadership Profile

The contributions of this study to the established body of research are significant in two distinct ways.   First, the findings of this study can assist in debunking myths and stereotypes about Mexican Americans in correlation with academic achievement, particularly in regard to familial support. This is done through an image reconstruction offered in the form of a profile, reflecting distinct characteristics of the research participants formulated with familial influence. Second, this study provides strategies for academic and professional success through a comprehensive leadership model based on a pedagogically grounded Mexican American female perspective, incorporating cultural relevance, gender, and race.

This leadership profile describes a leader who views her role as one that can impact or influence educational policy that directly or indirectly impacts

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Hispanic students. This leader is interested in serving students of color yet feels

an intrinsic connection to Mexican American or Hispanic students. She views

persons from marginalized communities such as Hispanic students as needing

additional assistance through the matriculation process as a result of their family's

inexperience with the higher education system. She will take it upon herself to

assist students through the matriculation process to the extent that she will feel

obligated to utilize her own resources to do so. She clearly sees her position and

career as mission driven with the ultimate goal of serving and giving back to the

Hispanic community in general and specifically to the community in which she

grew up and her family now lives. Her family is her motivation for living and

working in a Hispanic serving community.   Status is not of utmost importance

yet she feels that she will gain a level of respect as she establishes credibility.

This leader will create her own opportunities to achieve and excel both

academically and professionally. She will not sit and wait for opportunities to

come to her.

She is a visionary and sees her role as instrumental in assisting

Hispanic students in accessing higher education in order to provide them

increased opportunities, greater quality of life, establishing a family's educational

legacy and entrance into the middle class.   She will function in the higher

education system even without institutional support by accessing skills she has

acquired through her experience with adversity as a woman of color in the U.S.

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She is well versed in why Hispanic students should pursue higher education and feels that part of her mission is to ensure an increase in the number of students who will successfully pursue a higher education as a way to produce an educated work force, as well as, increase the education level and power of the Hispanic community.

Her culture is very important to her and she incorporates skills that she has acquired through her culture into her role as an administrator. She will also integrate the best of her culture into her office operations and utilize characteristics promoting respect and care in dealing with her constituents. In this sense she maintains consistency in her leadership role both in her public and private persona. Her role is a holistic one where cultural values and strategies are not separated from her leadership values and strategies, but rather serves as an interchangeable infrastructure. She values the use of the Spanish language particularly when interacting with potential students and their parents. She has developed a level of conscientia, which has allowed her to understand her ethnic culture and gender in relation to her social context and is firmly grounded into the politics of power differentials that exist in the higher education system.

She feels that mentors and role models are crucial to the success of Hispanic students. She will in her career seek her own mentors or role models and gladly function as a mentor for other Latinas. In this role she feels it is her responsibility to relay vital information crucial for survival about the political

landscape and how to best function within an unwelcoming campus environment.

Ultimately she feels it is important to encourage, support and relay survival

strategies to up and coming Latinas.

Leadership model

"Culture strongly influences how we lead and what we expect of our

leaders"(Nahavandi, 2000, p. 1)

As the second major contribution to the existing body of literature, the
researcher proposes a Mexican American female perspective leadership
model presented on p. 164 that can be used to study populations by
integrating an examination of race, gender, and culture.

Nahavandi (2000) proposes that leadership is not a culture-free process but

rather occurs within the context of a culture. Culture gives a group its uniqueness

and differentiates it from other groups. Nahavandi states, " We are strongly

influenced by our culture," (p.51) which determines what we consider right and

wrong and influences what and how we value, what we pay attention to, and how

we behave." Culture affects values and beliefs and influences leadership and

interpersonal styles. Leadership styles and behaviors are considered key to

effectiveness and are relevant from one culture to the next. Within this context,

Nahavandi's (2000) research explores leadership within a cross-cultural racial and

gender-based analysis, which supports a new perspective of leadership and

addresses the need to include a global perspective that incorporates race and

gender. According to Nahavandi, a leader is defined as any person who influences individuals and groups within an organization, helps them in the establishment of goals, and guides them toward achievement of these goals, thereby allowing them to be effective. Nahavandi's definition of leadership, combined with mentoring and role modeling, allows a more applicable examination of this study's participants.

Through interviews (platicas) with individuals from this group of women, and a retrospective look at my own life, it appeared to me that the skills that Mexican American women used in our everyday activities as administrators were skills acquired in early childhoods and homes as part of our culture. As Mexican American female administrators our leadership abilities, in combination with our ethnic cultural identity, provided a powerful combination that made us effective as leaders, student advocates, mentors and role models.

Nahavandi's (2000) research coupled with that of Ladson-Billings (1995) highlighting cultural relevance provides a strong foundation for this leadership model (p. 164). Ladson-Billings utilizes an "Afrocentric feminist epistemology" which is characterized by 1) a basis of concrete experience as a criterion of meaning, 2) the use of dialogue, 3) an emphasis on caring, and 4) and emphasis on personal accountability (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 154-155).

This notion of culturally relevant leadership involves the inclusion of cultural relevancy as spoken of by Ladson-Billings (1995) and cultural leadership

discussed by Nahavandi (2000), resulting in the concept of culturally relevant leadership from a Mexican American female (or Latina) perspective. This hybrid concept was used as a vehicle for these administrators to translate their culture, life experiences and personal challenges into skills and success strategies of competent and effective leadership.

Effectiveness in a traditional sense is measured in terms of outcomes, such as an increase in revenues or stock prices (numerical outcomes), whereas the effectiveness of these leaders as Mexican American females was defined by their self-assessment of how they helped their community and its children reach unprecedented levels of education.

For example, Nahavandi describes Fielder's Contingency Model as one where effectiveness is demonstrated through task-motivated leaders while Hersey-Blanchard's Situational Theory concerning leadership states that one's leadership style should be based on maturity level of subordinates. However, unlike these models the culturally relevant leadership model proposed through this study is mission driven and is grounded in the utilization of skills from ethnic culture as a way to lead. Ethnic culture is incorporated into every aspect of the model. Gillet-Karam's (Nahavandi, 2000, p.) model perhaps reflects the leadership components that mirror this culturally relevant leadership model from a Mexican American female perspective in that it frames leadership in four ways 1) It encourages taking appropriate risks to bring about change, a "vision" behavior. 2) It provides

caring and respect for individuals' differences, a "people" behavior. 3) It acts

collaboratively, an "influence" behavior. 4) Finally, it builds trust and openness,

a "values" behavior. Although Gillet-Karam's model incorporates vision, respect,

and influence and introduces values into the model it embraces the concept that

leadership is subject to the dynamics and interactions of people and institutions.

Although this may be accurate in a theoretical sense the leadership model most

appropriate for these women utilizes an institution as a vehicle in which to

function and perform their task not as an infrastructure for their goals or mission.

The leadership model now proposed by the researcher combines

Nahavandi's research incorporating gender, race, and culture, and research by

Ladson-Billings (1995) on cultural relevancy to reflect culturally relevant

leadership from the perspective of a Mexican American female. This model is

unlike other existing models that reflect a Eurocentric, male, linear perspective

(Garcia, 2003, interview). Rather, it provides a cyclical and dynamic model that

is fluid and situational, and considers race, gender, and ethnic culture. These

women established a familial culture within the present culture of higher

education and the institutional culture embedded in their work place. The added

familial culture within their office structure was made possible through the use of

relationships, which provided an infrastructure for functioning. These women

established a culture within a culture. They utilized the outcomes embraced by

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the institutional environment and produced their own outcomes, which included a mission to make a difference in the lives of others.

The core component of this model is the Mexican American culture, which is infused into each of its other components. Culture is represented by cultural practices, such as use of the Spanish language and celebration and recognition of Hispanic events. This particular model is driven by a strong familial foundation that, to an extent, can be simulated with a support system that nurtures academic excellence and encourages identification with a specific ethnic culture.

The model's three components are constructed within a building blocks structure building upon each other starting with family as the foundation, gaining respect as the approach and an ultimate goal of making a difference as the highest component in the structure. All factors related to gaining respect and making a difference continuously incorporate the core of culture within each component, which is demonstrated through family. This model is directly related to self-empowerment, creation of academic and professional opportunities, a network of family and peers for support and guidance, and mentors. The ultimate goal of this model is to make a difference in the lives of community, family, friends, and constituents through culturally relevant leadership from a Mexican American perspective.

This profile and leadership model are both offered as models of understanding in recruitment and retention of Mexican American female administrators. The researcher's intent is not to identify an absolute but rather an indication of who these women are and how their culturally relevant leadership makes them successful and effective as leaders. This model functions using the three themes of Family as a foundation, Gaining Respect as the approach, and the Goal of Making a Difference, as interrelated and inextricable components.

Theme One-Foundation

Family

Family is the core of the infrastructure and is relational in nature. The demographic data represent familial structure and early childhood environments, which were instrumental in identifying early educational influences. Religious affiliations and community ties were also influential in shaping character. Central to familial strength were two-parent homes with the mother as the parent who had the greatest impact on the participants' educational goals. Although in this particular study two-parent homes were foundational, the presence of a Catholic culture that frowned on divorce was largely influential. In this sense two-parent homes were not required to rear successful Mexican American administrators, and encouragement from mothers outweighed all other factors.

Mothers', encouragement as well as participants' social awareness, influenced educational goals in a way that enhanced the need to overcome social

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injustices committed against the participants' families. Living in low-income, marginalized communities and equipped with the knowledge that parents and grandparents were denied opportunities to advance economically due to race, or economic status presented a dichotomy for these participants. This feeling of lost opportunities presented itself as a "memory of resistance" in which academic achievement for these women was not defined as achievement itself but as regaining respect and dignity, while at the same time reclaiming a sense of accomplishment for their families and community. Within this resistance and adaptation grew a stronger sense of overcoming a system of obstacles. A familial foundation, which offered informal networks, as well as emotional, financial, and spiritual support, allowed the participants to be strong and achieve.

Theme Two-Approach

<u>Gaining Respect</u>

Respect was gained by the establishment of integrity through academic achievement, hard work, working long hours, being better, and maintaining integrity. Maintaining a seat at the table and consistently monitoring the interests of students of color, specifically Hispanic students, built respect for students and colleagues. This respect initiated a "voice" previously not often heard in discussions concerning policy. Cultural identification and maintenance of culture were crucial to effectiveness as an administrator. Becoming activists and advocates for Hispanic students set a precedent for future policy making.

