FROM THE LENS OF (IN)VISIBILITY: A PHOTOVOICE INQUIRY INTO HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN ADVANCE FILIPINO/A/X AMERICAN STUDENT RESILIENCE

Rangel Velez Zarate
California State University - San Bernardino

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd

Part of the Art Education Commons, Asian American Studies Commons, Community College Leadership Commons, Digital Humanities Commons, Educational Leadership Commons, Educational Methods Commons, and the Photography Commons

Recommended Citation
Zarate, Rangel Velez, "FROM THE LENS OF (IN)VISIBILITY: A PHOTOVOICE INQUIRY INTO HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN ADVANCE FILIPINO/A/X AMERICAN STUDENT RESILIENCE" (2023). Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations. 1746.
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1746

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
FROM THE LENS OF (IN)VISIBILITY: A PHOTOVOICE INQUIRY
INTO HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN ADVANCE
FILIPINO/A/X AMERICAN STUDENT RESILIENCE

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Rangel Velez Zarate
May 2023
FROM THE LENS OF (IN)VISIBILITY: A PHOTOVOICE INQUIRY INTO HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN ADVANCE FILIPINO/A/X AMERICAN STUDENT RESILIENCE

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Rangel Velez Zarate
May 2023

Approved by:

Dr. Karen Escalante, Committee Chair, Teacher Education & Foundations
Dr. Edwin Hernandez, Committee Member
Dr. Jason Magabo Perez, Committee Member
ABSTRACT

The dearth of research on Filipino/a/x American (FilAm) community college students perpetuates the narrative that they are regarded as “invisible,” receiving limited academic and social support. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent violence and discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) has exacerbated the already distressing academic and racialized experiences of FilAm students.

In this qualitative study, nine FilAm students who attended a community college in the Western United States participated in an online photovoice project which visualized their personal reflections and specific academic needs through digital photos and written narratives. Findings from this study indicated that there were hidden factors besides a racialized campus climate which notably affected their community college experiences.
DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation, a labor of love, is dedicated to my parents, Silvia Velez Zarate and Marino Serrano Zarate, to whom I owe a lifetime of gratitude. I love you both beyond all of the stars, lightyears and lifetimes. Thank you for all of the unique opportunities you have given to me throughout my life, traveling state to state and braving new weather for a new life in our military family to settling down and supporting me throughout every era of my academic career and for loving me unconditionally. ¡Pero mira, con chingadazos! Todo sucede por una razón, and I am so thankful for always being by your side as my two best friends in all of these wonderful years together. Mami, siempre voy a ser tus ojos puros. Daddy, I'll keep my head on the swivel. We graduated together.

I also want to thank God, a miracle-worker, who I’ve seen firsthand how strongly believing in a higher power can save us. Gracias a Dios por cuidar a mi Mami y Papi siempre en estos años y por tu amor en nuestras vidas. Virgencita de Guadalupe sigue nos cuidando todos los días. Thank you to my dear sweet Auntie Lou for your love and for giving my dad a second chance at life. I love you always!

I also dedicate this work to my Velez grandparents, Ofelia Medina Velez and Teodoro Velez, who helped raise me, gave me many unforgettable reasons to love my childhood and made California feel like home every summer and winter when I visited as a child and even now. My Zarate grandparents,
Raymunda Serrano Zarate and Juanito Zarate, who dreamed about me before I was born but I never had the chance to meet. Thank you for your stories and love which span generations of our family.

Thank you, California State University San Bernardino, for 13 years of education from two Bachelor’s degrees to a Master’s and now a Doctorate degree. Being a proud Coyote has been a transformative journey academically, personally and professionally.

I would like to acknowledge the time, energy and commitment my dissertation committee has put into supporting my work and affirming who I am. I feel lucky to have gotten my “dream team” as my dissertation committee. Dr. Karen Escalante thank you for keeping me on track as the shining anomaly of Cohort 14. We’ve been through so much together since I began working with you as a research assistant at a critical moment in my life. You made being a doctoral student SO exciting right when I needed you the most. Thank you for all of your constant support, always making me feel like a superstar and for seeing the Holmes Scholar in me.

Dr. Edwin Hernandez for connecting me with scholars in the field of AAPI Higher Education and for giving me validating feedback on my dissertation work as it transformed throughout these years. I am very thankful for your mentoring throughout this journey and advice for our CSUSB Research Competition, which I kicked ass in. ¡Gracias a ti!
Dr. Jason Magabo Perez for being my first-ever Filipino professor in my creative writing class. We both dream big, so I'm totally going to publish everything extra from my diss that you suggested in the months that we met. Salamat for everything.

I lastly dedicate this work to my younger self. Thirty years goes by fast. I never thought I would be where I am today, but life works in mysterious and beautiful ways. Continue dreaming the impossible and thank you for allowing myself to be vulnerable in order to become strong mentally and physically. Rangelito Tuyo.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.............................................................................................................................iii

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS..............................................................................iv

LIST OF TABLES.....................................................................................................................xii

LIST OF FIGURES..................................................................................................................xiii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..............................................................................................1

  Problem Statement..............................................................................................................1
  Purpose of the Study...........................................................................................................1
  Research Questions............................................................................................................3
  Significance of the Study.....................................................................................................3
  Theoretical Framework.......................................................................................................5
  Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations............................................................................7
  Key Terms Defined..............................................................................................................7
  Summary and Organization of Remaining Chapters.......................................................10

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW....................................................................................12

  Introduction.......................................................................................................................12
  Problem Statement............................................................................................................13
  Purpose of the Study...........................................................................................................14
    Narrative of Racial Microaggressions in Academic Spaces............................................15
    Narrative of Racial Stereotypes and Fatigue.................................................................19
    The AAPI “Model Minority” Narrative.........................................................................21
    The Dual Pandemic.........................................................................................................26
Psychological Trauma from the COVID-19 Pandemic
Pandemic Effects on Students
Academic and Personal Resilience
Summary
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN
Research Setting
Research Sample
Research Data
Data Collection
Data Analysis
Validity and Trustworthiness/Reliability
Positionality of the Author
Relevant Ethical Issues Addressed
Summary and Contributions to the Profession
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY
Intentions and Organizations of the Findings
Sample Demographics
Overview of Participants
Overview of Data Collection
Critical Race Theory Tenet 1: The Centrality and Intersectionality of Race and Racism
Theme One: Multiple Forms of Trauma Impact FilAm Students
Theme Two: FilAm Students Navigate Their Own Forms of Resilience..............................................................71

Theme Three: Familial Relationships Play a Vital Role in FilAm Students’ Identity................................................77

Critical Race Theory Tenet 2: The Existence and Need to Challenge Dominant Ideology............................................................78

Theme One: Familial Relationships Play a Vital Role In FilAm Students’ Identity................................................81

Theme Two: Cultural and Geographic Context Affects FilAm Students’ Sense of Belonging.................................84

Theme Three: FilAm Students’ Experiences in College Are Influenced by Faculty and Staff.................................92

Critical Race Theory Tenet 3: The Necessity and Validity of Using the Experiential Knowledge of Students of Color........................................93

Theme One: Cultural And Geographic Context Affects FilAm Student Sense of Belonging........................................95

Theme Two: FilAm Students Navigate Their Own Forms of Resilience..............................................................99

Theme Three: FilAm Students’ Experiences In College Are Influenced By Faculty and Staff...............................102

Resilience through Photovoice Counterstories........................................102

Chapter Summary........................................................................103
CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS....................106

Overview........................................................................................................106

Connections to Literature................................................................................108
  The Damaging Effects of the Model Minority Myth .................................108
  Bringing Visibility Back to FilAms.................................................................110

Defining the Emergent Themes From This Study........................................112
  Familial Relationships Play a Vital Role in FilAm Students’ Identity........112
  FilAm Students’ Experiences in College are Influenced by Faculty and Staff....113
  Multiple Forms of Trauma Impact FilAm Students......................................113
  Cultural and Geographical Context Affects FilAm Students’ Sense of Belonging...113
  FilAm Students Navigate Their Own Forms of Resilience......................114

Recommendations for Educational Leaders..............................................114

Next Steps for Educational Reform...............................................................115

Recommendations for Future Research.....................................................118

Limitations of the Study................................................................................118

Triangulation “From the Lens of (In)visibility” Photovoice Exhibition (2022).....119

Conclusions....................................................................................................124

APPENDIX A: CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER OF APPROVAL.................................................................127

x
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL........................................132
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FLYER.................................135
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM ...........................................137
APPENDIX E: “FROM THE LENS OF (IN)VISIBILITY” PHOTOVOICE EVENT
FLYER...........................................................................................................144
REFERENCES ................................................................................................146
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participants’ Chosen Pseudonym and Gender Pronouns...............................58
Table 2. Daily Prompts for Week One........................................................................59
Table 3. Daily Prompts for Week Two........................................................................61
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Sunset on a Walk by Angie (she/her).................................................66
Figure 2: Always Rising by Ross (he/him).....................................................69
Figure 3: Perseverance by Sydney Romero (she/her).................................72
Figure 4: More Support by Harana (she/her)...............................................75
Figure 5: Study Corner by CJ (she/her).......................................................79
Figure 6: So Corny by Halo-halo-Guy (he/him)..........................................83
Figure 7: Value in the Little Things by Angie (she/her)...............................85
Figure 8: Barong by Joseph Shepherd (he/him).........................................88
Figure 9: Group Dissection by Joseph Shepherd (he/him).............................90
Figure 10: Remote Work Setup by Angie (she/her)......................................94
Figure 11: One Sun Three Flowers by Ross (he/him)....................................97
Figure 12: Light in Need by Harana (she/her)............................................100
Figure 13: Panoramic View of “From the Lens of (In)visibility”.................120
Figure 14: Participants in Attendance of “From the Lens of (In)visibility”....122
Figure 15: Website of “From the Lens of (In)visibility”..............................123
CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

There are few studies that illustrate the systems of institutional and mental health support for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities in a COVID-era. Additionally, there is a dearth of research on the impact the pandemic has on Filipino/a/x American (FilAm) Community College students’ academic performance and emotional well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine three critical areas related to FilAm Community College students: (a) Identity formation through narratives and (counter) narratives, (b) Trauma and resilience and (c) Sense of belonging inside and outside of academia. This study looked at FilAm student identity as multifaceted and intersectional and how resilience from racial trauma in a COVID-era affected their sense of self and internal validation.

Additionally, this study focused on this community in the culturally diverse state of California, specifically a community college in the Inland Empire (College Z). It set the stage for community college institutions to consider what cultural, academic or mental health resources were provided for FilAm students. The study also urges educators to examine their biases in their current practices and
prompts a re-examination of the extent to which community colleges work to represent and affirm the experiences of underrepresented Students of Color to promote equity. The literature review in Chapter Two created the space to study how narratives and the sense of belonging of Students and People of Color were affected by racial trauma, academic and social spaces and the intersections and shifting with other racial identities because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because FilAm Community College students have been historically left out of educational research, it is critical that education practitioners consider the unique cultural and institutional factors that affect their capacity to achieve academic success and validating experiences in community college. This study was critical to gain a better understanding of the impact educational support systems have on academic success in order to break the stereotype that FilAm students are seen as liminal students or invisible from educational research.

The empirical results of the study revealed important information about the educational trajectories of FilAm Community College students in the Inland Empire, the intersections of their racial identity and ways educational institutions can work to support their educational and professional needs.
Research Questions

This study focused on the racialization of Filipino American community college students and their relationship with trauma, resilience and healing. This study sought to address two overarching research questions:

1. How have Filipino American community college students in the Inland Empire been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What systems of support can community colleges create to help Filipino American community college students during a COVID-era?

