

An Autoethnographic Exploration of Mexican-American Ethnic Identity among a Vaquero in Rural South Carolina



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Purpose of Statement

- This study embodies an autoethnographic approach to explore my experiences as Mexican American vaquero in rural South Carolina.
- Through personal narratives, visual arts, and recent experiences, this study aims to provide a retrospective view of fitting in and explaining a Mexican American's difficulties in this cultural context. In addition, by illuminating my experiences of Mexican American vaquero in rural South Carolina. This study seek to better understand ethnic identity and cultural diversity in America.

Research Questions

- What are my experiences as Mexican American vaquero in rural South Carolina?
- How do personal narratives and visual arts provide insight into my ethnic identity and experiences of cultural diversity?

Why Visual Arts?

- Dossin(2018) mentions in the text "*Traité* animated ideals and habits of Isou's community as an art emerged from and affirmed their own subculture" (p.40)
- Zantidos(2014) explains within the lines "Primitive peoples used their cave paintings and drawings to communicate and record 35-40,000 years ago (p.310)
- Adams & Owens(2021) "The analysis indicated that all participants engaged in drama activities, entered in dialogue, improvised and took on roles that had positively impacted on how they view themselves and others" (p. 78).
- In my illustrations, I use myself as the Mexican-American character in his work outfit as representation of my identity to speak for my experiences. Engaging in a physical activity other than visually spectating.



Methodology

- The document is well informed through the my own autoethnographic in which is a qualitative art-based research toward drawing on an individual's personalized experience.
- "The goal of autoethnography projects is to embrace the vulnerability of asking and answering questions about experience"(Adams, Ellis, Jones 2015 p.39)
- I am willing to be open and share the illumination of how I have been raised as an Mexian-American to contribute my story.

Findings

- The study's findings showcase the narrative elements inherent in my experiences of Mexican Americans residing in Rural South Carolina.
- I also present a unique contribution to the research in the form of two watercolor paintings that symbolize the struggle and success of embracing my ethnic identity and becoming a vaquero.

Conclusion

- The concept of the vaquero embraces the shared values and work ethic of both the farmer and the rancher as a symbol of personal growth and development through hard work and dedication, regardless of language or cultural background.
- The vaquero identity serves as a reminder that we all share common values and experiences and can draw strength and inspiration from these qualities, while promoting unity and shared identity.

Resources

- Adams, J., & Owens, A. (2021). *Beyond Text: Learning Through Arts-Based Research*. Intellect Books.
- Adams, T.E., Ellis, C.,& Jones, S.H.(2015). *Autoethnography*. Oxford University Press.
- Dossin, C. (2018). *France and the Visual Arts since 1945 : Remapping European Postwar and Contemporary Art*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts.
- Zantidas, E. (2014). *Semiotics and Visual Communication: Concepts and Practices*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.