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Theme Three-Goal

<u>Making a Difference</u>

The ultimate goal of the participants was to make a difference. Relaying knowledge of trials, tribulations, and overcoming struggles proved beneficial in serving marginalized populations such as Hispanic students. The lived experiences and knowledge of these administrators were shared with current and potential students to relay the means to overcome barriers. Participants need to make a difference was a direct result of feeling a responsibility to the greater community.

Providing the highest quality service to students reinforced the value of academic achievement. This was demonstrated through assistance in the matriculation process, which for Hispanic first generation college students proved crucial in gaining entrance into the higher education system. Participants gained strength through their identification with the Mexican American culture. For example, use of the Spanish language at work and home played a large part in this identification in terms of connecting with students and their families. Mentoring students and other Hispanic women proved crucial in relaying ways to survive and persist. Additionally, the need for Hispanic female administrators was seen as pertinent to the provision of a support and mentoring system for other Hispanic administrators and students. In addition to mentoring, student advocacy played an important part in making a difference. It also ensured a supportive campus environment, assisted

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in deconstructing myths and stereotypes about academic achievement and provided family support among Hispanic youth. The ultimate goal of the participants was to make a difference in the Hispanic community by ensuring a legacy of academic achievement in higher education.

 These participants possessed a commitment to service as a form of resistance. They were young enough to have experienced or heard of the subordination, oppression, and racism suffered by their people, and shared a "memory of resistance" through their family's plight, yet were old enough to remember stories of resistance through events such as the Chicano movement (Meier & Ribera, 1993, p. 219), Crystal City (Rendon, 1971, p. 109) and desegregation (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998, p. 388). Despite age, all participants were keenly aware that their current avenue to economic prosperity as well as making a difference for others was through education. The culturally relevant leadership model from a Mexican American female perspective discussed in this chapter is not presented. As mentioned this model maintains a building block structure that is constructed using the data that was used to categorize three themes. Family is the foundational building block with the second building block used as the approach, which is gaining respect, and the third building block is the goal, which is making a difference. Ethnic culture is used in this model as the one component that is integrated into all three blocks as the overriding factor and primary component within the structure.

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Culturally Relevant Leadership Model from a Mexican American Female Perspective

Theme Three
Goal-Making a Difference
- Committed to serving Hispanic communities as a mission
- Assists in matriculation process
- Stresses importance of cultural identification,
- Values cultural identification as vehicle to reach and serve students
- Values use of Spanish language and physical ethnic identification to serve students more effectively
- Views mentoring as crucial
- Provides quality service to students
- Maintains value and increase of Hispanic female administrators as a vision
- Works to debunk myths and stereotypes about Hispanic
- Values high academic achievement
- Works as a student advocate

Ethnic Culture

Theme Two
Approach-Gaining Respect
- Demonstrates competence as a way to gain respect
- Works long hours to accomplish goal and be effective
- Seeks to secure positions of influence
- Values mentoring as a way to relay information about political landscape and power differentials
- Continuously striving to reach unprecedented educational levels,
- Values institutional support,
- Contends with racism and discrimination,
- Deliberately maintains ethnic cultural values

Ethnic Culture

Theme One
Foundation-Family
- Mother as primary educational influence
- Supportive, nurturing, intellectual, family-home environment
- Established networks and communitarian ties in early childhood neighborhoods
- Viewed SES as a status not as reality
- Identified religious affiliation with family rules of conduct
- Valued use of Spanish in work and home
- Perceived discrimination as persistent yet not an obstacle
- Parents values supported high academic achievement and higher education
- Identified other influences of educational goals i.e. teachers, siblings,
- Provided with consistent family support monetary or otherwise

The intent of this leadership model was to develop a structure that could be used by institutions in recruitment and retention of Mexican American female administrators, by Mexican American female administrators themselves as a reflection of their experiences and Hispanic students as a guide in maintaining culture throughout their academic career. It also provides a snapshot of how they function through strong family ties, networks, and connections, both formal and informal, to other Latinas, as well as leadership enhanced by cultural identification. Participant leadership approaches were generated from a strong cultural base, which included ties to rituals and traditions, a strong work ethic, and an intrinsic mission to further a new generation of educated Hispanics. Their persistence and perseverance appeared to culminate from a "memory of resistance" that spurred the need to succeed for their families, their "people," and for themselves as members of a collective body. Working above and beyond the call of duty was not based on career objectives, but on a perspective of mission.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Based on knowledge gathered from this study and taking into account current strategies proposed as a result of various studies concerning factors that impact Hispanic students such as early intervention programs (Gandara, 1994), financial assistance (Chahin, 1993), welcoming environments (Alva, 1991), and relevant support services (Gloria, 1997; Robles, 2000) the following recommendations were proposed.   These were offered despite the current status

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of the education pipeline, looming perceptions of Latinas, and Hispanic underachievement. Additionally, these recommendations were proposed as strategies for Mexican American females to consider as ways to empower themselves and effectively impact the Hispanic community through the institutions in which they serve. These recommendations address the needs of Mexican Americans as self-empowering individuals, administrators, and students. Therefore, the following recommendations are in effect proposed for Mexican American females but may be beneficial to the State of Texas and applicable for implementation throughout the nation. These recommendations are presented by premising the data used to draw conclusions. The following recommendations target three primary audiences, 1) Mexican American female administrators, their colleagues and mentees, 2) Upper level Administration in institutions of higher education and 3) Hispanic students in the educational pipeline.

<div align="center">Mexican American female administrators</div>

<div align="center">Recommendations:</div>

Mexican American female administrators and other Latinas need to:

a) Continue to empower themselves by seeking their own educational and professional opportunities within the higher education system

b) Utilize their ethnic culture as a source of strength both professionally and personally

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c) Incorporate familial traits and ethnic culture acquired in childhood to produce an effective and efficient office structure

d) Create mentoring opportunities by identifying and self-selecting potential mentors

e) Mentor other Latinas and relay pertinent information concerning the political landscape and power differentials that currently exist in the higher education system

f) Establish networks for themselves and other Latinas that will serve as support systems

g) Seek, acquire and maintain administrative positions of influence where they can directly impact educational policy

h) Continue to utilize non-traditional methodologies in serving and studying Hispanic communities

i) Seek opportunities to become fluent in the use of the Spanish language

j) Continue to serve the Hispanic community as a mission

Upper level administration and institutions of higher education

Recommendations:

a) Seek and locate potential Latina candidates through existing networks such as Latina organizations and colleague referrals

b) Support institutionalized formal and informal Latina networks on campus by hosting Latina centered conferences, seminars and workshops

c) Provide travel dollars to Hispanic females to support conference attendance and professional development

d) Acknowledge and support celebration of cultural events

e) Provide flexible work hours for Hispanic female administrators to address family responsibilities

f) Allow and support alternative forms of outreach to potential students such as home visits to the student's family

g) Support and incorporate Mother Daughter Programs into the University setting as a way to emphasize the crucial role of mothers as primary influence in the formation of educational goals

h) Provide a inviting campus environment where Latinas and other persons of color will feel welcomed

i) Encourage the use of Spanish in the work place and provide emersion programs as a form of professional development

Hispanic students in the educational pipeline

Recommendations:

a) Utilize the higher education experience as a vehicle to enhance cultural awareness

b) Peer mentor other Hispanic students

c) Participate in mentoring programs that support the needs of Hispanic students

d) Seek out mentors who will encourage and support educational goals

e) Maintain and incorporate the use of Spanish language in the higher education experience

f) Impact the educational pipeline by achieving unprecedented levels of educational achievement and success

g) Participate in standardized test preparation programs in order to effectively access higher education and graduate programs

<u>Researcher's Experiential Perspective</u>

As the researcher, I conducted this study as a way to explore my identity as a Mexican American female administrator in relation to other women with similar ethnic identities and to examine the life experiences and professional challenges of these participants as they reflected my own life. I was also interested in uncovering similarities among participants' overall experiences in the higher education system. My own experience mirrored a strong cultural identification and pride associated with being Mexican American. Early childhood experiences were centered around academic achievement. In my home environment, my father encouraged pursuit of higher education even if it meant moving away from home. Self-education was promoted and learning environments were established in the home through family spelling bees, and recitation of poems and documents such as the Preamble to the Constitution. My father would give my siblings and me assignments, typically one-page papers that were to be completed and placed on the dining table for him to read upon his arrival at midnight from his second job. These assignments were in addition to our school homework. The topics for each of these papers were chosen from a range of many that could be found in the family's red Britannica Encyclopedias that were purchased from a door-to-door salesman. Reading was highly encouraged, and academic excellence was

not an option. My father would state that it was his job to support us, and it was our job to go to school and bring home good grades. He would also state, "All my children will get a college education. I don't care what you want to be, it doesn't matter if you want to be a bum, but you will be a bum with a college degree." Using sarcasm, he emphasized the fact that obtaining a higher education degree was very important to him.

My mother also supported this goal and did her part in encouraging all her children to pursue knowledge. Her nightly activity included getting all six children into the queen size beds available for all the children and reading aloud various types of literature. Little did I know at the time that she was not only trying to catch up with her own reading, but also wanted to instill in us the value of reading. I remember her silhouette in the light of the hallway just outside our room where she sat to read to us bedtime stories that ranged from Bible scripture to novels such as *Little Women*, the local San Antonio newspaper, *Woman's Day* magazines, and sections of the beloved encyclopedia.

This study not only provided extensive knowledge concerning Mexican American female administrators to the limited existing body of literature but it also assisted me as the researcher to identify with participants' experiences and provided a sense of validation for myself as an administrator and a Mexican American woman who survived the higher education system.

<u>Advice for future administrators</u>

As the researcher I felt it crucial to collect and relay advice to up and coming Mexican American female administrators. Therefore, the following advice was offered by participants as an avenue to specifically relay knowledge of self-empowerment, political awareness, survival, and success. These topics were presented as "platicas" in the same sense that Latinas pass on knowledge. Participants were invited to share at least one piece of advice with Latinas, specifically Mexican American females who occupied entry-level administrative positions and who were also contemplating careers as administrators. The following quotes were offered in the hope that they would provide valuable insights. Participants were interested in relaying this knowledge as an opportunity to share their collective wisdom. Advice was given concerning professional conduct,

the value of self-awareness, mentoring, academic excellence, making a difference, and leadership style.

Dr. Apollonia stressed striving for excellence in all one does, which included hard work and perseverance: "Be sincere, trustworthy, self-confident and hard working." Ms. Refugia felt that personal conduct and awareness of one's professional surroundings were important:

I would actually say this to any woman, don't get involved romantically with any colleagues, work hard, don't gossip, try to stay away from that, it is okay to be informed, keep your ears open but do not participate in the gossip. Realize that you are going to have to work really hard and put in extra time and be extra successful to just be considered successful.