Significance of the Study

Bonus and Maramba (2013) assert that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students experience many life challenges that are often unrecognized or become silenced to educational research. From narratives of racial stereotypes/discrimination, violence and struggles with finding a sense of belonging, this community is an under-researched and under-represented minority (Hernandez, 2016), especially from a community college student’s perspective. In particular, the issues of Filipino American community college students “have been hidden by their racialization as Asian Americans” (Buena vista, 2010, p. 116).

Hidalgo (2013) illustrated that the effects of “colonial mentality attributes everything positive and desirable to the colonizers (147)” and that it directly impacts FilAm student identity and academic achievement. Ocampo (2016)
illustrates that Filipino racial identity for college students is fluid because it is determined by their social and institutional context. Buenavista et al. (2009) claim that Filipino Americans occupy liminal, or in-between, status because while their experiences in college resemble those of underrepresented racial minorities, as AAPI, they are stereotyped as universally successful “model minority” students and therefore do not need targeted outreach and retention services (p. 228).

Buenavista (2010) further urges that the racialization of Filipinos in the United States as “model minorities” are harmful to themselves and to other Asian American populations who experience limited academic and social support from educational practitioners. These pervasive experiences render the Filipino identity invisible (Nadal, 2021). Additionally, the “invisibility of Filipino Americans in the educational curriculum influences how these students construct knowledge” (Andresen, 2013, p. 70).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States led to stigmatization, violence, and discrimination against the AAPI community (Wu et al., 2021), which has only contributed to this macro traumatic phenomenon. The coronavirus panic is exacerbating people’s existing prejudices and the proliferation of ongoing discrimination of all racial, ethnic, and marginalized groups, which is representative of a more insidious form of societal sickness (Litam, 2020, p. 151). Tumale (2016) asserts that the educational trajectories of Filipino American community college students are adversely affected by racial ideologies perpetuated at the interpersonal level and the racialization of
education affects identity development “in terms of identity dissonance, community cultural wealth, and deficit frameworks” (p. 67). Institutions must provide supportive work and education environments for Filipino Americans as it also benefits and contributes to inclusiveness and diversity for colleges and universities as a whole (Maramba & Nadal, 2013, p. 305).

Theoretical Framework

Legal scholars developed Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework that interrogates the ways in which White supremacy shapes the experiences of People of Color (Ladson-Billings, 2021). In educational contexts, it challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism in education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice have been used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups (Solórzano, 1998). Education scholars have relied on the CRT tradition of counterstory to contextualize the educational experiences of underrepresented Asian Americans (Buenavista et al., 2009).

This study investigated the ways Filipino American community college students remain resilient despite individual experiences with racial trauma. In response to the institutional dynamics of racism in education, Solórzano (1998) proposed five tenets of Critical Race Theory which include: (a) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, (b) the existence and need to challenge dominant ideology, (c) the role of social justice in using such a framework, (d) the
necessity and validity of using the experiential knowledge of Students of Color, and (e) the utility of interdisciplinary perspectives to holistically understand the experiences of Students of Color within historical and contemporary contexts.

These five tenets advocate that “the historical and contemporary experiences of students of color must be examined within a context of educational policies and practices that perpetuate racial marginalization within education” (Buenavista, 2010, p.115). CRT’s intention is to “challenge the dominant discourse on race and racism as they relate to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups” (Solórzano, 1998, p. 122). Buenavista (2010) further posits that using a CRT is critical in understanding and centralizing the voices of Filipino students in educational research as it moves away from the Model Minority Myth into discourse surrounding family dynamics, culturally affirming educational experiences and the sociohistorical context of Filipino students.

Tumale (2016) further asserts that moments of racialization, in combination with other racial microaggressions, have an influence on how students approach their community college experience. Thus, with the global pandemic as a macro traumatic magnification of racial inequity, these racial microaggressions continue to negatively influence Filipino American community college students.
Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

This study assumed that the participants were qualified to discuss their lived experiences as FilAms in community college. It was assumed that the participants also answered truthfully and accurately to the proposed questions based on their personal experience. This study had two main limitations which included the limited sample size and the singularity of the site.

Because the call for FilAm participants was sent during the summer of 2022, I received multiple responses from interested participants but could have potentially had more during the fall semester when more students were active on their student email accounts. Additionally, the study was conducted at a community college in the Inland Empire, which comprises San Bernardino and Riverside counties and therefore only accounted for the lived experiences of the FilAms who attended the chosen site. Delimitations of the research design included the specific school district where the study took place and the number of participants in the study.

Key Terms Defined

Definitions of terms used in the study are as follows:

*Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI)*: any people of Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origin to the countries, states, jurisdictions and/or the diasporic communities of these geographic regions.
*Filipino American (FilAm/Pinoy):* Americans of Filipino/a/x descent.

*First generation Filipino American:* Filipinos who were born in the Philippines and have migrated into the U.S.

*Second generation Filipino American:* Filipinos born in the U.S.

*Race:* a social category created in order to facilitate access and develop structures of power and privilege.

*Racialization:* a socially constructed process or incidence of ascribing specific racial identities to a group or that did not identify themselves as such.

*Racial Minority:* a group of a certain race that are in the minority compared to a larger group, the rest of the population, etc.

*Ethnicity:* the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

*Ethnic Identity:* the extent to which one identifies with a particular ethnic group(s); refers to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership.

*Intersectionality:* a framework for understanding how social identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and gender identity overlap with one another and with systems of power that oppress and advantage people in the workplace and broader community.
Racial Microaggressions: the everyday racialized incidents that students face in college and impede their feelings of acceptance and integration into academia.

First-generation college student: a student who does not have at least one parent who earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Second-generation college student: a student who has at least one parent who earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Validation: recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worthwhile.

Mental Health: an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being as it affects how they think, feel, and act.

Trauma: an event, or series of events, that causes moderate to severe stress reactions.

Racial Trauma/Race-based traumatic stress: the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes.

The Inland Empire (The IE): a metropolitan area and region in Southern California, inland of and adjacent to coastal California, centering around the cities of San Bernardino and Riverside, and borders Los Angeles County to the west.

Participatory Action Research (PAR): A qualitative framework for conducting research which is centered around the collaboration of
participants and the researcher to address a social issue impacting the community of the participants.

*Photovoice:* A visual research methodology used in PAR in which participants take photos of their experiences and the main issues affecting their lives to enact social change and advocate for their individual empowerment.

*Photo Elicitation:* A visual research methodology used in qualitative research to enhance the internal validity of a study.

**Summary and Organization of Remaining Chapters**

This study consists of five chapters, including the introduction to this project. Chapter Two consists of a review of literature related to racialized experiences of Students of Color and AAPI students in TK-12 and higher education settings, the consequences of these racialized experiences, especially the damaging effects of the Model Minority Myth and racial trauma on the mental health, sense of belonging and academic success of FilAm students. Chapter Three includes the methodology of the study. Various considerations and parameters of the study are considered in depth. The parameters encompass the participants, design of the study, the data collection methods, and the data analysis procedures. Each of the areas were exhaustively considered and the detailed design for the study was thoroughly outlined. Chapter Four contains the results of the study and relates the analysis of each of the research questions and their significance. Finally, Chapter Five consists of a discussion of the
findings of the study which includes current practices and suggestions for further research.
Introduction

Maramba and Bonus (2013) assert that AAPI students experience many life challenges that are often unrecognized or become silenced in educational research. From narratives of racial stereotypes/discrimination, violence and struggles with finding a sense of belonging, this community is an under-researched and under-represented minority (Hernandez, 2016), especially from a community college student’s perspective. In particular, the issues of Filipino American community college students “have been hidden by their racialization as Asian Americans” (Buenavista, 2010, p. 116). Ocampo (2016) illustrates that Filipino racial identity for college students is fluid because it is determined by their social and institutional context. Buenavista et al., (2009) claim that Filipino Americans “occupy liminal, or in-between, status because while their experiences in college resemble those of underrepresented racial minorities, as AAPI, they are stereotyped as universally successful ‘model minority’ students and therefore do not need targeted outreach and retention services” (p. 228).

Buena vista (2010) further urges that the racialization of Filipinos in the United States as “model minorities” are harmful to themselves and to other Asian American populations who experience limited academic and social support from educational practitioners. These pervasive experiences render the Filipino
identity invisible (Nadal, 2021). Additionally, the invisibility of Filipino Americans in the educational curriculum influences how these students construct knowledge (Andresen, 2013).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States led to stigmatization, violence, and discrimination against the AAPI community (Wu et al., 2021) which has only contributed to this macro traumatic phenomenon. The coronavirus panic is exacerbating people’s existing prejudices and “the proliferation of ongoing discrimination of all racial, ethnic, and marginalized groups is representative of a more insidious form of societal sickness” (Litam, 2020, p. 151). Tumale (2016) asserts that the educational trajectories of Filipino American community college students are adversely affected by racial ideologies perpetuated at the interpersonal level and the racialization of education affects identity development in terms of identity dissonance, community cultural wealth, and deficit frameworks. Ultimately, “institutions must provide supportive work and education environments for Filipino Americans as it also benefits and contributes to inclusiveness and diversity for colleges and universities as a whole” (Maramba & Nadal, 2013, p. 305).

**Problem Statement**

There are few studies that illustrate the systems of institutional and mental health support for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities in a COVID-era. Additionally, there is a dearth of research on the impact the
The COVID-19 pandemic has on Filipino American Community College students’ academic performance and emotional well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine three critical areas related to Filipino American Community College students: (a) Identity formation through narratives and (counter) narratives; (b) Trauma and resilience; and (c) Sense of belonging inside and outside of academia. This study looks at Filipino American college student identity as multifaceted and intersectional and how resilience from trauma in a COVID-era affects their sense of self and internal validation.

Additionally, this study focused on this community in the culturally diverse state of California, specifically a community college in the Inland Empire (College Z). It set the stage for community college institutions to consider what cultural, academic or mental health resources were provided for FilAm students. The study also urges educators to examine their biases in their current practices and prompts a re-examination of the extent to which community colleges work to represent and affirm the experiences of underrepresented Students of Color to promote equity. This literature review examines how narratives and the sense of belonging of Students and People of Color were affected by racial trauma, academic and social spaces and the intersections and shifting with other racial identities because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Narrative of Racial Microaggressions in Academic Spaces

Racism in the American education system works to oppress racial minorities and manifests itself in many dehumanizing practices. This systemic vulnerability has the ability to create a disconnect between institutions of power and access to educational success for Students of Color through “the production and reproduction of systemic racial advantages for some (the dominant racial group) and disadvantages for others (the subordinated races)” (Bonilla-Silva, 2015, p. 1360). The definition of “White supremacy,” according to Pérez Huber et al. (2021) identifies there is a “perceived superiority of Whites over People of Color functioning as an insidious disease that upholds the conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy where People of Color are consistently placed in a subordinate position to Whites” (p. 2). Racism is perpetuated through this hierarchical structure. The academic and social experiences of racism that Students of Color face every day can take the form of “racial microaggressions” which describe the everyday racialized incidents that students face in college and impede their feelings of acceptance and integration into academia (Teranashi, 2002, p. 145).

The racial microaggressions Students of Color experience often are normalized into school policies and practices. These narratives often illustrate unfair assumptions that are projected toward Students of Color. Stereotypes in educational settings affect the perceptions Students of Color have about their own safety and their teachers because of their lowered expectations and racial
tracking (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021). Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework works to centralize the conversation of racialized experiences in education.