Dr. Zapata advised maintaining a degree of gender and cultural introspection, continuously examining oneself as a person, a professional, and a Latina. She recommended maintaining strength as a Latina and learning from others:

I would say build the core, the core of who you are, know yourself, know. Even when you build the strength of who you are, as a Latina or Mexicana, a woman, be open to the generosity of spirit of people who are not of your gender or ethnicity. There are extraordinary people all around you, you can learn from all of them, they have something to give you and you have something to give them. I think that you have to surprise people; very often people will assume that you do not operate out of a strong ethnic based core. They will very often try to cubby-

hole, pigeon-hole you and they expect one thing to come out and you have to surprise them and take them to a place they didn't know that you would be and I will give you my final advice, never be a hat-in-hand Mexican. You do not ask for permission.

Dr. Morales emphasized the importance of being self-motivated. She advised seeking out mentors with whom to share experiences, even non-Latina mentors. She also believed that one should never accept "no" as an answer, but seek the solution:

Don't take "no" for an answer. I think one of the skills that I have is that in the absence of mentors I have been able to motivate myself and that is part of the ambition that I talk about. But I just melt when I have a mentor that I can go to for advice. I would tell a young Mexican American woman, don't give up, and just keep doing it. When you need a kick in the butt, call me I will always make sure you get that, you have to be driven to get things done, because there are so many people who want to keep you back. How do they do that, they marginalize your abilities or just drag you down so you don't have the confidence to go on.

Dr. Campos recommended participating with the larger group of administrators yet maintaining one's integrity by doing a good job. She felt that the way a person best served the greater community was to determine how to make a

difference. She believed that thriving oneself encouraged others to provide

opportunities for students to thrive.

I would say several things. First of all you have to be very well prepared, you

have to stay focused on doing an excellent job in whatever you do. You have to

make sure that you are not going to be aloof, that you are going to integrate

yourself within the larger community of administrators, and I would say that you

do not have to go around proving yourself, you just have to do a good job at

whatever you are doing and your actions will speak for themselves. I don't go

around trying to prove to anybody that I can do things, I just do it and I do the

very best job that I can. I think I would say to female administrators, stay focused

at doing an excellent job, come through with your promises and see it as an

opportunity to make a difference. You need to consider, "What is that

administrative position going to do for you and for other people? What

opportunities are you going to provide for them?" I think that if you stay focused

on how you make a difference, how can I change the quality of life in my own

environment, in my own community? I think those are the bottom lines you have

to be looking at more than how do I stay on top as an administrator. Unless you

are making a difference, unless you are bringing others to be better persons and

individuals, why would you want to be an administrator? In this case it has to be

making a difference for students in particular, it's making a difference for other

faculty members that are going to have an opportunity to thrive in the job that

they are doing, thrive as professionals and as individuals. You shouldn't stay

focused on "What is this position going to do for me?"

Dr. Martinez felt it was important to create and embrace one's own leadership

style, conduct oneself appropriately, and be the very best in all actions:

My advice would be, be the best you can be like the army. Study others,

everything has been invented, so it is your role to take all these inventions,

reconfigure them and make them your own. And by that I mean, study best

practices that have worked well for other people elsewhere and pick from all of

that and create your own leadership style.

Dr. Camacho believed that a support system was key to learning survival

techniques and maintaining support:

You need to be ethical and you need to be consistent. Look for support; find

those who will be supportive of you, because not everyone will be. Find people in

upper administration that are going to be supportive of your work. You need to

find support systems regardless of what level you are at.

Dr. Massiate felt that young administrators should create their own opportunities

and, when possible, promote the hiring of Latinas:

We're not cheap and if we're pursuing the Latina it is because she is

capable and finally we're convincing people to take a look and saying the Latina

is very capable and they are smart. The fact is if they were able to make so many

gains being uneducated, being underpaid, being stuck in factories with no

benefits, we know what it takes. The time is right, the numbers will tell you that

and the population will tell you that. It has to happen and if it doesn't then those

of us in the system have failed miserably in provoking administration to do more

Latino hiring. There are simply not enough of us.

Summary

Findings revealed that successful Mexican American female
administrators were well adjusted in cultural identity and grounded in
family, a strong work ethic, and the passion to make a difference. They
surrounded themselves with support systems that included family
members and friends who responded positively to their pursuit of
advanced degrees.   Professionally, they embraced institutions that
supported the needs of Latino students, and, for this reason, chose to serve
in communities where large Hispanic populations resided. Their cultural
identification with the Mexican American culture was considered a source
of pride. Use of the Spanish language by the participants proved to be one
form of resistance and relayed to students and parents an interest in
identifying with the culture.

The categories of Family, Gaining Respect, and Making a Difference were used to

draw some conclusions. For participants their families served as the strength and

support. Religion and religious practices guided the rules of conduct for the

family and language provided a sense of solidarity, community, and identity.

Gaining Respect was used as a category to explain participants' interaction with

institutional support, campus climate, and the sense of being welcomed. The third category, Making a Difference, included the existence of a power structure that rendered these participants different in terms of culture and existence. Relaying these same power differentials to mentees proved to be crucial for survival. Mentoring proved to be a desire rather than a need, although mentoring was viewed by participants as crucial.

Establishing the concept of familialism within the office structure was an important factor in providing participants with a support system that helped them perform in an often-hostile environment. Participants were keenly aware of the politics of higher education and felt they needed to pass this knowledge on to their mentees. The experience of being a Mexican American administrator was reported to be noticeably different compared to that of all white or African American administrators, and for both ethnicity and gender. Despite differences in experience, the Mexican American administrator participants were effective due to pride in their culture and ethnic identification with students. In essence, participants believed that obtaining a higher education degree was an opportunity for the entire family to rise to a new level of academic achievement. Although academic achievement was highly valued by all the participants' parents, being first generation college students posed some logistical problems in terms of processes and procedures necessary for matriculation. Overall, participants felt the need to create their own opportunities both as students and professionals. The

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women's accomplishments were seen as beneficial to their families, as well as to their communities of origin and present communities of residence. In a cultural context, these same families and communities were instrumental in infusing characteristics that assisted in the success of these women. The findings of this study assisted in debunking myths and stereotypes about Mexican Americans in terms of academic achievement and levels of familial support. This reconstruction is offered in two ways, as a profile, reflecting distinct characteristics of the research participants and a strong sense of family and second through a culturally relevant leadership model. The comprehensive leadership model provides strategies for academic and professional success through a comprehensive leadership model based on a pedagogically grounded Mexican American female perspective, incorporating culture relevance, gender, and race. This leadership model was developed through the scholarship of Afsaneh Nahavandi (2000) and Gloria Ladson Billings (1995). Nahavandi's research highlights a cross-cultural racial and gender-based analysis of leadership and supports a global perspective that incorporates race and gender while Ladson-Billings researches the value of cultural relevancy. These two concepts extrapolated from this current research are combined to produce culturally relevant leadership from the perspective of a Mexican American female. A culturally relevant leadership model assists in understanding the style of

leadership used by these women as an effective means to serve the community in which they live and students they serve.

Recommendations were produced using data from the three categories used to organize this study 1) Family, 2) Gaining Respect and 3) Making a Difference. Using these categories, three audiences were targeted, 1) Mexican American and Latina administrators, 2) Institutions of higher education and 3) Hispanic students in the educational pipeline. These recommendations focused on self-empowerment, ethnic culture as a source of strength, seeking out potential mentors, mentoring other Latinas, establishing networks of Latinas to use as support systems, developing fluency in the Spanish language, obtaining unprecedented levels of educational attainment, utilizing outreach practices that are familial in nature and acquiring of influential positions that directly impact education policy.

This study was conducted as a way for the researcher to explore identity as a Mexican American female administrator in relation to other women with similar ethnic identities and to examine the life experiences and professional challenges of these participants.

Advice was offered by participants as an avenue to specifically relay knowledge of self-empowerment, political awareness, strategizing, surviving, and succeeding.

Finally, this study proved to be useful for supporting quantitative studies and providing a profile of the women who are the support in a system that thrives on creating obstacles to access institutions of higher education.

<u>Recommendations for Future Study</u>

Recommendations for future study include an extensive study using an increased number of Mexican American female administrators and a more in depth examination of their success. Another recommendation is to conduct a parallel study in other university systems in the state of Texas including the Texas State University System and the Texas A&M System. Research with African American and white female counterparts would provide comparison data that could be used to gather commonalities of administrative experiences and provide an opportunity to institutionalize support services and mentoring programs for women of color and women in general.

<u>Limitations of the Study</u>

The limitations of this study included the small number of Mexican American female administrators currently holding administrative positions in the University of Texas System schools (Apodaca, 2001) and the even smaller number of Mexican American female administrators available for this study. As full-time students, mothers, and administrators, participants and the researcher were constrained by limited availability due to demanding personal and

professional schedules and by their mission driven approaches to their administrative positions.

<p style="text-align:center;"><u>Significance of the Findings of the Study</u></p>

This study was significant because it produced qualitative evidence supporting previously conducted quantitative studies (Esquivel, 1993;Gandara,1995). Although these former studies were important in establishing the foundation for this research, they were quantitative in nature. While both quantitative and qualitative studies produce valuable data, in this study a qualitative methodology was used to capture the "voices" of its participants through maintenance of the power of the word that is subsequently relayed to the reader (Quintana, 1990). This study presented concrete evidence produced through lengthy interviews that reiterated the findings of Gandara's (1995) and Esquivel's (1993) studies and also offered the "voices" of participants, superseding the general category of Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano. These "voices" add to the current knowledge base related to gender issues and perceptions of participant roles in the higher education system. This study takes into consideration that gender and racial issues are determining factors in the lives of Mexican American female administrators in the University of Texas System.

This study proved useful because it provided a profile of Mexican American female administrators in the University of Texas System institutions

and a culturally relevant leadership model from a Mexican American female perspective. This profile and leadership model can now be used by institutions to better understand the needs of Mexican American females in recruitment and retention as students, faculty, and staff, and can also provide Mexican American females reference for documented accounts of their experiences.   In addition this study presents cutting edge information concerning the integration of culture, cultural relevance and leadership.

Request for Permission to use Interview Guide

Dr. Patricia Gandara,

I met you at a conference this past spring semester at the University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Government. The conference featured discussions on equity and testing and was sponsored by the Center for Mexican American Studies. We spoke briefly about my dissertation topic, which is a study on the life challenges and experiences of Mexican American female administrators in Texas higher education institutions. I found your interview guide from *Over the Ivy Walls* to be appropriate for my study. I would like to ask your permission to utilize this interview guide as the foundation for the questions that I pose to my participants. If granted permission please be assured that I will cite your work on any and all references to your guide.

My dissertation committee is aware that I would like to use your guide, they are Dr. Angela Valenzuela, Dr. Jim Scheurich, Dr. Jay Scribner, Dr. Jaime Chahin and Dr. Marilyn Kameen.

Thank you for your time,

Stella Silva
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Administration
UT Austin

Note: this request was sent via e-mail on May 30, 2001

APPENDIX B

Dr. Patricia Gandara's Response

May 30, 2001

I am pleased that it is useful to you. Certainly you have my permission to use it.

Note: this is a documented response on e-mail date May 30, 2001

Stella wrote:

Dr. Gandara,

I met you at a conference this past spring semester at the University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Government. The conference featured discussions on equity and testing and was sponsored by the Center for Mexican American Studies. We spoke briefly about my dissertation topic which is a study on the life challenges and experiences of Mexican American female administrators in Texas higher education institutions. I found your interview guide from Over the Ivy Walls to be appropriate for my study. I would like to ask your permission to utilize this interview guide as the foundation for the questions that I pose to my participants. If granted permission please be assured that I will cite your work on any and all references to you guide.

My dissertation committee is aware that I would like to use your guide, they are Dr. Angela Valenzuela, Dr. Jim Scheurich, Dr. Jay Scribner, Dr. Jaime Chahin and Dr. Marilyn Kameen.

Thank you for your time,

Stella Silva
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Administration
UT Austin

APPENDIX C

Invitation to Participate in Study

Dr. _____,

My name is Stella Silva and I am a doctoral student at The University of
Texas at Austin studying educational administration with a concentration in
higher education. My dissertation topic involves exploring the educational
challenges, successes and life experiences of Mexican American female
administrators. I will be conducting focus groups and or interviews at the
University of
Texas at El Paso, the University of Texas at San Antonio, UT Pan American and
UT
Brownsville. The actual interview consists of a set of questions collecting
biographical information, some questions concerning your role as an
administrator and a short summary chart. The entire interview for some
participants depending on how in-depth they have chosen to answer lasts
anywhere from 50 minutes to 1 hour and a half. I know that as an administrator
your time is valuable and limited, however I would like to invite you to participate
in a focus group and interview. If you are willing to participate, please contact me
with your availability at ss23@swt.edu or (W)512-245-2278 or (H) 210-710-
1049.

Note: You have been recommended by either a dissertation committee member or
by one of your colleagues as someone who would provide valuable insight into
this topic.

FYI
My dissertation committee members are as follows: Dr. Angela Valenzuela, Dr.
Jaime Chahin, Dr. Jay Scribner, Dr. Jim Scheurich and Dr. Marilyn Kameen

Thank you again for your time,

Stella Silva
Assistant Director
Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
Southwest Texas State University
San Marcos, TX

Note: Initially the University of Houston was a consideration and was later changed to the University of Texas at El Paso.

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Part I

1. Full Name_____

2. Age_____

3. Marital Status: Married_____
   Divorced_____Single_____Other_____

4. Any Children?_____if yes, number and
   ages_____

5. Did you have your children while attending college?if yes please describe
   _____
   __
   _____
   __

6. How do you self identify?
   Hispanic_____
   Chicana_____
   Mexican American_____
   Latino/a_____
   Indigenous_____
   Other_____

7. First Language spoken from childhood_____
   Second?_____

8. Religious Affiliation_____

9. Were you born in the U.S.?_____ if not
   where_____

10. Were your parents born in the U.S.___if not
    where?_____

11. Where were your maternal and paternal grandparents born?
    Maternal _____
    Paternal_____

12. Describe the primary environment in which you grew up
    Rural_____
    Suburban_____
    Urban_____
    Other_____

13. What do you consider your hometown?_____

14. Did you grow up in Texas?____If yes, what was the ethnic or racial
    makeup of your hometown?_____

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Part II

15.   What was your socioeconomic status while you were growing up?_____

16.   Educational background: name degrees obtained and from where
Associate_____
Bachelors_____
Masters_____
Doctoral_____
Other_____

17.   Do you consider yourself a first generation college student?(neither one of your parents obtained a college
degree_____