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002):

CRT advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin. As a central principle of CRT, populations that have otherwise been subordinated or silenced can be heard through legitimate narratives that challenge the dominant discourse of reality. (p. 25)

Narratives of racially stigmatized communities in educational institutions have persisted and represent a major equity gap in education research. Pérez Huber et al. (2021) examined the ways that People of Color experience racial microaggressions (risk factors) and micro affirmations (protective factors) in higher education institutions. The purpose of the study was to show how institutional racism expressed as racial microaggressions pose a threat to the academic success, sense of belonging and emotional well-being of Students of Color. Pérez Huber et al. (2021) indicated that risk factors such as racial microaggressions work to keep People of Color marginalized. The study suggested that racial microaggressions such as academic deficit narratives and
racist stereotypes directed at Students of Color can perpetuate systemic racial inequities.

Similarly, Solórzano (1998) completed a study which focused on narratives of racialized and gendered microaggressions of Chicano/a/x graduate students. The purpose of the study was to use CRT as a guiding framework to illustrate and document the stories of discrimination of these students through the intersections of race and gender. The study analyzed close-ended and open-ended surveys along with in-depth interview data (Solórzano, 1998). The study revealed narratives of racism, both subtle and explicit, which led doctoral students to experience feelings of alienation from their peers/academia, low self-worth, lowered expectations and sexism from instructors. Solórzano (1998) indicated that the systemic barriers for Students of Color, even at the graduate level, are difficult to identify and overcome.

On the other hand, McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) studied the ways in which Black Educators work to ensure the academic success and social protection of Black students in elementary, middle and high schools. The study employed a framework of politicized caring (Mckinney de Royston et al., 2021) which led the researchers to two research questions. The first question asked, “How do Black educators articulate the need to protect Black students?” and the second question asked, “What are the mechanisms of protection these educators enact in their classrooms and in schools?” (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021, p. 77). The data were collected using semi-structured interviews involving Black
educators, critical stakeholders and observational data of in-class practices. The coded data included: race/racialization, discipline, care, teacher-student relationships, and protection/safety (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021, p. 80).

While Solórzano’s (1998) study focused on systemic barriers for Students of Color, the study by McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) discussed how Black educators focused their racial consciousness in the classroom with discussions about racialized harm such as experiences of stereotypes and police brutality. Additionally, McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) discussed how protection of Black students could be conceptualized through disciplinary restraint and affectionate naming. In contrast to Solórzano’s (1998) study, McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) discussed how Black educators combatted the lack of support through the protection of the students and safe spaces. McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) suggested that “Black educators should be intentional about creating safe spaces for Black students because violence and trauma are systematically orchestrated by aggressive and institutionalized neglect” (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021, p. 99). Solórzano’s (1998) and McKinney de Royston, et al. (2021) illustrated the racialized experiences of Chicana and Chicano students and Black educators, whereas the study by Pérez Huber et al. (2021) provides critical implications for the racial microaggressions endured by Students of Color.

Racial microaggressions in academic spaces according to Pérez Huber et al. (2021) work to keep minoritized students in their marginal space.
Marginalization in education can take multiple oppressive forms including narratives of explicit and implicit racism, leading to feelings of low self-worth or lowered expectations from instructors (Solórzano, 1998). Despite this institutional normalization of racial microaggressions, some educators work to create safe spaces and incorporate affectionate naming in the classroom (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021). Critical Race Theory (CRT) as proposed by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) works to center the experiences of minoritized students and empower them to counter the harmful effects of institutional neglect (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021).

Narrative of Racial Stereotypes and Fatigue

Drawing from CRT in education, Pérez Huber et al. (2021) conducted a study which cited “racial battle fatigue” (i.e., emotional withdrawal or acceptance of racist attributions) as the negative social and psychological stress responses to African American males attending predominantly White campuses. The study’s research design involved graduate Students of Color who attended a four-year university and examined how these students understood racial micro affirmations (as a remedy to racial microaggressions) and how they experienced them in their schools and outside of school. There was a total of 30 participants for the study in a focus group over the span of seven months. Pérez Huber et al. (2021) indicated that racial microaggressions can take many forms (i.e., the absence of Educators of Color in academic spaces and the deficit views Students of Color place on themselves and their families for systemic educational outcomes).
In addition to the individual experiences of students, racial microaggressions can affect the entirety of a campus racial climate. Solórzano et al. (2000) conducted a qualitative study using ten focus groups consisting of thirty-four purposefully sampled African American students attending three elite research universities. This study aimed to use focus groups to illustrate how these students experienced racialized marginalization at their institutions. Using a grounded theory approach, the study found that students faced microaggressions in their interactions with faculty including implicit bias “leading to feeling ‘drained’ by the intense scrutiny their everyday actions received in the context of negative preconceived notions about African Americans” (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 67).

The study also revealed that the negative racial climate of their campus cultivated a sense of discouragement, frustration, and exhaustion resulting from racial microaggressions, leaving some African American students “despondent and made them feel that they could not perform well academically” (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 69). Based on the results of the study, the researchers cautioned that without documentation and testimonial, racial stereotypes and their damaging effects to all Students of Color can be severely underestimated in educational settings.

Racial microaggressions in academic spaces have a negative impact on the mental health of African American students, leaving them feeling the psychological stress of, “racial battle fatigue” (Pérez Huber et al., 2021).
Additionally, racial microaggressions stemming from student interactions with faculty can also negatively affect the academic performance of Students of Color (Solórzano et al., 2000).

The AAPI “Model Minority” Narrative

The stereotype that Asian Americans are seen as high-achieving masks the significant racial, social and economic disparities that exist within this ethnically diverse community (Museus et al., 2021). This stereotype, known as the “Model Minority Myth" assumes that as a collective whole, Asian Americans are well-educated and successful, thus minimizing their experiences into a narrow narrative. It also depicts the false narrative that the academic achievement of AAPI students takes priority over their mental health (Johnston-Guerrero & Pizzolato, 2016). Additionally, Yi et al. (2020) further discussed that the myth was both politicized and weaponized by White supremacy to pit non-Asian American People of Color against each other by claiming that systemic inequalities exist because of their cultures.

Museus, et al. (2021) add that the Model Minority Myth essentializes the experiences of Asian American communities, causing racial exploitation of Asian Americans in the United States. White supremacy is further amplified when Asian Americans are excluded from social justice agendas and discourses, therefore shifting the responsibilities of racial oppression and the burden of addressing them onto the shoulders of other communities of color (Museus et al., 2021). Because the Model Minority Myth informs the public perceptions of Asian
Americans and Pacific Islanders as an American success story, it erases them from educational research, policy and practice.

Teranishi (2002) conducted a study which illustrated the racialized social and educational experiences of Chinese and Filipino students in high school as they related to their college prospects and relationships with stakeholders such as their peers and faculty members. The study’s objective was to highlight some of the misconceptions regarding the educational experience of AAPI students. The researcher cited the stereotypes of AAPI students being high academic achievers as problematic because it rules them out from discourse involving their educational needs or issues. The two research questions which guided this study included: “In what ways are race and/or ethnicity a factor in the educational experiences of Chinese and Filipino Americans?” and “Do race and/or ethnicity affect these students' ability to develop and pursue postsecondary aspirations?” (Teranishi, 2002, pp. 144-145). The study noted that understanding racial climates in schools is determined by acknowledging that students learn in distinct racial contexts.

The participants for this research consisted of Filipino and Chinese students at four purposefully sampled California public high schools, which had a large Chinese or Filipino population. The research design incorporated a short survey with open-ended questions about racial experiences and attitudes about identity, followed by an in-depth semi-structured interview. In the results of the study, Teranishi identified two themes through student narratives including: the
role of inclusion in the race and ethnicity of the students’ educational experiences and the effect the social climate had on the students’ academic performance because of the connotations of their race and ethnicity.

While Chinese students were treated as the model minority, with high expectations and support from their peers, teachers and counselors, the Filipino students felt they were stigmatized as delinquents and left with little to no guidance about college prospects or confidence in their academic abilities (Teranashi, 2002). Racialized interactions in school, therefore, favored the academic prospects of Chinese students but would be of disservice to Filipino students. Filipino students’ interpersonal, psychological and structural challenges in school made it difficult for them to cultivate a positive self-image of their ethnic and racial identities (Teranashi, 2002, p. 151).

Ultimately, the academic and racial identities of AAPI students have been informed by their racialized experiences in unique ways. Research by Johnston-Guerrero and Pizzolato (2016) challenged the narrative that the Model Minority Myth has positive outcomes for AAPI college students using a constructivist and grounded theory study. The purpose of this study was to examine the multiple social identities (i.e., gender, social class) and the cognitive development of AAPI college students through their interpretation of the terms, “race” and “ethnicity” as they related to their identity-based claims. Two research questions guided the study: “How useful do the terms race and ethnicity seem to be for their understanding of their identity?” and “Why are the terms utilized in different ways
by Asian American students?” (Johnston-Guerrero & Pizzolato, 2016, p. 906). The categorization of AAPI students as a collective community leads to their perception of being overrepresented in higher education, thus rendering specific ethnic groups of AAPI students invisible to their unique needs and resources.

The study design utilized Jones and McEwin’s (2000) model of multiple dimensions of identity (MMDI) which outlined the relationship between a person’s core personal identity, several significant social identity dimensions (e.g., race, class), and contextual influences (Johnston-Guerrero & Pizzolato, 2016, p. 908). The study included 101 AAPI undergraduate participants across two college campuses who were interviewed face-to-face about their social identities, contextual influences and their perceptions of race and ethnicity in their academic lives and society.

The study’s results illustrated various responses, especially from students who did not fit the Model Minority Myth. Some results indicated that the term “race” was negative, a term externally applied, while “ethnicity” was positive while other results showed that the two terms were interchangeable and thus indistinguishable. The authors offered implications for educational practices including an indication that the “Asian” label for counseling center practitioners does more racial harm to students who might not fit under the AAPI umbrella.

Identity-based claims by students in higher education related to their race and/or ethnicity have critical implications for the formation of their social identities in educational settings (Johnston-Guerrero & Pizzolato, 2016). Similarly, the
Model Minority Myth affects the social positioning of AAPI students and more broadly, Students of Color through the dangerous stereotyping of identities.

Yi et al. (2020) conducted a study which critiqued literature published between 2000-2013 which discussed the Model Minority Myth. The purpose of the study was to determine if the research surrounding the myth reinforced hegemonic paradigms through deficit-oriented discourse. By implementing an anti-imperialistic analysis for the study, the authors indicated that the racialization of Asian Americans in education is problematic and critical to investigate further. The study used the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory to guide the analysis and examine how the Model Minority Myth reinforces White Supremacy, the systemic oppression of Asian Americans and to a greater extent, the impacts it has on other Communities of Color.

Yi et al. (2020) generated two questions to guide the study. Their first question was, “Why is there disagreement regarding whether framing of the myth reinforces deficit paradigms?” The second question asked was, “After making sense of these divergent perspectives, how do we understand the ways in which the myth is framed in existing research?”

The latter question included two sub questions: “How do systemic contexts shape the ways in which the myth has been framed in research?” and “What are the ramifications of the ways in which the myth has been framed in this literature for social justice agendas?” (p. 551).
The research aimed at analyzing literature by clarifying the different interpretations and critiques of the Model Minority Myth using existing knowledge on the subject. The results of the study indicated that the literature under analysis discussed strategic anti-essentialism efforts, antiracist agendas and racial justice advocacy for all Communities of Color. Additionally, the study discussed the importance of critiquing framing processes such as racial triangulation as they work to decenter the identities and experiences of some groups of Asian Americans and inhibit strategic efforts in social justice agendas.