18.   Name the title of the administrative position you currently hold?_____

19.   Place of Birth?

20.   Did you attend pre-school or kindergarten?

21.   What was your first recollection of hearing about college or that college was an opportunity for you?

22.   What was the highest grade in school that your father completed?

23.   What was your father's occupation while you were growing up?

24.   What was the highest grade in school that your mother completed?

25.   What was your mother's occupation growing up?

26.   Where do you fall in the birth order of your family?

27.   What language was your primary language?

28.   How has use of that language changed over time?

29.   Do you use that language in your current occupation?

30.   What religion, if any did your family practice growing up?

31.   What was the role that religion played in your family?

32.   Who was the person or persons who most influenced you in setting your educational goals?

33.   Which parent had the greatest influence in the development of your educational goals?

34.   What was your mother's attitude towards the value of education?

35.   What was your father's attitude towards the value of education?

36.   Was there another influential person whose attitude towards education impacted you?
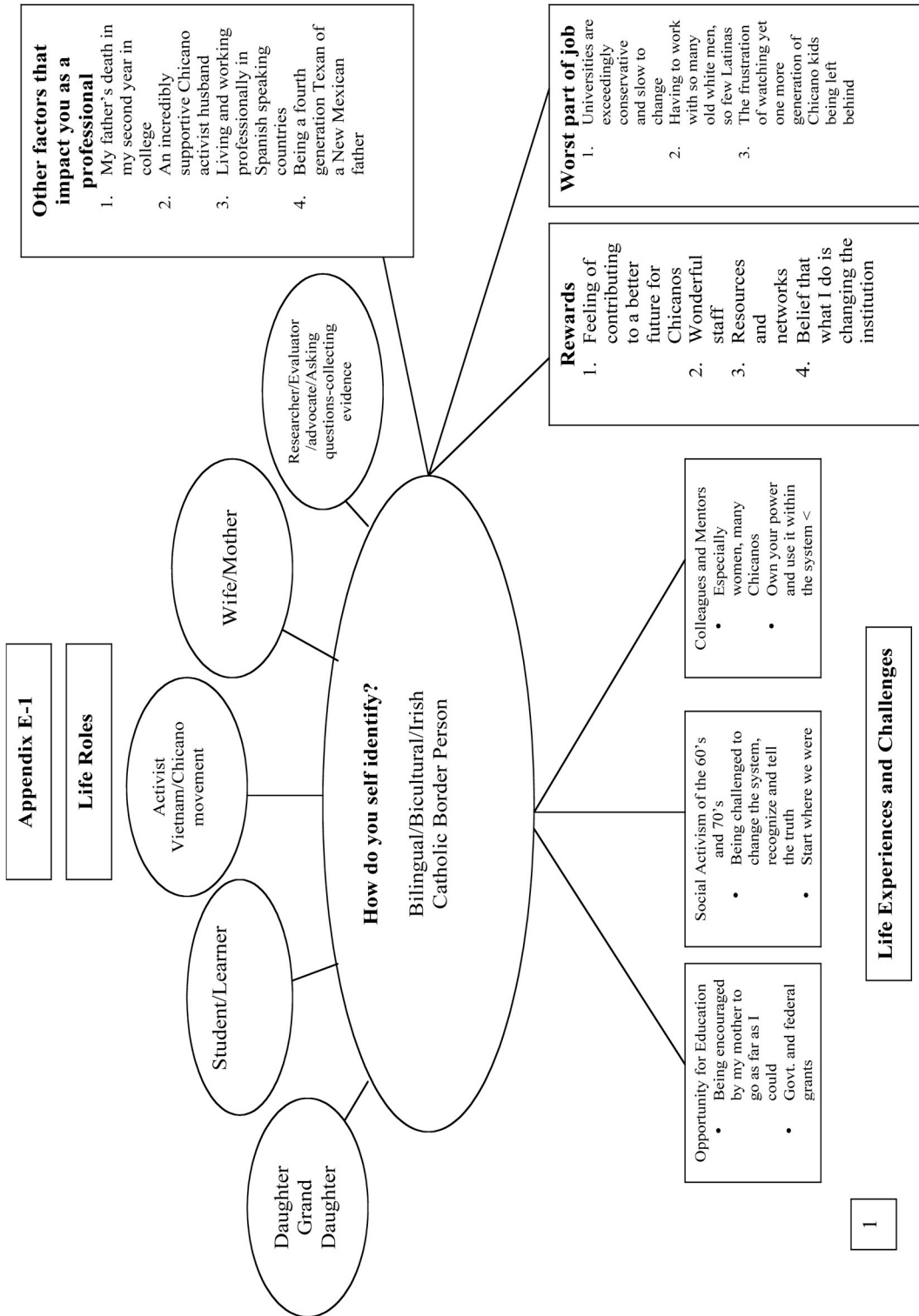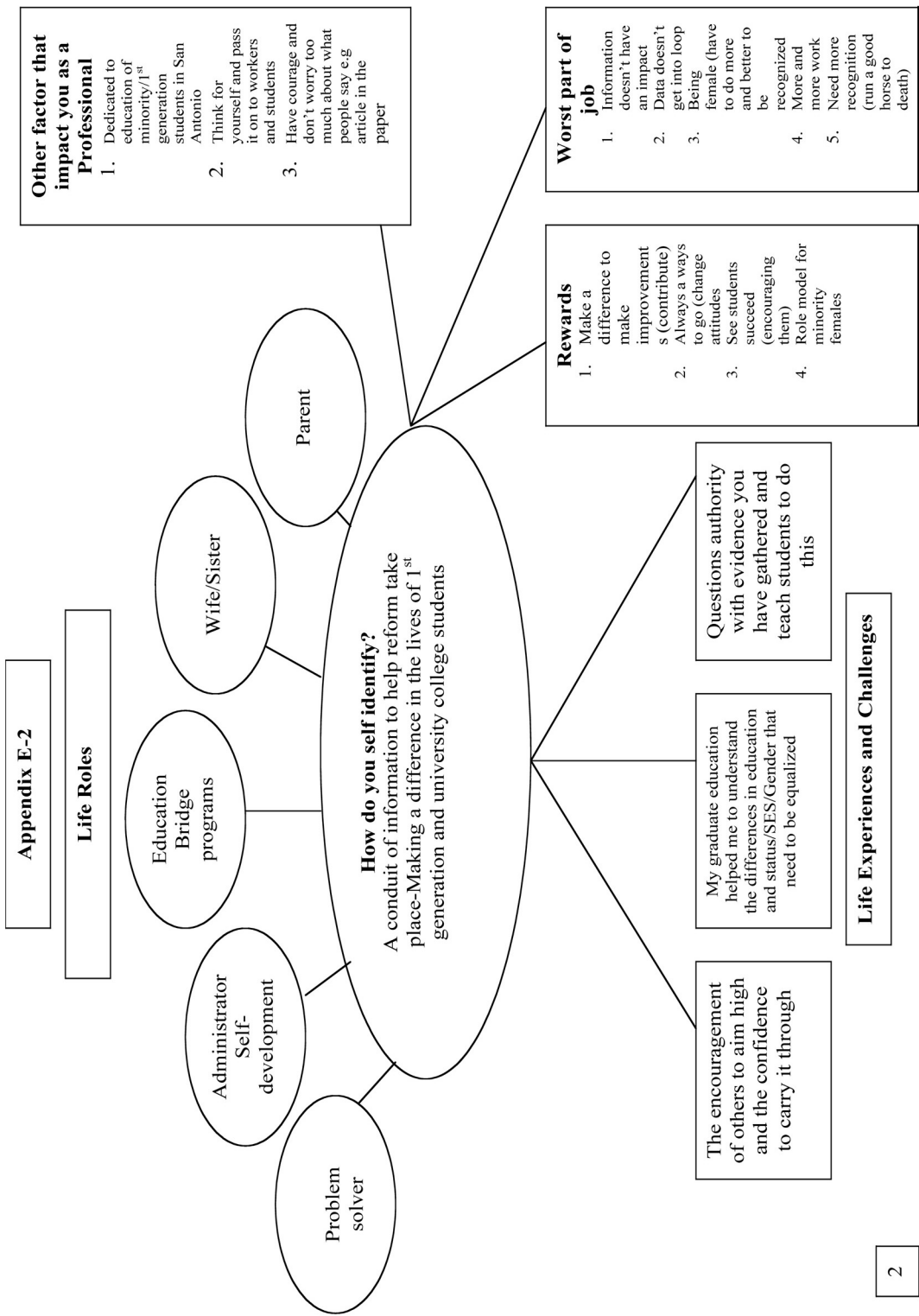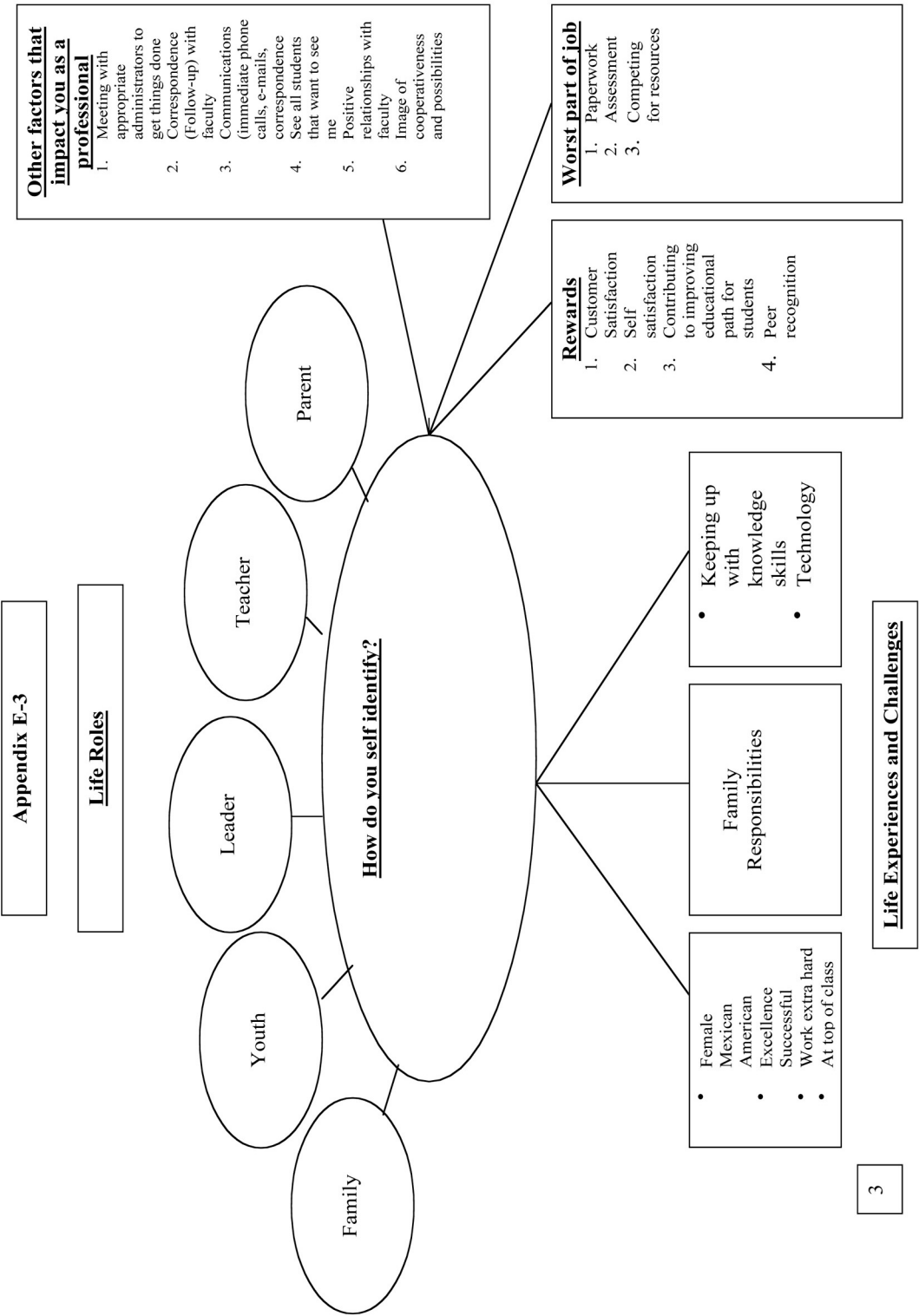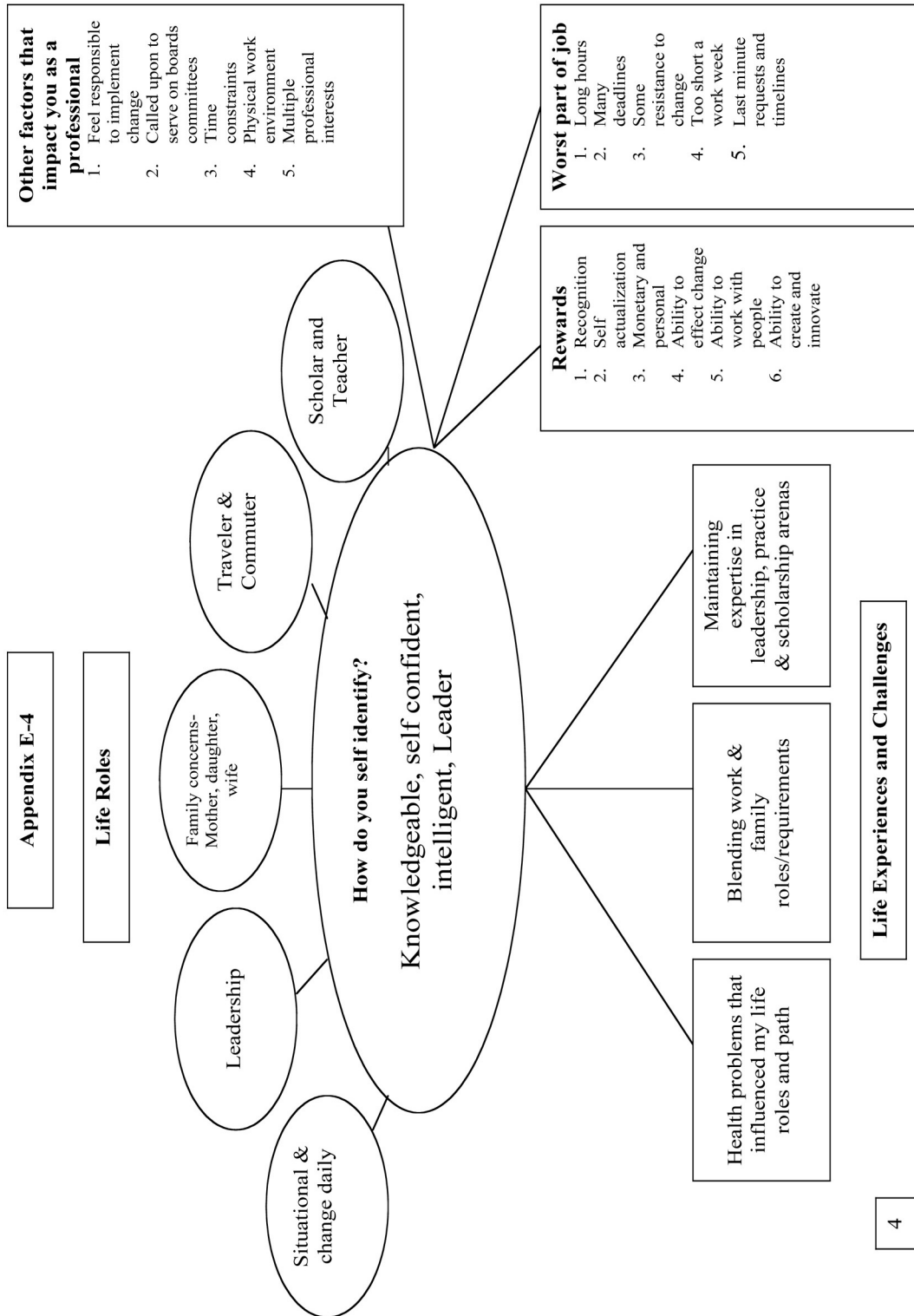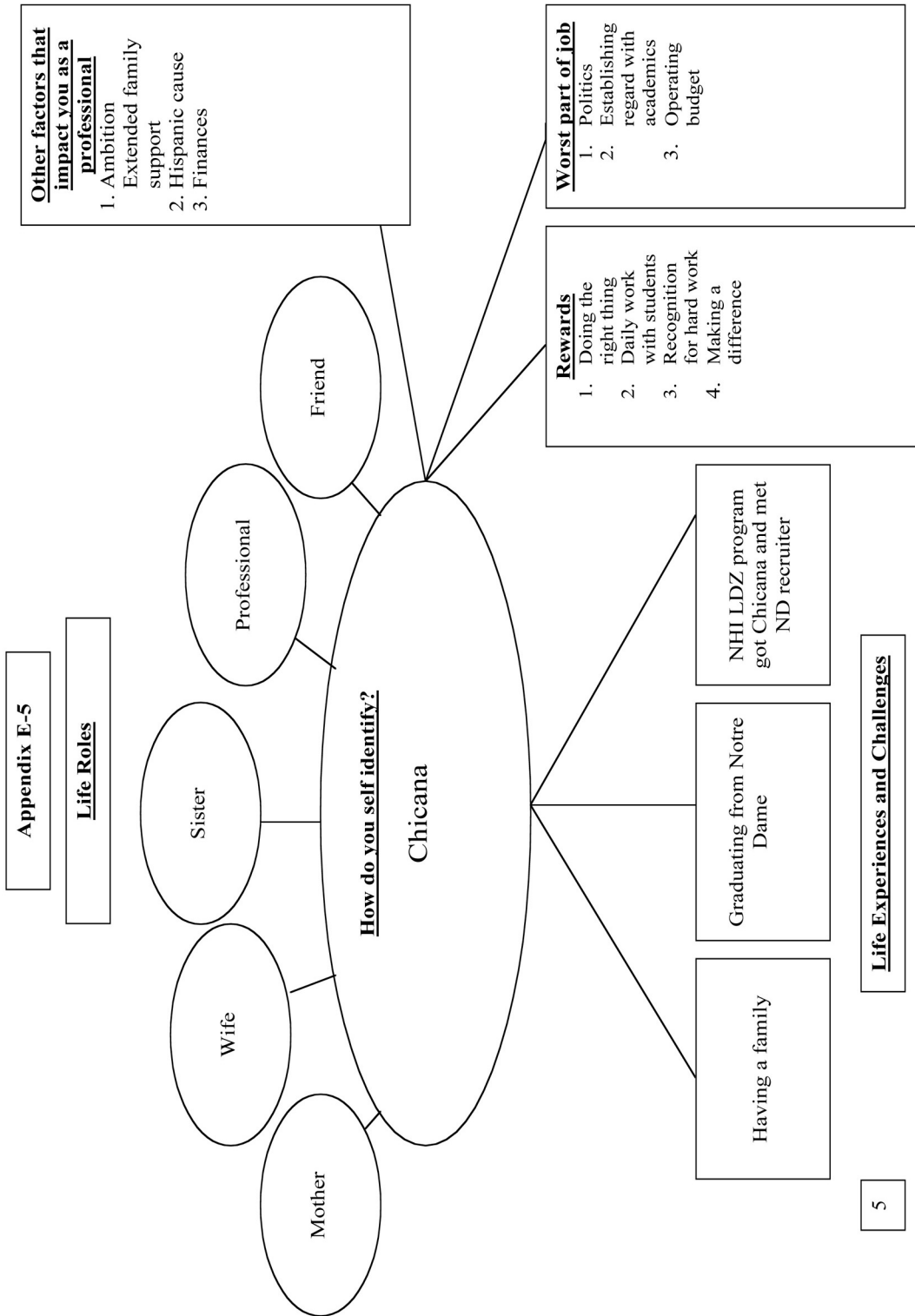
Interview Guide

Part III

37.   In what ways did your parents assist you if any in early schooling?
38.   Did your siblings reach the same educational levels that you have?
39.   What was the racial or ethnic makeup of your neighborhood when you were growing up?
40.   Were you ever aware of any discrimination that affected your family, due to their ethnicity?
41.   Have you ever felt that you had to reject familial (family) or cultural values in order to survive academically or professionally?
42.   Do you feel that your physical appearance or skin color has been a factor in your academic or professional success?
43.   How would you describe your leadership style?
44.   How do you think that others would perceive or describe your leadership style?
45.   Did you delay marriage because of your education?
46.   Did you wait to start a family in order to pursue an education? If yes, how long did you wait?
47.   Did you or do you feel that your spouse supported your educational goals?
48.   How would you rate your experience as an administrator in higher education in general and more specifically at your institution? On a scale from 1-5 with 5 being the highest.
49.   Do you think the experiences of a Mexican American female administrator are much different than other administrators? if yes, why? How would the experience of Anglo male administrators be different? Anglo female administrators? or Mexican American male administrators?
50.   What kinds of challenges do you feel exists for Mexican American female administrators?
51.   Do you feel that your institution has supported you in your efforts to succeed in your professional position?
52.   What types of cultural characteristics do you feel you possess that have assisted you in your educational and administrative career?
53.   Do you feel that you have experienced any form of racism or discrimination?
54.   Do you feel that mentoring is important if yes, why?
55.   What advice would you give to an entry-level Mexican American female administrator working in higher education?

Life Roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional
1. My father's death in my second year in college
2. An incredibly supportive Chicano activist husband
3. Living and working professionally in Spanish speaking countries
4. Being a fourth generation Texan of a New Mexican father

Daughter
Grand
Daughter

Student/Learner

Activist
Vietnam/Chicano
movement

Wife/Mother

Researcher/Evaluator /advocate/Asking questions-collecting evidence

How do you self identify?

Bilingual/Bicultural/Irish Catholic Border Person

Worst part of job
1. Universities are exceedingly conservative and slow to change
2. Having to work with so many old white men, so few Latinas
3. The frustration of watching yet one more generation of Chicano kids being left behind

Rewards
1. Feeling of contributing to a better future for Chicanos
2. Wonderful staff
3. Resources and networks
4. Belief that what I do is changing the institution

Colleagues and Mentors
- Especially women, many Chicanos
- Own your power and use it within the system <

Social Activism of the 60's and 70's
- Being challenged to change the system, recognize and tell the truth
- Start where we were

Opportunity for Education
- Being encouraged by my mother to go as far as I could
- Govt. and federal grants

Life Experiences and Challenges

1

Life Roles

Other factor that impact you as a Professional

1. Dedicated to education of minority/1st generation students in San Antonio
2. Think for yourself and pass it on to workers and students
3. Have courage and don't worry too much about what people say e.g article in the paper

Worst part of job

1. Information doesn't have an impact
2. Data doesn't get into loop
3. Being female (have to do more and better to be recognized
4. More and more work
5. Need more recognition (run a good horse to death)

Rewards

1. Make a difference to make improvements (contribute)
2. Always a ways to go (change attitudes
3. See students succeed (encouraging them)
4. Role model for minority females

Parent

Wife/Sister

Education Bridge programs

Administrator Self-development

Problem solver

How do you self identify?
A conduit of information to help reform take place-Making a difference in the lives of 1st generation and university college students

Questions authority with evidence you have gathered and teach students to do this

My graduate education helped me to understand the differences in education and status/SES/Gender that need to be equalized

The encouragement of others to aim high and the confidence to carry it through

Life Experiences and Challenges

2

Life Roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional
1. Meeting with appropriate administrators to get things done
2. Correspondence (Follow-up) with faculty
3. Communications (immediate phone calls, e-mails, correspondence
4. See all students that want to see me
5. Positive relationships with faculty
6. Image of cooperativeness and possibilities

Worst part of job
1. Paperwork
2. Assessment
3. Competing for resources

Rewards
1. Customer Satisfaction
2. Self satisfaction
3. Contributing to improving educational path for students
4. Peer recognition

Parent

Teacher

Leader

Youth

Family

How do you self identify?

- Keeping up with knowledge skills
- Technology

Family Responsibilities

- Female
- Mexican American
- Excellence
- Successful
- Work extra hard
- At top of class

Life Experiences and Challenges

3

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Appendix E-4

Life Roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional

1. Feel responsible to implement change
2. Called upon to serve on boards committees
3. Time constraints
4. Physical work environment
5. Multiple professional interests

Worst part of job

1. Long hours
2. Many deadlines
3. Some resistance to change
4. Too short a work week
5. Last minute requests and timelines

Rewards

1. Recognition
2. Self actualization
3. Monetary and personal
4. Ability to effect change
5. Ability to work with people
6. Ability to create and innovate

Scholar and Teacher

Traveler & Commuter

Family concerns- Mother, daughter, wife

Leadership

Situational & change daily

How do you self identify?

Knowledgeable, self confident, intelligent, Leader

Maintaining expertise in leadership, practice & scholarship arenas

Blending work & family roles/requirements

Health problems that influenced my life roles and path

Life Experiences and Challenges

4

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Appendix E-5

Life Roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional
1. Ambition
   Extended family support
2. Hispanic cause
3. Finances

Worst part of job
1. Politics
2. Establishing regard with academics
3. Operating budget

Friend

Professional

Sister

Wife

Mother

How do you self identify?
Chicana

Rewards
1. Doing the right thing
2. Daily work with students
3. Recognition for hard work
4. Making a difference

NHI LDZ program got Chicana and met ND recruiter

Graduating from Notre Dame

Having a family

Life Experiences and Challenges

5

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Life Roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional
1. Educational standing (degrees)
2. Commitment to career
3. Mobility

Worst part of job
1. Commitments to p.r.
2. Politics having to build coalitions

Rewards
1. Status
2. Opportunity to finish terminal degree
3. Opportunities for continued professional development

Activist

Woman

Friend

Sister

Daughter

How do you self identify?
Mexican American

Mexican American female

Mexican American

Migrant Worker

Life Experiences and Challenges

6

Life Roles

Wife   Mother   Grandmother   Friend   Mentor/Teacher   Professional

Note: the participant felt that her life roles did not fall in a hierarchy or sequential order. She felt that all these roles were important but changed through her life's cycles.

How do you self identify?

Mexican American

Other factors that impact you as a professional
1. My expectations of self
2. Consistent review by others
3. Good professional colleagues
4. Opportunities to exchange ideas
5. Family expectations

Worst part of job
1. Hypocrisy/Politics
2. Double standards
3. Lack of resources
4. Long hours
5. Working with Turkeys

Rewards
1. Personal growth
2. Travel
3. Helping students
4. Setting standards
5. Creative/risk taking
6. Adventures

Breast Cancer   Associates Expectations   Personal Goals

Life Experiences and Challenges

7

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Life roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional
1. Not having mentors
2. Not having other women to interact with on a daily basis
3. Few formal opportunities to grow as a professional
4. Having a great President- visionary, dedicated, committed

Visionary

Do it! Implementer

Mentor

Change Agent

Teacher

How do you self identify?