The Model Minority Myth works in concert with White supremacy as a form of racial exploitation (Museus et al., 2021) to further oppress AAPI students by treating this community as a monolith while ascribing them assumptions of universal success, overachievement and disregard to mental health. This stereotype in educational settings creates a racial climate that perpetuates inequalities and creates segregation within AAPI subgroups (Teranishi, 2002). Additionally, the myth affects the perceived social identity and positioning of AAPI students on college campuses (Johnston-Guerrero & Pizzolato, 2016). Ultimately, the false narrative created by The Model Minority Myth erases the work of AAPI activism and racial justice (Yi et al., 2020).

The Dual Pandemic

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic originating from Wuhan, China led to unprecedented and devastating health, economic and social impacts of individuals worldwide; however, the disease has not affected everyone
equally, disproportionately burdening racial and ethnic minorities (Chen, et al., 2021). In the United States, social problems such as racism against Asian Americans were manifested in the form of anti-Asian rhetoric, racist abuse and physical assault as, “the perpetrators of this violence see all of these bodies as foreign and threatening” (Tessler, et al., 2020, p. 642). AAPI communities were treated as a monolith through implicit bias and grouped under the same identity which led to discourse politicizing the virus as being associated with Asian communities. This led to experiences of heightened racial disparities and neglect of the diverse needs among AAPI ethnic groups.

**Psychological Trauma from the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Yang et al. (2021) implemented a phenomenological qualitative content analysis which involved reviewing several news media reports and articles centered around anti-Asian rhetoric, racism and violence within the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed to investigate the impact these stories had on Asian race-based stress and trauma amplified during the pandemic. The authors utilized both inductive and deductive coding to indicate which articles aligned with the emerging phenomena during the coronavirus era. This study offered a look into stigmatizing narratives about anti-Asian incidents.

Race-based stress and trauma is an emerging psychological framework that shifts the conversation about trauma from acute, incident-based trauma to the chronic stress and re-traumatization associated with racism (Yang et al., 2021, p. 1). Several news outlets containing anti-Asian discourse were explored.
in this study, including *National Public Radio* (NPR), *The British Daily Mail* and tweets composed by former President Donald Trump.

Five prominent themes were revealed through this qualitative analysis: (a) pathologizing cultural practices; (b) alien in one’s own land; (c) invalidation of interethnic differences; (d) ascription of diseased status; and (e) duality of frontline hero and virus carrier (Yang et al., 2021, p. 1). The first theme illustrated sensationalist news media which aimed to place the blame of the pandemic on Chinese culture and communities. Since multiple themes were reported to occur at once, a multidimensional analysis of the data was conducted to interpret and contextualize the institutional and cultural levels of the reported anti-Asian incidents. The second theme cited news reports of anti-Asian discrimination which perpetuated Asian communities as foreigners, regardless of their nationality. The third theme discussed different spheres of racism such as isolated incidents or misrepresentation of the virus in the media which further reflect racism at institutional or cultural levels (Yang et al., 2021). The fourth theme illustrated the weaponized language of labeling the Asian race with a diseased status via social media. Lastly, the fifth theme discussed the duality of Asian healthcare workers as frontline heroes and virus carriers, being honored for their work during the pandemic while also experiencing racial hostility.

The results of the study concluded that the reports of negative psychological stress AAPI communities felt resulted not only from in-person racist incidents but from media outlets amplifying information about the virus.
Additionally, the race-based stress also reflected an invalidation of interethnic differences among AAPI communities along with ascription of diseased status (Yang et al., 2021).

Hahm et al. (2021) conducted a study using 2020-2021 longitudinal data from the COVID-19 Adult Resilience Experiences Study (CARES) for the purpose of exploring racism and discrimination narratives written by AAPI and non-Asian U.S. young adults who participated in CARES. The study focused on answering two research questions: 1) what types of discrimination did U.S. young adults, across races, experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and 2) What type(s) of affective reactions were elicited by these discriminatory experiences? The study investigated the experiences of both AAPI and non-Asian young adults ages 18-30.

The study draws from The Harrell Model (2000) of multidimensional racism-related stress which suggests that discrimination has psychological, social and functional consequences, implying that vicarious experiences of racism such as viewing online, relating of personal narratives related anti-Asian discrimination negatively affects the mental health of both AAPI and non-Asian people. The methodology used a thematic analysis which organized three distinct levels of anti-Asian discrimination: societal, interpersonal and intrapersonal. These levels were further divided into four manifestations of discrimination: political discrimination, direct discrimination, vicarious discrimination and internalized discrimination. These manifestations were then divided into four
affective reactions: fear, anxiety/distress, hopelessness/depression, and avoidance.

The data was organized to represent participants’ responses, constructs and definitions in open-ended responses of their experiences with discrimination in work, social media and school settings. The reports from participants suggests that anti-Asian discrimination, in any manifestation, can contribute to negative affective responses such as fear and anxiety/distress. The researchers note that the closest modern analogy to the occurrence of anti-Asian discrimination related to COVID-19 may be the ethnocentric experiences reported by Arab and Muslim Americans post 9/11. Additionally, the study claims that this type of anti-Asian discrimination treats Asians as “perpetual foreigners resulting in the sense of feeling like aliens in their own lands”. The study’s limitations were identified in the use of open-ended questions, for which the authors suggest future studies should employ more in-depth qualitative interviews to derive data illustrating social processes described in this analysis as well as coping mechanisms through which people address the harmful effects of anti-Asian discrimination. The study also makes note that the age range of young adults aged 18-30 was also a contributing limitation, as the results cannot be generalized for other age groups. The researchers suggest that collaboration between systems including educational systems, law enforcement and media campaigns can work to empower AAPI communities.
The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated race-based traumatic stress for AAPI communities through anti-Asian targeted harassment and violence along with misleading news and media rhetoric (Yang et al., 2021). Likewise, narratives of anti-Asian discrimination during the pandemic illustrate the power that targeted discrimination has on AAPI mental health (Hahm et al., 2021).

**Pandemic Effects on Students**

Museus, et al. (2021) aimed to explore the role of Asian American undergraduate students engaged in social justice advocacy, especially as it relates to their histories of racial oppression and by other racial minorities. The purpose of the study was to outline and address gaps in knowledge regarding how Asian American students make sense of their role in solidarity doing social justice advocacy despite barriers in systemic racial dynamics such as competition within communities of color. The study utilized a critical paradigm to observe how students viewed solidarity in relation to advancing racial relations and social justice objectives.

The participants were purposefully sampled AAPI students and out of 300 students who completed a social justice Likert-scale screening questionnaire, 11 were selected to participate in the face-to-face semi-structured interview process. These questions were aimed at helping the students tell their stories of advocacy, solidarity and social justice work. The participants for the study included Asian American undergraduates who were attending the Midwest Asian
American Student Union (MAASU), a regional association of Asian American student unions from 25 campuses in the Midwest.

Three themes were identified the study: recognition of interconnected realities, centering solidarity and using an intersectional approach to social justice activism and advocacy. Respectively, the interview themes in these narratives revealed that communities of color have shared futurities or destinies through intersecting struggles; one movement shapes the possibilities of others, building coalitions and facilitating dialogue among diverse groups strengthens understanding and the work of solidarity and there is a mutual benefit to showing up for other communities such as learning about their identities and issues. The authors note the misconception that Asian Americans are uniformly assimilationist and the weaponization of such stereotypes, to dismiss the impact of systemic oppression toward other Communities of Color which poses challenges to Asian American and other racially minoritized communities building alliances.

Chen et al. (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study aimed at examining the relationship between perceived racism, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), resilience and mental health outcomes of AAPI graduate and undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study utilized the Vulnerable Populations Framework which claims that health outcomes are guided by racial inequities and preventative resources that are available to these populations.
Chen et al. (2012) proposed three questions to guide this study. The first asked, “What was the prevalence of AAPI students’ relative risk (perceived and factual racial discrimination, fear of COVID-19), resources (COVID-19 prevention knowledge, resilience), and mental health status (depression, PTSD) during the pandemic?” The second question asked, “What were the relationships of AAPI students’ relative risk (perceived racial discrimination, fear of COVID-19), resources (COVID-19 prevention knowledge, resilience), and PTSD when controlling for sociodemographic variables?” The third question asked, “What were the relationships of AAPI students’ relative risk (perceived racial discrimination, fear of COVID-19), resources (COVID-19 prevention knowledge, resilience), and depression when controlling for sociodemographic variables?” (pp. 123-124).

The mixed methods design included a cross-sectional survey of qualitative and quantitative data which included a survey and interviews of a convenience sample of AAPI college students (Chen et al., 2021). The variables used to measure the sample population included: age, gender, degree, relative risk, resilience and PTSD and racial discrimination. The study used a Pearson Correlation coefficient and Hierarchical Regression estimates to measure the effects of the variables on the sample population. The data collection included surveys that included measured levels of fear of COVID-19 and exposure to traumatic experiences/recovery capacity. The interviews revealed that the negative impact of the pandemic on college life/career prospects and worry of
racial discrimination not only affected the mental well-being of AAPI college students, but this vulnerable population might require immediate counseling and mental health assistance (Chen et al., 2021).

Academic and Personal Resilience

Museus et al. (2021) suggest that educators be intentional about creating spaces designed to foster interracial solidarity and create programs that raise awareness about how racism affects different communities of color and the intersections between different forms of racialization and racial violence.

Research by Muñoz et al. (2018) used a case study approach to examine how normalized anti-immigrant and racially inflammatory rhetoric (“the Trump Effect”) before and after the 2016 presidential election affected the college experience for undocumented Latinx students. The participants of the study included students self-identified as Latino/a, Latinx and/or Chicana/Chicano who attended two- and four-year colleges. The study used a CRT theoretical framework and the methodology included 90 to 120-minute focus groups participating in their critical race testimonies with careful attention to ensuring the confidentiality of these undocumented participants.

The study revealed four emergent themes including: (1) citizen fragility seemed pervasive and The Trump Effect finding hope was deemed as challenging; (2) students experienced an increase of emboldened racist nativism on their college campuses; (3) the exploitation of undocumented student labor; and (4) shared solidarity as beneficial for student resilience (Muñoz et al., 2018,
pp. 41-42). The interviews described that the perpetual trauma these students experienced through anti-immigration rhetoric was prevalent and bolstered through social media platforms. Also, students felt exploited and patronized due to their college’s efforts in supporting DACA.

Most notably, the study illustrated that empowerment and resilience for these students was achieved through shared solidarity with other minoritized student organizations such as AAPI and Black students. The results of the study warned that when students are tokenized for being resilient in college, institutions “absolve institutions of the responsibility to address the trauma and stress students experience during tumultuous political times (Muñoz et al., 2018, p. 49).

Pérez Huber et al. (2021) discussed how racial microaggressions experienced by marginalized communities can be remedied by micro affirmations that can be protective, make them feel valued and provide a source of healing from the trauma of microaggressions (Pérez Huber et al., 2021). Racial micro affirmations can take the protective role of empowering People of Color through counterspaces, which work to engage students in authentic dialogue and support the cultural intimacy of safe spaces and centering the experiences of Communities of Color through the Ethnic Studies discipline and engaging in everyday validations (Pérez Huber et al., 2021).

Nadal et al. (2010) conducted an exploratory study of the unique experiences of Filipino American graduate students and their identity development. The purpose of the study was to illustrate the specific needs of this
population of students in higher education and to develop support systems for their academic success (Nadal et al., 2010). The authors indicated that since there is a dearth of research on Filipino American graduate students, snowball sampling methodology and the distribution of online surveys with open-ended answers were utilized for the study.

The researchers used the consensual qualitative research (CQR) method to determine five domains of data review including: deficiencies and (a) lack of resources for Filipino American graduate students, (b) positive experiences as Filipino American graduate students, (c) experiences with support systems, (d) experiences due to race/ethnicity and racism, and (e) recommendations for improving Filipino Americans’ graduate school experiences (Nadal et al., 2010, p. 698). The study discussed the psychological outcomes of self-reliance and alienation these students experienced. The results of the study determined that Filipino American graduate students can be resilient in their studies through mentorship and outreach programs and ethnic-specific programming by pan-Asian American organizations on campus (Nadal et al., 2010). Overall, the researchers urged professors and educators to be inclusive of the institutional and academic needs of Filipino American graduate students.

Summary

There is a large body of work discussing the racialized experiences of Students of Color in educational settings. The aforementioned studies indicate
that the systemic barriers to academic success and resilience that White supremacy imposes on racially minoritized populations positions Students of Color to have a disadvantage over their own educational agency. These racial disparities can include racial microaggressions (i.e., lowered expectations from educators, failure to recognize cultural differences amongst Students of Color) and a lack of educational resources (i.e., Educators of Color, mental health support, student services, etc.). A number of studies also discussed the risk and protective factors of racialized experiences associated with campus climates and student perceptions of racism and resilience in school.

This research also indicates that in physical and digital spaces, racial discrimination in the U.S. fueled by White supremacy is further amplified in the midst of heightened political tension, fear and insecurity. In particular, the studies examined the negative psychological effect that racism, both subtle and explicit, had on Students of Color. The studies illustrated how Students of Color negotiate their ethnic and academic identities and their own capacity to achieve academic success while taking charge of their mental health.

Students of Color include Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students and their distinct ethnic communities. The studies indicated the lack of research issues surrounding AAPI students is because of the politicized and harmful nature of the Model Minority Myth, which falsely assumes AAPI communities as a monolithic group and ultimately perpetuates their marginalized status. This marginalization, according to the studies, pits AAPI communities
against each other and to a greater extent, does social and psychological harm to other Communities of Color. Nevertheless, the narrative of resilience in education is problematic because macro traumatic events can leave lasting effects on these students.

Research, therefore, indicates that educational leaders must be intentional about transforming systems of support for AAPI students in higher education. Important elements which can assist AAPI students include: 1) developing and ensuring counterspaces exist on campus which foster a sense of safety and unity among AAPI students; 2) recruiting and retaining more Educators and Mentors of Color; 3) calling out systems of oppression and racism through meetings involving stakeholders; 4) incorporating culturally-sustainable praxis; and 5) using school racial/ethnic enrollments to identity underrepresented Communities of Color to develop these systems of support. This study focuses on the FilAm population of AAPI communities and attempts to fill gaps in the potential ways community colleges can support the academic success and mental health of FilAms living in a COVID-era. The next section addresses the research methods to be used in this study.
Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a type of critical research which centralizes the political empowerment of people through their involvement in the design and implementation of a research project with the intention of understanding the subtle and overt manifestations of oppression to ignite collective action (Merriam, 2009, p. 36). The research for this study was conducted using a photovoice qualitative research method. Photovoice is a PAR method which visually documents intangible concepts by means of photography and is accompanied by a narrative, caption or story to give more meaning to the photographs to be put in an exhibition to invite policymakers and decision makers to view the photos and narratives in an effort to work for some sort of social change. This method is particularly significant for decision-makers to listen to the stories and voices of marginalized people (Latz, 2017). PAR is inherently critical, political and is social change/justice oriented. It creates a space to bring marginalized voices to the center of qualitative research by means of including participants as co-researchers.

Photovoice works in concert with the Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenant of creating counterstories to elevate minority voices, experiences and realities by challenging traditional narratives of minoritized populations. Photovoice has three anticipated outcomes: (a) action and advocacy to affect policy change (b)
increased understandings of community needs and assets; and (c) individual empowerment (Latz, 2017, p. 43) Because policymakers are often excluded from the experiences and circumstances in which the policy was created (Latz, 2017) photovoice works to bridge this gap as it “interrogates a citizen approach to documentary photography, the production of knowledge, and social action” (Latz, 2017, p. 66).

Research Setting

Because there is a dearth of research on FilAm community college students in the Inland Empire (often referred to by locals as the IE), the research for this project was conducted at a community college in the Inland Empire located in Southern California, USA. The proposed research setting was selected for three critical reasons: (1) The geographic location (2) The enrollment size of FilAm students (3) The need for more FilAm representation at this primarily Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). The research project took place in the summer of 2022.

Research Sample

The purpose of this study was to examine three critical areas related to FilAm Community college students: (a) Identity formation through narratives and (counter) narratives (b) trauma and resilience and (c) Sense of belonging inside and outside of academia. This study looked at FilAm college student identity as
multifaceted and intersectional and how resilience from traumatic experiences affects their sense of self and internal validation. The current study focused on the racialization of FilAm community college students and their relationship with trauma, resilience and healing.

_Purposive or Purposeful_ sampling is a criterion-based selection sampling strategy in which the researcher creates a list of attributes and criteria essential to the study which reflects the purpose of the study and guides the identification of information-rich cases (Merriam, 2009, p. 77-8). The inclusionary criteria for this study was a purposive sample of 10 first-generation self-identifying FilAm community college students who currently attended the site of the study, College Z. Prospective participants were recruited through responses to a mass email distributed to the campus by College Z’s Office of Student Life. Additionally, a digital flier recruiting participants for the study was broadcasted on College Z’s official website and social media outlets. The flier’s language included the following:

- We are recruiting Filipino/a/x American students for an online self-paced two-week study on how this community has been impacted by racial trauma heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Photovoice empowers minority communities and addresses their needs through photos and narratives. Use your smart device camera to share your story.
Prospective participants who fit the inclusionary criteria for this study (FilAm community college students) were invited to participate. This study sought to address two overarching research questions:

1. How have Filipino American community college students in the Inland Empire been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What systems of support can community colleges create to help Filipino American community college students during a COVID-era?

FilAm students are an underrepresented minority in community college attendance statistics. The research setting aligned with the research purpose and research questions because College Z is attended by underrepresented FilAm students who could benefit from the research project. Nevertheless, all community colleges can benefit from this study because it can help them cultivate an inviting space for populations of FilAm to attend and succeed in college.

Research Data

Merriam (2009) asserts that qualitative researchers focus on observing the meanings that people have developed from their experiences and the world around them through an inductive process which is emergent, flexible and rich in description. Additionally, at the outset of a qualitative study, the investigator knows what the problem is and has selected a purposeful sample to collect data.
in order to address the problem (Merriam, 2009, p. 171). This study was qualitative in its design and data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. According to Van Maanen (1979):

Qualitative research is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 520)

Photovoice is flexible by design; six steps were used as a guidepost to collect then analyze the data for this study: (1) identification- acknowledging our epistemological values as researchers and developing inquiry and conversation with participants over how the photographs would be used (2) invitation- inclusion and exclusion criteria are considered from the participant pool (3) education- consideration of the participants’ consent to be published or photographed, providing participants with informational material about the study and the contact information of the researcher and an explanation to participants on how the smart device would be used to take photos (4) documentation- giving guidance such as open-ended prompts on what participants ought to photograph (5) narration- using photo-elicited narrations, the participants dialogically and collaboratively make meaning of the narrative data set (6) ideation- the researcher considers existing research on the topic and generates thematic strands within narrations (Latz, 2017, pp. 4-5).
Data Collection

Grounded Theory is a specific research methodology which positions the researcher taking an inductive stance as the main instrument of data collection (observations, documentary materials etc.), deriving meaning from the data and building a theory grounded in the data itself (Merriam, 2009, pp. 29-30). Although I am pulling from the traditions of Grounded Theory, photovoice is flexible and my intention is to simply borrow from the theory by using the documentary photography from the photovoice and the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to create actionable institutional change at College Z. Aspects of Grounded Theory was therefore used to investigate concepts of the racialized identity of FilAm community college students in the Inland Empire and their experiences with healing and resilience from racial trauma.

Specifically, both the narrations from the photo elicitation were systematically analyzed for thematic patterns. Because photo elicitation in the form of narrative provides participants with, “more than one symbolic means of expression: language and image” (Latz, 2017, p. 75), it was the participants who provided an analysis and gave meaning to the photos.

Photo elicitation is the use of photographs to generate verbal discussion (Thomas, 2009). As part of the PAR methodology, the participants of the study took photos and provided a narration or conversation about the photo’s representation and relevance to their own experiences and daily prompts. The photographs taken served as an antecedent, eliciting responses from the
participants to describe how they used photography to respond to the prompt(s) provided to them (Latz, 2017, p. 74) Photo elicitation can be part of a data collection method and a form of analysis.

In addition, five daily open-ended prompts aligned with the proposed study’s research questions assisted the participants in their photo elicitation:

- Describe your experience being a Filipino/a/x student at College Z during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In what ways do you feel a sense of belonging as a Filipino/a/x in the Inland Empire and at College Z? Do you think living and/or learning in the IE made your community college experience different from other racial identities?
- How does your racial identity as a Filipino/a/x student during the pandemic affect how you think about Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) identity and COVID-19 related racism/racial trauma? How did you realize that you identified as Filipino/a/x?
- What comes to mind when you think of the experiences you have/had with the instructors, counselors, staff and other students at College Z? In what ways have you felt racially or culturally represented in the courses or instructors you have had as a student at College Z?
- What support systems and resources at College Z would you like implemented to feel more seen, heard and valued as a Filipino/a/x student?
Accessibility was at the forefront of this project. The target population of community college students typically have access to smartphones and/or smart devices with cameras and internet accessibility. Therefore, the data were collected using a Google Forms document generated by the researcher and sent to the participants as a URL link available via email or text message to ensure convenience and increase the likelihood of consistent engagement in the project. The document included a brief message informing the participants about the open-ended prompt of the day. Participants input a nickname/pseudonym, their gender pronouns, an original and unedited photo taken on their smartphone/smart device, the title of their photo and 5-6 sentences describing the photo as it related to the prompt.

The first week focused on the photovoice/photo elicitation phase, collecting the participants' photos and narratives. The second week sought to engage the participants in reflective written discussion regarding their experience in the project. The participants had the opportunity to view the photos and narratives from other participants as a form of member-checking to enhance trustworthiness in the data collection. It is critical to note that in the data collection process, the participants must feel supported and appreciated for their contributions to this work. Expressions of gratitude, amiability and encouraging language used in daily communication of the prompts assisted in the participants’ responses and attrition to further validate their experiences.
The fifth step: narration was conducted using photo elicitation. As a core method within the methodology, photo elicitation, a method especially well-suited for inquiries related to education, is used in nearly every photovoice study (Latz, 2017, p. 75). As part of the PAR methodology, the participants of the study took photos and provided a 5-6 sentence written narrative about the photo’s representation and relevance to their own experiences and daily prompts. Asking participants to document aspects of their social worlds gives researchers access to spaces, insights and realities not accessible otherwise (Latz, 2017, p. 76). The photos and the words of the participants help to initiate their reflective storytelling process. Additionally, the photographs always represent the participants’ gaze, something that the researcher can never fully experience or understand completely (Latz, 2017, p. 76).

Data Analysis

Coding is the process of assigning some sort of shorthand designation (words, phrases, colors or a combination of these) to various aspects of data to easily retrieve specific pieces of data (Merriam, 2009, p. 173). Coding for this study took three phases: open, axial and theoretical. Photovoice data analysis is flexible and the Grounded Theory approach in data analysis can be executed in any order, this sequential order of the phases served as a guidepost for the process.
In the open-coding phase, the word data from the photovoice narrations were, “broken down into discrete parts, closely examined and compared for similarities and differences.” (Latz, 2017, p. 98). Qualitative data analysis software was not used for this study. Instead, the word data from the photo elicitation narrations were copied and pasted from the received Google Forms onto a Microsoft Word document. Open codes were added onto the document narrations within the text in the form of a bold bracket. It is in this first phase where the researcher began to, “conceptualize categories, build initial themes and think about theory” (Latz, 2017, p. 98). Data chunks were coded either line by line, sentence by sentence or paragraph. The open-coding phase had the data organized into different quotes from the narratives, a theme and a brief narrative which paraphrased what the quote was illustrating.