Hispanic woman who is a mentor & a Teacher of Teachers who also serves as an administrator

Worst part of job
1. Long hours

Rewards
1. Sense of self-fulfillment
2. Sense of accomplishment
3. Opportunity to grow professionally
4. Mentoring
5. Opportunity to make a difference in lives of students

Thrive through challenges
Challenge=opportunity to thrive & grow

- Great family-supportive husband and supportive mom
- Secure family experiences

- Lots of activities/opportunities that go beyond the university setting i.e. author, consultant, advisory board (state and national
- Colleagues all over the nation

Life Experiences and Challenges

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Life Roles

Other factors that you as a professional

1. Youthful appearance-age
2. Lack of doctorate
3. My lack of skills in playing politics in order to advance- "how do you do that?"
4. Lack of role models locally that I can get advice from regarding all the above.

Sister

Wife

Professional

Daughter

Mother

How do you self identify?
First Generation
Hispanic/Woman/Mother/Professional

Worst part of job

1. Lack of role models to identify with
2. Limited advancement without education
3. Limited pay
4. Societies value/ view of education and lack of investment

Rewards

1. Impacting students
2. Role modeling (family and students)
3. Representing (female and Hispanic)
4. Empowering and providing opportunities
5. Intrinsic rewards for self
6. Monetary rewards

Provided opportunities to advance professionally

Motherhood

Denied opportunities to advance professionally

Life Experiences and Challenges

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Life Roles

Other factors that impact you as a professional

1. Supportive husband and children (son and daughter)
2. Supportive family
3. Supportive colleagues
4. Good mentors
5. A university President that provided me with this opportunity

Worst parts of job

1. Not enough staff to do as much as I'd like
2. Not much time to think

Rewards

1. Opportunity to create change
2. Opening doors for other Latinas
3. Serve as a role model
4. Knowing that I am a part of assisting a younger generation move to another level e.g. students

Colleague

Community/Builder Internal/External

Leader

Administrator

Change Agent

How do you self identify?

Bilingual/Bicultural/Binational Latina

Varied work experiences and volunteerism

Education

Living in different countries in central and South America

Life Experiences and Challenges

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Other factors that impact you as a professional

1. Time to do work
2. Promising tasks
3. Making all meetings
4. Being visible

Worst part of job

1. Personnel
2. Consistent
3. Saying "no"

Rewards

1. Visibility
2. Leader
3. Level of education
4. Perceptions
5. Respect

Mentor

Sibling

Colleague

Wife

Mom

How do you self identify?
Mexican American

Be productive in my research

Maintain open door with faculty, staff and colleagues

Open relationship with family

Life Experiences and Challenges

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APPENDIX F

Summary of Life Roles

Participants	Life Roles				
Andrade	1.Daughter	2.Student	3. Activist	4. Wife/ Mother	5. Researcher
(Dr. Massiate)	1.Problem Solver	2.Administrator	3.Educator	4.Wife/ Sister	5. Parent
(Dr. Diaz)	1.Family	2.Youth/ Outreach	3.Leader	4.Teacher	5. Parent
(Dr. Castillo)	1.Situational	2.Leader	3.Mother/ Daughter/Wife	4.Traveler/ Commuter	5.Scholar/ Teacher
(Dr. Morales)	1.Mother	2.Wife	3.Sister	4.Professional	5.Friend
(Dr. Castillo)	1.Daughter	2.Sister	3.Friend	4.Woman	5.Activist
(Dr. Martinez)	1.Wife	2.Mother	3.Grandmother	4.Friend	5.Mentor/ Teacher/ Professional
(Dr. Campos)	1.Teacher	2.Change Agent	3.Mentor	4.Visionary	5.Implementor
(Ms. Chavez)	1.Mother	2.Daughter	3.Professional	4.Wife	5.Sister
(Dr. Castillo)	1.Change Agent	2.Administrator	3.Leader	4.Community Builder	5.Colleague
(Dr. Cammacho)	1.Mom	2.Wife	3.Colleague	4.Sibling	5.Mentor
(Ms. Refugia)	1.Mother	2.Wife	3.Director/ Administrator	4.Employee	5.Sister
(Dr. Zapata)	1.Mother	2.Daughter/ Alzheimer's in family	3.Community Symbol	4.Professional Education Leader	5.Advocate

APPENDIX G

Summary of Life Experiences and Challenges

PARTICIPANTS	Life experiences and challenges		
Dr. Andrade	1.Opportunity for education (LE)	2. Social activism of 1960's (challenged to change system) ©	3.Mentor-own your own power and use it within the system (LE)
Dr. Massiate	1.Encouragement from other to aim high and confidence to carry through (LE)	2. Graduate education an eye opener to differences in status/SES/gender and equity (LE)	3. Learned how to question authority and teach students to do the same (LE)
Dr. Diaz	1. Challenge as a Mexican American female, strive for excellence, need to be at top of class ©	2. Family responsibilities	3. Need to keep up with knowledge skills and technology ©
Dr. Apollonia	1. Health problems influenced life role and family (LE)	2.Challenge to blend work and family roles ©	3.Maintain expertise in leadership and scholarship ©
Dr. Morales	1.Family challenges (C)	2. Graduating from Notre Dame (LE)	3. National Hispanic Leadership Program/met Notre Dame recruiter (LE)
Dr. Casillas	1. Migrant worker (LE)	2. Being Mexican American (LE)	3. Mexican American female ©
Dr. Martinez	1.Breast cancer (LE)	2. Associates expectations ©	3. Meet personal goals ©
Dr. Campos	1. Many opportunities to go beyond university setting as advisor, consultant, advisory board (LE)	2. Great family support, husband, mom, secure family experiences (LE)	3. Challenge=opportunity to thrive and grow ©
Ms. Chavez	1. Denied opportunity to advance professionally (LE)	2. Motherhood (LE)	3. Opportunity to advance ©
Dr. Castillo	1.Lived in different countries in South America (LE)	2.Education (LE)	3. Varied work experiences and volunteerism (LE)
Dr. Cammacho	1. Open relationship with family (LE)	2.Maintain open door with faculty, staff and colleagues	3. Productivity in research ©
Benitez-Sullivan Ms. Refugia	1. Death of parent when participant in high school (LE)	2.Working for radio belingue (LE)	3. Motherhood ©

Dr. Zapata	1. Growing up in loving community, extended family & nuclear family, mother, church (LE)	2. Service on U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (LE)	3. Divorce->adversity->growth (LE)
Ms. Banda			

Appendix H

Summary of Factors That Impact You as a Professional

Participants	Other factors that impact you as a professional
Dr. Andrade	1.Father' death during second year of college, 2. Supportive Chicano activist husband 3. Living and working professionally in Spanish speaking countries 4. Being a fourth generation Texan of a New Mexican father.
(Dr. Massiate)	1. Dedicated to education of minority 1st generation students in San Antonio 2. Ability to think for self and pass it on to workers and students 3. Have courage and don't worry about what people will say.
(Dr. Diaz)	1. Meeting with appropriate administrators to get things done 2. Correspondence-follow up with faculty 3. Communication 4. See all students that want to see me 5. Positive relationship with faculty 6. Image of cooperativeness
(Dr. Apollonia)	1. Feel responsible to implement change 2. Called upon to serve on boards and committees 3. Time constraints 4. Physical work environment 5. Multiple professional interests
(Dr. Morales)	1. Ambition 2. Extended family support 3. Hispanic cause 4. Finances
(Dr. Casillas)	1. Educational standing (degrees) 2. Commitment to career 3. Mobility
(Dr. Martinez)	1. Self-expectations 2. Consistent review by others 3. Good professional colleagues 4. Opportunities to exchange ideas 5. Family expectations
(Dr. Campos)	1. Not having mentors 2. Not having other women to interact with on a daily basis 3. Few formal opportunities to grow as a professional 4. Having a great president who is a visionary and is dedicated and committed
(Ms. Chavez)	1. Youthful appearance and age 2. Lack of doctorate 3. Lack of skills in playing politics in order to advance 4.lack of role models locally who could help with the above concerns
(Dr. Castillo)	1. Supportive husband and children 2. Supportive family 3. Supportive colleagues 4. Good mentors 5. University president that provided this opportunity
(Dr. Cammacho)	1. Need time to work 2. Promising tasks 3. Making all meetings 4. Be visible
(Ms. Refugia)	N/A
(Dr. Zapata)	1. National leadership obligations 2. Health/age 3. I am very big picture

Appendix I

Summary of Participant Information

Participants	Current Institution	Degrees/ Institutions	Current Position
Dr. Massiate	UTSA	(U.T.)-PhD	Catalog
Dr. Diaz	UTSA	Check catalog	Asst. Dean college of Business
Dr. Apollonia	UTPA	(D)-Nursing (U.T)-B.S (N.Mex)- MSN, PhD.	Dean of College of Health Professions
Dr. Morales	UTB	(Notre Dame)-B.A.History/Bus MA-Science in Administration (UT Corpus Christi)-ED.D	Dean of students
Dr. Casillas	UTB	(TWU)-Soci. (U or Ariz)-MA-Voc/Eval/Rehab (U of H) EdD-Ed. Admin.	Asst. VP student affairs
Dr. Martinez	UTB	(UTB)-BA-PoliSci MA-Eng/Couns&Guid. EdD-Couns/Psych	Vice President student affairs
Dr. Campos	UTEP	(UTEP)-BS-Elementary Ed. & reading, MA-supersvision administration, PhD. Bilingual Ed.	Acting Dean college of education
Ms. Chavez	UTSA	(OLLU)-Bach. Eng/Comm Arts (OLLU) MA. Human Sci.	Director of new student programs
Dr. Castillo	UTEP	(?) BS-Secondary ed. W/minor in Spanish & History (George Mason U.)-MA-bilingual, multicultural degree (Cal State Chico)-MA (Clairmont U.) PhD.	Asst. VP for institutional advancement

Appendix I

Summary of Participant Information

Dr. Cammacho	UTPA	(UTPA)-BA (SWT)-MA (TxA&M)-PhD.	Dept. Chair /Assoc. professor school of educational administration
Ms. Refugia	UTPA	BA-Journalism Radio/Tel/News	Director of Office of U. Relations
Dr. Zapata	UTSA	(U.T)- Journalism (Umass-Amerhest)-PhD, Ed. L (3hon.degrees)	Acting Dean college of education
Ms. Banda	UTSA	(SAC)-Associate degree (St. Mary's)-BA (U of H)-MA (UT)-ABD-Ed. Admin.	Director of Community Relations
Ms. Herrera	UTSA	(UTSA)	Coordinator of K-16 programs