Grouping open-codes by combining word data into categories is sometimes called axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2017) which “comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning” (Richards, 2005, p. 94). The axial coding phase worked to reassemble the fragmented word data which was dismantled during the open coding process. Strauss (1987) identified four procedural steps for axial coding: (a) lay out the properties and dimensions of the categories (b) identify the conditions, actions, interactions and consequences associated with a phenomenon or category (c) relate categories to subcategories and (d) look for clues in the data to understand how major categories are related to one another.” (Latz, 2017, p. 99).
The Microsoft Word document containing the photo-elicited narratives were color-coded based on the emergent themes observed by the participants’ photo elicitation. In addition, the submitted photos were downloaded from the submitted Google Sheets document and color-coded according to emergent themes and categories on a separate Microsoft Word document. The axial coding phase uses categories, themes or findings to organize and visualize the data into buckets into which segments of texts are placed (Merriam, 2017, p. 182).

Merriam (2017) illustrates that at the beginning of the study, the analysis strategy of the researcher is entirely inductive, looking at pieces of data and deriving tentative categories; the end of the study sees the researcher operating from a deductive stance, looking for more evidence in support of the final set of categories. Additionally, Merriam (2017) asserts that in addition to being responsive to the purpose of the research, the categories, themes and findings constructed during data analysis in the axial coding phase should meet the following criteria:

- Be as sensitive to the data as possible
- Be exhaustive (enough categories to encompass all relevant data)
- Be mutually exclusive (a relevant unit of data can be placed in only one category)
- Be conceptually congruent (all categories are at the same conceptual level)
Glassier and Strauss (1967) cautioned that selecting data for a category which has been established by another theory tends to hinder the generation of new categories; emergent categories prove to be the most relevant and best fitted to the data as opposed to borrowed categories since in the long run they may not be relevant, and are not exactly designed for the purpose, they must be respecified (p. 37).

Lastly, the theoretical coding phase worked to collapse thematic ideas into a theoretical direction by “creating connections between categories and further collapsing thematic ideas.” (Latz, 2017, p. 100). Each color-coded data chunk derived from the axial-coding phase was reorganized by category and subcategory into a new Microsoft Word document to assist in a more linear and clear depiction of the data analyzed throughout this process. The color-coded photos and narratives from the participants were organized by categories. Although theoretical codes can be named and established with the assistance of existing literature, the researcher was cautious to avoid, “crossing the line of forced integration of a preconceived theoretical model.” (Holton, 2007/2010, p. 283). The researcher consulted the literature of CRT as another form of data to substantiate or disrupt the themes and emergent understandings being constructed in the data analysis.
Validity and Trustworthiness/Reliability

What makes experimental studies scientific or rigorous or trustworthy is the researcher’s careful design of the study, applying standards well developed and accepted by the scientific community (Merriam, 2009, p. 210). The photovoice pieces (photographs and the participants’ written narratives) were the data collected for this project. Allowing space for inductive analysis is critical to the validity of qualitative research. In addition, to increase the credibility of the data collected, a strategy of triangulation was incorporated into the study. Denzin (1978) proposes four types of triangulation: the use of multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators or multiple theories to confirm emerging findings. This study relied on multiple sources of data through the use of asking reflective questions to participants about their process.

Tinkler (2013) said:

What people photograph is also shaped by the research task and context…some studies invite participants to imagine specific audiences when producing photos. . . how research participants respond to the researcher’s task will also be shaped by the photographic opportunities, such as how and where the photographer can move and what they can access. (p. 169)

The reflective questions for the participants helped to validate the emergent themes that were observed in the first week of photo elicitation. Examples of some of these questions include:
• What was being a part of this project like?

• What was your favorite part of this project?

• Which one of your own original photos and its narrative for this project do you think will best contribute to the advancement of Filipino/a/x students at College Z? Why? Please include the photo’s title.

• This study will be a part of a scholarly presentation in the form of a Photovoice exhibition to be held at College Z. Which specific community members would you recommend attending this exhibition?

• Using the collection of photos from the participants in this project as a reference, what themes and topics (broad or specific) from the participant photos and narratives do you think best illustrate the needs and concerns that College Z must address for our Filipino/a/x student community at this moment in time? How so? In what ways can you personally relate to the discussions being made from the photos/narratives?

The reflective questions were available on a Google Forms sheet at the beginning of the second week of the study. Much like the photo elicitation phase, there was one open-ended prompt communicated to the participants per day. In contrast to the first week, which focused on both photos and written narrations, the second week’s triangulation phase focused on the reflective questions. One of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective
phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research (Merriam, 2009, p. 213).

Positionality of the Author

As the author of this dissertation, I wish to take responsibility and preface this document with transparency. I am a Filipino-Mexican American cis-gendered male living in Southern California, US, who was raised in a stable middle-class household as an only child to two cis-gendered parents. My identity as an ethnic minority has informed my praxis, scholarly endeavors and advocacy for other minorities pursuing higher education.

FilAms in the Inland Empire were pertinent to this study because of the assumption that they are nonexistent or invisible in this geographic location. Many individuals stereotype FilAms prominently in the greater Los Angeles area or Northern California but never in the IE. I was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado and am the son of a military family.

Throughout my life I have relocated to Kentucky, Tennessee, Washington State, and eventually, my current home in San Bernardino, CA in 2002. In a time when I felt so much instability in my life, I finally felt a sense of belonging in San Bernardino. For many FilAm students, the Inland Empire is their home and in-person or online schools are equally a place for growth, self-discovery and community. Because I live and work in IE, I felt a social and personal responsibility to have this project focused on the ways the COVID-19 pandemic
and the instability it caused has affected FilAm students who live in the Inland Empire.

As an instructor with a background in disciplines of English and Political Science, I am aware of the urgency of my research. The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to keep in mind the emancipatory nature of research in order to reduce bias, collecting data and interpreting the data to create a discussion around the discourse. I was the data collection tool and conductor of data analysis for this study and recognize that my privilege as a researcher along with my personal and professional experiences should serve as a platform to represent the voices and lived experiences of my participants. My hope is that my work can advance the stories and identities of individuals who have experienced the effects of systemic racism and exclusion in academic and online spaces.

Relevant Ethical Issues Addressed

Several ethical considerations for this project protected the organization and the participants. Working with human subjects requires that the researcher remain ethical and professional throughout the data collection, analysis and presentation process (Merriam, 2009). To enhance confidentiality, the organization and human participants were given pseudonyms from the beginning of data collection. To ensure ethical means of data collection, the researcher
abided by the rules and regulations set forth by the California State University San Bernardino’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).

In an effort to protect prospective participants against COVID-19, the study was conducted exclusively in a digital/online modality and all data collection/analysis was also conducted asynchronously. In the call for participants and communication with prospective participants, they were briefed on what actions to avoid during their photo-taking process including: avoiding taking photos of other individuals, avoiding illegal, hateful and sexual/pornographic imagery and avoiding taking photos of personal identifying information (social security information, driver’s license, etc.). Data collected including the photos and narratives were saved and secured on a Microsoft Word document on a password-protected computer only accessible to the researcher and this data along with all texts and email communication with participants was deleted and destroyed after the completion of the study.

Summary and Contributions to the Profession

The study sought to explore counternarratives about the lived experiences of a purposive sample of 15 first and second-generation FilAm community college students who attend College Z. The methodology for this study incorporated a photovoice and photo elicitation method which was distributed to the participants via a Google Forms Document. A variation of the Grounded Theory approach was utilized for the data analysis. Participant photos and their
narration along with their reflection on their experience in the project as a form of triangulation and the study’s reliability was collected for analysis of emergent themes in relation to Critical Race Theory (CRT).

This study is important to the field of educational research for several reasons. The narratives from the photovoice served as a form of counternarrative/counterstory about FilAm community college students’ experiences in contrast to the damaging institutional effects of the Model Minority stereotype on this population. This narrative stereotypes AAPI students as generally well-off academically and socially because of their perceived collective success. Additionally, FilAm community college students are seen as an “invisible minority” and this study shifts the essential nature of the research itself, making it more authentic to the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Latz, 2017, p. 21). Ultimately, this study puts the onus on educational institutions to provide the resources and spaces for FilAms to share their stories and lived experiences.
CHAPTER FOUR:
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Intentions and Organization of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine three critical areas related to FilAm Community college students: (a) Identity formation through narratives and (counter) narratives (b) trauma and resilience and (c) Sense of belonging inside and outside of academia. Specifically, I aimed to understand how FilAm community college students in the IE have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Research Question 1) and what systems of support can community colleges create to help these students within the context of the pandemic (Research Question 2). The study explored these experiences of FilAm community college students through a photovoice inquiry. This chapter will provide an examination of the digital photos and narratives collected from the FilAm community college students at College Z using CRT as a theoretical framework as well as five central themes identified from the data.

Sample Demographics

Overview of Participants

This study consisted of a cohort of nine self-identifying FilAm community college students who attended College Z. Out of the nine participants, six identified through she/her/hers gender pronouns and three identified as
he/him/his gender pronouns. These participants were students during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on their education and personal lives as FilAms in the IE. The following chart provides the chosen pseudonyms for the participants and their gender pronouns:

Table 1. Participants' Chosen Pseudonym and Gender Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender Pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angie</td>
<td>she/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ</td>
<td>she/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deity</td>
<td>she/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halo-halo Guy</td>
<td>he/him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harana</td>
<td>she/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Shepard</td>
<td>he/him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matamis</td>
<td>she/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>he/him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Romero</td>
<td>she/her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Data Collection

This photovoice study was a two-week online asynchronous study and the data was collected through Google Forms responses. Participants were sent a new prompt every morning for five days during the two-week data collection period. In response to each prompt, participants submitted a photo and a 5-6 sentence narrative description.

During the first week, the participants chose their pseudonyms for the study and answered questions about how they navigated their educational experiences during the pandemic. Participants also responded to questions regarding their thoughts on race, representation at College Z, and FilAm identity:

Table 2. Daily Prompts for Week One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>● Describe your experience being a Filipino/a/x student at College Z during the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Day 2 | In what ways do you feel a sense of belonging as a Filipino/a/x in the Inland Empire and at College Z?  
|       | Do you think living and/or learning in the IE made your community college experience different from other racial identities? |
| Day 3 | How does your racial identity as a Filipino/a/x student during the pandemic affect how you think about Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) identity and COVID-19 related racism/racial trauma?  
|       | How did you realize that you identified as Filipino/a/x? |
| Day 4 | What comes to mind when you think of the experiences you have/had with the instructors, counselors, staff and other students at College Z?  
|       | In what ways have you felt racially or culturally represented in the courses or instructors you have had as a student at College Z? |
Day 5

- What support systems and resources at College Z would you like implemented to feel more seen, heard and valued as a Filipino/a/x student?

The second week focused more on a reflection of the participants’ experience with the photovoice project. The prompts asked participants about their favorite part of the project and asked them to view the photos and narratives from their cohort and as well as which community members they would want me to invite to the photovoice exhibition to showcase their work. When viewing the photovoice submissions from their cohort, participants were able to find common ground and validation from viewing the photos and reading about their intersecting struggles and experiences as FilAm community college students during the pandemic. Triangulation of these multiple data sources increases the validity of these findings:

**Table 3: Daily Prompts for Week Two (Triangulation Phase)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Two</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

61
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>● What was being a part of this project like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>● What was your favorite part of this project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>● Which one of your own original photos and its narrative for this project do you think will best contribute to the advancement of Filipino/a/x students at College Z? Why? Please include the photo's title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>● This study will be a part of a scholarly presentation in the form of a Photovoice exhibition to be held at College Z. Which specific community members would you recommend attending this exhibition?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 5

- Using the collection of photos and narratives from the participants in this project as a reference, what themes and topics (broad or specific) from the participant photos and narratives do you think best illustrate the needs and concerns that College Z must address for our Filipino/a/x student community at this moment in time? How so? In what ways can you personally relate to the discussions being made from the photos/narratives?

Because of the richness of my data in relation to disrupting race and racism, three central Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenets were employed to analyze and organize the findings into three main sections: (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; (2) the existence and need to challenge dominant ideology; and (3) the necessity and validity of using the experiential knowledge of Students of Color (Solórzano, 1998). Organizing my data analysis with three CRT tenets works to respond to the research questions as, “the historical and contemporary experiences of students of color must be examined within a context of educational policies and practices that perpetuate racial marginalization within education” (Buenavista, 2010, p. 115).
Photovoice works in concert with the Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenant of creating counterstories to elevate minority voices, experiences and realities in challenging traditional narratives of minoritized populations. This methodology works to bridge this gap as it “interrogates a citizen approach to documentary photography, the production of knowledge, and social action” (Latz, 2017, p. 66).

Five essential themes were derived from the data:

1. *Familial relationships* play a vital role in FilAm students’ identity.
2. FilAm students’ *experiences in college are influenced by faculty and staff.*
3. Multiple forms of *trauma* impact FilAm students.
4. Cultural and geographic context affects FilAm students’ *sense of belonging.*
5. FilAm students navigate their own *forms of resilience.*

FilAms have been deeply impacted by anti-Asian racism and targeted violence in the IE. As much as racism occurs implicitly and explicitly at micro-(individual) and macro-(societal) levels (Solórzano, 1997) it is key to note that, “race and racism are critical factors in defining and explaining the experiences of People of Color” (Buenavista et al., 2009, p. 72). The communal fear brought on by racially-targeted violence has a direct impact on FilAm students and the way they understand and navigate their racial identities.
Critical Race Theory Tenet 1: The Centrality and Intersectionality of Race and Racism

The following photovoice submissions highlight the CRT tenant of the *centrality and intersectionality of race and racism* which illustrates the intricate nature of FilAm students’ specific relationship to race and racism. Bonus and Maramba (2013) illustrate that FilAm bodies bear the traces of colonized histories which includes the past experiences of their family members. *Figure 1* highlighted this sentiment. Central to this discussion is the way in which FilAm students locate a sense of resilience despite racial trauma that surrounds them. *Figure 2* continues this conversation with the development of FilAm mental health concerns while *Figures 3 and 4* continue this conversation and foresee a future for FilAm institutional support against the damaging effects of the Model Minority Myth.
The incidents of violent attacks on Asian-Americans that seems to have risen during the pandemic has been difficult to comprehend and heartbreaking to witness. Around the country Filipinos have been victims of this as well, and it’s a reminder that no group is safe in the eyes of a racist. A Chinese woman was actually stabbed and killed while walking her dog last year in Riverside not far...
from where I was living, and it made me nervous to go on walks. It’s made me nervous for my parents, and I’ve heard their stories of things they endured when they first immigrated. I’m not sure when I realized my identity since it’s always been a part of who I am, and existing in this country comes with the hyphenated “Fil-Am” title. Now I try not to let fear get in the way of going on walks.

Angie expressed her feelings about a local violent incident close to where she lived in the IE. She recollects how the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about anti-Asian racism and violence. Most significantly, Angie mentions how the incident made her nervous for her parents and how she “heard their stories of things they endured when they first immigrated,” indicating that, existing as a Filipino in America comes at the risk of violence or some sort of discriminatory practice. It is clear that this incident has traumatized Angie, noting that she deems the (multiple) attacks against Asians as, “difficult to comprehend” and “heartbreaking to witness.” She aches for her community and is emotionally dwelling on these experiences profoundly.

She recognized “FilAm” as essential to her identity and the distinction of this identity marker makes her distinctly American as well as Filipina.

Additionally, the identification of the murder victim as a Chinese woman and Angie’s fear for herself as FilAm and her parents is evident of the political climate in which she has been living, where no AAPI can feel safe to simply walk the
streets without the threat of racially-targeted violence. Nevertheless, Angie remains resilient despite her narrative.

**Theme One: Multiple Forms of Trauma Impact FilAm Students**

Significant to Angie’s narrative is how the fear of racism is critical in understanding how intergenerational and immigrant trauma have impacted her sentiments on her FilAm identity. She parallels her parents’ story of immigration to the looming threat of violence in this country. This cultural context informs the way Angie understands her social positioning as FilAm in America.

The emerging theme of multiple forms of trauma reflected The Harrell Model (2000) of multidimensional racism-related stress which suggests that discrimination has psychological, social and functional consequences, implying that vicarious experiences of racism such as viewing online, relating of personal narratives related anti-Asian discrimination negatively affects the mental health of AAPI. Angie has experienced race-based traumatic stress and thus, as she expressed both visually and verbally in the photo of Figure 1, a scenic image of a setting sun, several pine trees and a mountainous backdrop, a hallmark of IE outdoor life. Angie is reflective of her environment and her social surroundings. The Model Minority Myth in which treating all AAPI as a monolith and the threat of racial violence against FilAms can also be drawn from Angie’s narrative as, “the perpetrators of this violence see all of these bodies as foreign and threatening” (Tessler et al., 2020, p. 642). She therefore sees her community as a target to this violence and is also subjected to this trauma.
As a Filipino student during the pandemic, I think the AAPI community has always gone through stuff like this. I am very distasteful towards the media for speaking on issues such as Stop Asian Hate and Black Lives Matter only when a tragedy goes viral. Just because it’s not being broadcasted doesn’t mean it’s not happening anymore. I realized I truly wanted to take pride in my Filipino/AAPI identity after seeing what the generations before me did to get us to this point. (Whether they’re Filipino or any other race.) Asian outlets such as 88rising that throw festivals and fund Asian Mental Health programs would not have been
possible if it were not for the people before us that fought against injustice and
discrimination.

News media coverage of racially-targeted violence can be upsetting and can even work to retraumatize minoritized communities. In Figure 2, Ross illustrates his frustration with how “tragedy goes viral” and those viral moments are what seem to be mainstream news until the next tragedy takes the spotlight. Addressing the ongoing efforts of the Black Lives Matter Movement and Stop Asian Hate campaigns, Ross mentions that even if the news does not cover all stories of racially-targeted assault and discrimination, they are happening every day and have been for many years. Racial trauma takes on a new form as media narratives of anti-Asian discrimination during the pandemic illustrate the power that targeted discrimination has on AAPI mental health (Hahm et al., 2021).

Ross’s narrative discusses not only the damaging effects of exposure to media on race-related violence but also reminds us about the dangerous perpetuation of this violence in our communities from these reports. This narrative corresponds to Yang et al.’s (2021) study which aimed to investigate the impact various media outlets’ stories of targeted anti-Asian violence had on Asian race-based stress and trauma amplified during the pandemic. Equally significant to this narrative is the discussion Ross makes surrounding the cyclical nature of race-based stress toward FilAms and the broader AAPI community.
Race-based stress and trauma is an emerging psychological framework that shifts the conversation about trauma from acute, incident-based trauma to the chronic stress and re-traumatization associated with racism (Yang et al., 2021, p. 1). He grievously views such news coverage as sensationalist and deficient towards making a significant systemic impact to fight against racism, as “the AAPI community has always gone through stuff like this.”

Theme Two: FilAm Students Navigate Their Own Forms of Resilience

It is apparent that the pandemic has been exacerbated by disproportionately burdening racial and ethnic minorities (Chen et al., 2021). Despite the challenges of bearing witness to these events, Ross finds hope in the advocacy work of his FilAm community and the broader AAPI community for centering the importance of mental health and community resilience in the midst of the pandemic, as evidenced in his photo of a public outdoors 88rising event. Narratives of resilience from racial trauma are often paired with discourse on coping with mental health concerns. There is shared solidarity amongst racial identities (Muñoz et al., 2018) but little is known about what personal resilience looks like and how it is manifested in individual FilAm student experiences. 

Figure 3 elucidates this concept through Sydney’s reflection on “the important things in life and to stand high above those with unhinged morals.”
Since I was still a student when the pandemic hit, I was brought into a position where I had my character tested through every choice I made moving forward. All of a sudden things are changing fast and isolation seems such a drastic change from everyday life, life remains hectic still somehow. I find that the pandemic brought out people’s true colors as well, ugly hues that are so easy to hate and blame other people over fear. Calm, peaceful moments like these gives me perspective to focus on the important things in life, and to stand high above
those with unhinged morals. I think the picture titled Perseverance will effectively contribute to the advancement of Filipino/a/x students at College Z. Even though all my pictures tended to have a common theme of nature and scenery, I believe that the gorgeous landscaping, angle and gentle blend of colors in Perseverance does a good job at hinting at the complexities that Filipino/a/x had to deal with. The subtle coloring from a darker hue to a much colorful optimistic, bright hue is telling of the optimism that prevails.

In her narrative, Sydney meditates on the concepts of fear, isolation and the bigotry which overtook her life during the pandemic. Referencing her photo, she parallels the angles of the architecture and colors in the sky with the “complexities that FilAms had to deal with,” referencing how racial trauma has affected her community. Despite the tension she felt, she found a “calm, peaceful moment” through her reflective narrative and photo, a building with its pillars illuminated with lights along with a colorful evening sky in the background. The submission title, “Perseverance” is evident of Sydney’s resilient and hopeful mindset through her “optimism that prevails” despite the drastic changes she experienced during the pandemic. Her personal resilience is consistent with Nadal et al.’s (2010) discussion about FilAm student self-sufficiency as a result of isolation and racial trauma. Although one can see her character as proactive and independent, this coping method could possibly result in obstacles with academic
performance and self-esteem specific to FilAms in which her White counterparts may not ever experience (Nadal et al., 2010).

Even if it is not explicitly mentioned that Sydney experienced firsthand “people’s true and ugly colors,” it is critical to note that she had her “character tested.” Sydney is praiseworthy for finding peace in this moment by capturing her photo, yet it is not her personal resilience that absolves institutions from the institutional trauma but a misinterpretation of her resilience “absolves institutions of the responsibility to address the trauma and stress students experience during tumultuous political times (Muñoz et al., 2018, p. 49). This potentially perpetuates the inequities produced by the Model Minority Myth. Figure 4 addresses the insufficient FilAm representation in mental health support through Harana’s photovoice narrative:
I personally would like to see a counselor option for Asian Americans. Growing up Filipina came with a lot of struggles and it would feel nice to speak to a professional that knew or was at least trained to deal with AAPI students. I have utilized the College Z counseling for mental health and the staff is phenomenal, but I can’t help but feel a little under-represented because I haven’t seen clubs or counselors that are geared towards AAPI. I would love to see what College Z could implement and have even considered taking steps to create more
awareness for it. I believe that this photo about having specialized support for Asian Americans would be the most beneficial to the advancement of Filipino/a/x students. I believe that this would be the most because the importance of mental health will only continue to rise. When I first started college, I was living with parents who mentally, verbally, and emotionally abused me and it pressured me to reach for degrees that didn’t really pique my interest, only theirs. If I were able to go back in time and change the course of events for younger me, I would lead young Harana to a guidance counselor. If students at College Z had a counselor that was specialized to help support AAPI families and struggles, I really do believe it would save lives.