Appendix J

Summary of Job Rewards

Participants	Rewards of Job
Dr. Apollonia	1. Recognition 2. Self-actualization 3. Monetary and personal rewards 4. Ability to affect change 5. Work with people 6. Ability to create and innovate
Dr. Zapata	1. Seeing others take up the cause 2. Regeneration of leaders 3. Respect from others 4. Being appreciated 5. Opportunity to know outstanding individuals
Ms. Herrera	
Ms. Chavez	1. Impacting students 2. Role modeling 3. Representing a female Hispanic 4. Empowering and providing opportunities 5. Intrinsic rewards 6. Monetary rewards
Dr. Diaz	1. Customer satisfaction 2. Self-satisfaction 3. Improving educational paths for students 4. Peer recognition
Ms. Refugia	1. Flexibility 2. Salary 3. Ability to shape direction
Dr. Morales	1. Doing the right thing 2. Work with students 3. Recognition of hard work 4. Making a difference
Dr. Cedillas	1. Status 2.Opportunity to finish PhD. 3. Opportunity for continued professional development
Dr. Cammacho	1. Visibility 2. Leader 3. Level of education 4. Perceptions 5. Respect
Dr. Martinez	1. Personal 2. Growth 3. Travel 4. Helping students 5. Setting standards 6. Creative risk-taking 7. Adventures
Dr. Campos	1. Sense of fulfillment 2. Sense of accomplishment 3. Professional growth 4. Mentoring 5. Opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students
Dr. Massiate	1. Make a difference for improvement 2. Able to change attitudes 3. Seeing students succeed, encourage them 4. Role model for minority females
Dr. Castillo	1. Opportunity to create change 2. Opening doors for other Latinos 3. Serve as role model 4. Assist younger generation to move to a higher level

Appendix K

Summary of Worst Part of Job

Participants	Worst part of job
Dr. Apollonia	1. Long hours 2. Many deadlines 3. Some resistance to change 4. Too short a workweek 5. Last minute requests 6. Time lines
Dr. Zapata	1. Volume of work and energy depletion 2. Micro resources 3. Limited resources for vision or dreams 4. Having to ask for money
Ms. Herrera	
Ms. Chavez	1. Lack of role models to identify with 2. Limited advancement without education 3. Limited pay 4. Societies view of education and lack of investment
Dr. Diaz	1. Paperwork 2. Assessment 3. Competing for resources
Ms. Refugia	1. Discipline 2. Long hours 3. Salary
Dr. Morales	1. Politics 2. Establishing regard with academics 3. Operating budget
Dr. Casillas	1. Commitments to public relations 2. Politics 3. Having to build coalitions
Dr. Cammacho	1. Personnel 2. Being consistent/ continuous 3. Needing to say "no"
Dr. Martinez	1. Politics/hypocrisy 2. Double standards 3. Lack of resources 4. Long hours 5. Working with turkeys
Dr. Campos	1.long hours
Dr. Massiate	1. Information doesn't have the impact is should 2. Data doesn't get into the loop 3. As a female we have to do more and be better to be recognized
Dr. Castillo	1. Not enough stuff to do that I like 2. Not enough time to think

Appendix L-1

Summary of Participants Background Information

Participant	Marital Status	Age	Children	Town Born in	Ethnic & Self-identification	1st lang spoken	Religious Orientation
Dr. Apollonia	M	Over 21	3	El Paso, TX	(E) Hispanic, Mexican American, Mexican Descent (S) Knowledgeable, self-confident, intelligent, leader	1st Spanish 2nd language English	Roman Catholic
Dr. Zapata	D	56	1	Del Rio, TX	(E) Mexicana Mex Am Chicana	Span/Eng (Bilingual)	Methodist
Ms. Herrera	M	36 ?	3	San Antonio	(E) Mexican American	Span/Eng	Catholic
Ms. Chavez	M	34	1	L.A. CA.	(E)Hispanic (S) First generation, woman, mother, professional	English	Catholic
Dr. Diaz	S	?	0	Laredo, TX	(E) Mexican Italian-Mex Culture	Span/Eng (Bilingual)	Catholic
Ms. Refugia	M	43	1	Donna, TX	(E) Latina Mex Am (S) Mother	Eng/Span	Catholic
Dr. Morales	M	33	3	Weslaco, TX	(E) Chicana	Eng/Span (Bilingual)	Catholic
Dr. Casillas	S	54	0	San Benito, TX	(E) Mexican American	Spanish	Catholic
Dr. Cammach	M	44	2	Weslaco, TX	(E) Mexican American	Span/Eng (bilingual)	Catholic
Dr. Martinez	M	57	2	San Benito, TX	(E) Mexican American, Hispanic	Spanish (Bilingual)	Catholic

Appendix L-1

Summary of Participants Background Information

Dr. Campos	M	54	4	Chihuahua Mexico	(E) Hispanic (S) Hispanic woman who is a mentor & teacher of teachers who also serves as an administrator	Span/Eng (Bilingual)	Roman Catholic
Dr. Massiate	M	?	2	San Antonio TX	(E) Mexican American (S) A conduit of information to help reform take place making a diff. in the lives of 1st gen and U. coll. Students	English	Catholic
Dr. Castillo	M	55	2	El Paso, TX	(E) Latina (S) Bilingual, bicultural, binational	Span/Eng	Catholic
Ms. Banda	D	50	1	San Antonio, TX	(E) Mexican American	Span/Eng	Catholic

Appendix L-2

Summary of Participants Background Information

Participants	Person to influence education	Parents occupation/while growing up	Parents born In U.S.	Parents Grade Completion	Maternal G-Parents Born in U.S.	Paternal G-Parents Born in U.S.
Dr. Apollonia	Mother	M-Admin Assist. F-Delivery man, Jeweler	M-Cuidad Juarez F- ?	M- H.S. F- 6th grade	MGM- Mexico MGF- Mexico	PGM- Mexico PGF- ? German descent
Dr. Zapata	Mother/Father	M-Retail/school system F-Butcher, Civil service employee	M-Del Rio F-Del Rio	M-8th F-3rd	MGM-Mexico MGF-U.S.	PGM-Mexico PGF-Mexico
Ms. Chavez	Parents/elementary school teachers	M-Food service F-Vending/blue collar worker	M-San Anto, TX F-San Anto,TX	M-11th grade F-11th + GED	MGM-Mexico City MGF-Mexico City	PGM-New York PGF-San Antonio
Dr. Diaz	Parents	Service worker	M-San Anto, TX. F-San Anto, TX	?	MGM-Guadalajara MGF-Guadalajara	PGM-? PGF-Italy
Ms. Refugia	Father	M-Homemaker F-Farm laborer	M-Mexico F-Texas	M-7th F-Some High school	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-Texas PGF-Texas
Dr. Morales	Parents and 3rd grade teacher	M-Educator/coach F-Educator/coach	Yes	M-Masters degree F-Master degree	MGM-U.S. MGF-U.S.	PGM-U.S. PGF- U.S.
Dr. Casillas	Me	M-Processing plant worker F-Lumber yard worker	Yes	M-3rd grade F-7th grade	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-Mexico PGF-Mexico
Dr. Cammacho	Mother	M-Office worker for family business F-Plumber	M-Weslaco, TX F-Donna, TX	M-Not known F-H. S. Diploma	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-U.S. PGF-U.S.
Dr. Martinez	Mother	M-Housewife F-Farmer	Yes	M-9th grade F-9th grade	Not known	PGM-U.S. PGF- U.S.
Dr. Campos	Family/herself	M-restaurant/bakery worker F-in Mex. Office job/in U.S. maintenance worker	M-Phoenix, AZ F- Chihuahua, Mexico	M-8th or 10th grade F-2-3yrs college	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-Mexico PGF- Mexico
Dr. Massiate	Father/Nuns	Service worker	M-Mexico F-Mexico	?	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-Mexico PGF-Mexico
Dr. Castillo	Family/Teacher	M-Homemaker F-Jack-of-all-trades	M-Mexico F-Mexico	M-3rd grade F-4th grade	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-Mexico PGF-Mexico
Ms. Banda	Mother/Father	M-Homemaker F-Office manager	M-Monterrey, Mexico F-Yes	M-6th grade F-12th grade	MGM-Mexico MGF-Mexico	PGM-San Anto, TX PGF-San Anto, TX

Appendix L-3

Summary of Participants Background Information

Participants	What they Consider their Hometown	Primary Enviro.	SES	Birth order	Ethnic Makeup Of Neighbor Hood	1st Gen College Student ?
Dr. Apollonia	El Paso	Small Town	Low	1/1	Mexican	Yes
Dr. Zapata	Del Rio, TX	Small town	Low	3/3	Mexican	Yes
Ms. Herrera	San Antonio	Small town	Low		Mexican American	Yes
Ms. Chavez	L.A., CA./San Anto, TX	Urban	Low	1/2	Hispanic	Yes
Dr. Diaz	San Anto, TX	Small Town	Lower/middle		Mexican American	Yes
Ms. Refugia	Sanger,CA./ San Anto, TX.	Small Town/suburban	Low	5/5	Latino, Anglo, Armenian, Japanese	Yes
Dr. Morales	Weslaco, TX	Rural	Upper-middle	1/4	Mexican As a teenager Anglo	No
Dr. Casillas	San Benito, TX.	Small town	Low	4/6	100% Hispanic	Yes
Dr. Cammacho	Weslaco, TX	Rural	Middle-Class	2/3	Hispanic	Yes
Dr. Martinez	San Benito, TX.	Rural/Small Town	Low	1/2	60% White 40% Hispanic	Yes
Dr. Campos	El Paso, TX.	Urban	Mexico-High U.S. Low	3/9	Hispanic	Yes
Dr. Massiate	San Anto, TX.	Small town	Middle		Hispanic	Yes
Dr. Castillo	El Paso, TX.	Rural	Poverty level	9/9	70% Hispanic	Yes
Ms. Banda	San Anto, TX	Suburban	Middle Class	1/7	White and Hispanic	Yes

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VITA

Stella Silva, the third oldest daughter of six children born to Juan Jose Silva and Concha Herrera Silva, was born in San Antonio, Texas on April 28, 1964. Stella graduated from St. Francis Academy in 1982. In the fall of 1982 she enrolled in The University of Texas at Austin where she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1986. Stella received a Master of Arts degree in Education from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1994. In the Fall of 1995, Stella was admitted into the Educational Administration Program at The University of Texas at Austin to pursue a PhD.

After receiving her Bachelors degree she started her career in the field of education at Osan Air Force Base in South Korea where she taught Pre-school. In 1988 she moved to northern California where she worked in the field of early childhood development. Upon her return to San Antonio in 1992 she enrolled in graduate school and entered the field of student affairs as a graduate intern for the Office of Minority Student Affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Upon graduation she went to work as an Education Specialist for Palo Alto Community College in San Antonio, Texas specializing in transfer agreements. She has worked for Southwest Texas State University as Assistant Director in the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs since 1997.

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This dissertation was typed by Stella Silva