Harana’s photovoice submission, “More Support” shows her holding up a graphic on her phone which states, “Support Asian-American Communities,” contrasting in a bright yellow-green gradient backdrop. Harana’s narrative serves as a counternarrative to how FilAms do not seek mental health services as it signifies weakness of disgrace to the family (Maramba and Bonus; Nadal, p. 105). In fact, Harana is proud to share her experiences and advocates that more work at College Z needs to be done to help create access to mental health services for other AAPI community members in college. Harana’s narrative also aligns with Angie’s as alluded to in Figure 1, FilAm identity suffers from the effects of the Model Minority Myth as, FilAms “are assumed to be undeserving of
institutional support in the form of targeted outreach and retention services” (Buenavista et al., 2009, p. 76).

**Theme Three: Familial Relationships Play a Vital Role In FilAm Students’ Identity**

Harana’s advocacy for FilAm guidance counselors comes at a critical moment when in her narrative she illustrates that when she was living with her parents, they “mentally, verbally and emotionally” abused her and pressured her to pursue degrees she had no interest in. Her narrative illustrates that her experiences as a Filipina are specific and are often overseen by general counselors in college. The intersection of FilAm parent influences in college as well as the generational gap between themselves and first generation FilAm students is important to note because students bring social, cultural and educational capital (Vea, 2013) which impacts their educational trajectories.

In addition to the culturally-specific experiences FilAms experience with their parents, the negative impact of the pandemic on college life/career prospects and worry of racial discrimination might require them to receive immediate counseling and mental health assistance (Chen et al., 2021). “If students at College Z had a counselor that was specialized to help support AAPI families and struggles, I really do believe it would save lives,” she affirms.
Critical Race Theory Tenet 2: The Existence and Need to Challenge Dominant Ideology

These next photovoice submissions center around the CRT tenant of *the existence and need to challenge dominant ideology*, offering a look at daily challenges and successes which are often overseen or erased from the narrative of FilAm students. Anderson (2013) further remarks on this occurrence:

Since identity is an important issue in communities of color, learning through a mainstream academic paradigm is a major factor in people of color’s internalization of their psychological and cultural capacity. With regard to FilAm’s contributions and experiences in the United States, the repercussion of this capacity is invisibility or limited visibility, particularly in terms of merely acknowledging the contributions of groups of color in the classroom. (p. 70)

**Figures 5 and 6** begin with an honest discussion about FilAm experiences at home and how they affect their student life at College Z. **Figures 7 and 8** pick up with **Figure 6**’s theme of sense of belonging and puts the onus on College Z to provide the resources to help a FilAm student community thrive. Finally, **Figure 9** directs the conversation of student life within the context of the relationships with faculty and staff at College Z.

It becomes evident that these students are aware of the impact that FilAm culture and People of Color have on their decision-making processes and their self-awareness as FilAms in community college.
I have only been attending College Z for one summer semester, during my break before my third academic year at my university. This corner of the bedroom - a room I share with my two sisters - should have served as my study area for my summer classes while I was home from dorming at university, in the same way it was used during my last semester of high school and my first year of college. But my time away at university during my second year seems to show how my sisters and I have grown too much to be able to fit together neatly in our already confined shared space. I wish I could’ve stored my dorm items in the garage instead of the one quiet corner I have in this house, but my mother, who growing up poor in the Philippines developed a tendency to hold on to every piece of
useless clutter we have, has completely overtaken that space, along with any
spare closet we have. I guess this picture doesn’t make me look any better than
her, but keep in mind that this is a combination of me and my two sisters
personal items, one of which will also be moving into her own dorm in the coming
academic year. The clutter in our room’s study corner could very well be a
parallel to the emotional chaos that came with online school, but with the lifting of
restrictions allowing me and my sister to dorm at our colleges, this summer this
corner has come to represent how much I have grown into my own person;
taking up more space than my family can accommodate, even if my dad
managed to throw out everything my mom was hoarding tomorrow.

CJ’s experience at home illustrates the difficulties she faced during the
height of the pandemic. Her photo depicts a cluttered corner of a shared
bedroom space which she shared between her two sisters, expressing how
suffocating the lack of space can feel in an already challenging time in her
academic career. She continues to express her frustration by discussing her
mother’s tendency to hoard items which exacerbated CJ’s situation. She feels
that she cannot live in peace at home nor be successful in her studies because
her family’s lifestyle invades her personal and emotional space.
Theme One: Familial Relationships Play A Vital Role In FilAm Students’ Identity

CJ finds negotiating her identity as a student comes at the expense of also negotiating her identity with her family. Bonus and Maramba (2013) illustrate that FilAm bodies bear the traces of colonized histories which includes the past experiences of their family members. Reflecting on her photo, CJ adds:

The heavy theme of family and how our relationships were affected during the pandemic I think is greatly applicable to a lot of college students living at home and in particular Filipino students, because of how much emphasis is placed on sacrificing for the family. While I can't say it would have been any different had the pandemic never happened, the growth and stagnation captured in the picture is all the more emphasized from it. By bringing up the intergenerational trauma that comes from growing up poor, and subsequently how that affects those around you, maybe it could also encourage other students to reflect on the surroundings and behaviors they have. Perhaps understanding where a habit comes from can help us to consciously unlearn them as well.

This finding also aligned with Buenavista’s (2010) claim that using a CRT approach is critical in understanding and centralizing the voices of FilAm students in educational research as it moves away from the Model Minority Myth into discourse surrounding family dynamics. CJ described the cluttered and confined space as parallel to the “emotional chaos” of online school, pessimistically expressing that the living situation with their siblings and mother
was indicative of their exhaustion. CJ’s experience contrasts the stereotype that AAPI universal success is without struggle. In fact, this finding illustrated the social realities which FilAms must constantly go through phases of negotiating their academic lives and familial relationships, consistent with Ocampo’s (2016) illustration that FilAm racial identity for college students is fluid because it is determined by their social and institutional context.

Halo-halo-Guy’s negotiation with his FilAm identity at home and at school was also a topic of discussion but with more of a focus on how Filipino culture has influenced his idea of finding a sense of belonging at College Z:
Around the table most of the time conversations talk about life situations such and placement to where we are currently. For Filipinos we thrive as a community. We kill silence and seriousness with corny jokes to help pass time, and generally it works to keep us going and brings entertainment. Getting into College Z I found
it hard to get into a community that has the same interest outside of class rooms.
In the Philippines, people that graduate college stay in communication till the end of their days. I'd like to have that sort of contact in the end of my college days. There is a big difference in racial identities because on how people group up but it just makes studying more focused into getting things done.

Halo-halo-Guy values community. In his photo of steamed corn on the cob, gatherings around the table, corny jokes and discussions about life bring him joy. He says that “Filipinos thrive as a community.” He continues, “In the Philippines, people that graduate college stay in communication till the end of their days. I'd like to have that sort of contact in the end of my college days.” Because of this very specific cultural aspect of Filipinos, it is only natural that he would want that same comfort while a student at College Z.

Theme Two: Cultural and Geographic Context Affects FilAm Students’ Sense of Belonging

Halo-halo-Guy’s experience with community aligns with Teranishi’s (2002) study which illustrated the difficulties that FilAm students had with negotiating their identity as college students and that understanding racial climates in schools is determined by acknowledging that students learn in distinct racial contexts. Finding his community in College Z has been a struggle, and this also affects his sense of belonging. It is as if Halo-halo-Guy’ identity as a FilAm
student is erased when he lacks community. Anderson (2013) also describes FilAm student identity as heavily influenced by family, community and school which ultimately affects their social positioning in the world.

Sense of belonging and community is also apparent in Angie and Joseph’s photovoice submissions which heavily advocate for culturally-specific events College Z can create to foster a sense of community for FilAm students:

**Figure 7: Value in the Little Things**

by Angie (she/her)
As far as support systems and resources go, I think in the few months I’ve been enrolled I’ve seen evidence of some good ones at College Z already. I’ve gotten emails about things like clubs, parenting groups, a Juneteenth celebration, and the food pantry; I think it’s great that the school addresses real issues students are faced with, like food insecurity. I took this picture of “exotic” Asian fruits grocery shopping this week because I liked the colors, and mangoes will always be associated in my mind with being Filipino. I think continuing to honor the presence of a multicultural student body would be beneficial for everyone. That could look like a community day, a social club, or some kind of resources centered on the first-generation AAPI college experience. Acknowledging Filipino Heritage/History Month would be nice, too. As far as helping advance other Filipino students, I’m not sure which of my photos would have the most effect. I think they should be considered as a whole, and are all equally a part of my narrative. It’s hard for me to say since just participating in the study is a step outside of my comfort zone. I think maybe other Filipino students could relate to that as well, and I hope that would be some source of solidarity, just knowing that there are others out there who may relate to their feelings and experiences. If anyone may feel the same way I do, and not be used to being outspoken or feel that their life story matters, then that would be an accomplishment for me.
Angie’s photo, “Value in the little things” depicts a batch of vibrant Asian fruits from a grocery shopping haul, which she associates in her mind with being Filipino. Much like the vibrant fruit, she hopes for a lively and community-rich multicultural event which she sees as, “continuing to honor the presence of a multicultural student body like a community day, a social club, or some kind of resources centered on the first-generation AAPI college experience and...acknowledging Filipino Heritage/History Month.”

Central to this discussion is how a lack of community could interfere with FilAm students’ ability to be successful in college. The interpersonal, psychological and structural challenges Filipino students face in school make it difficult for them to cultivate a positive self-image of their ethnic and racial identities (Teranashi, 2002, p. 151). To help remedy this challenge, Angie hopes that her work in this study can empower other students in her community. She adds:

…just participating in the study is a step outside of my comfort zone. I think maybe other Filipino students could relate to that as well, and I hope that would be some source of solidarity, just knowing that there are others out there who may relate to their feelings and experiences. If anyone may feel the same way I do, and not be used to being outspoken or feel that their life story matters, then that would be an accomplishment for me.

Joseph’s photovoice submission also harkens back to Angie’s sentiments, with a deep passion for promoting FilAm cultural appreciation around College Z:
This is a photo of a barong that my dad passed down to me. If there isn’t one already, I think it would be awesome if College Z did some sort of cultural fair, like a Festival of Nations or something. Some place where students could put on their cultural attire and engage with other students and faculty over food, song, or dance. It would be amazing to quickly identify what cultures the faculty and staff identified with. I think it could potentially foster a strong sense of community and cultural value. I’d love to wear my barong to school and find other students who showed up with it too! I think my photo entitled "Barong" would best contribute to
The advancement of Filipino/a/x students at College Z. The idea of representation in a social setting where everyone could easily see the beautiful culmination of cultures can be a phenomenal community building event. There is incredible empowerment given to me whenever I see someone wearing a barong because it represents me and it (usually) is worn proudly. I’m sure that other Filipino/a/x students who see my photo will also feel a sense of belonging and pride for their culture and heritage. I also think that other ethnic groups may see the photo and feel proud of their own heritage and cultural wear.

Joseph’s photo depicts a white barong- a traditional and national Filipino shirt worn by men. It is an embroidered long-sleeved formal shirt worn for special occasions. It was passed down to him by his dad and he is proud of what it represents, his FilAm heritage and the cultural value he finds in wearing it. Joseph believes this will help to empower the broader College Z community because they will be able to proudly wear their cultural attire. In hopes of finding other FilAm students wearing their barongs as well, he feels that “representation in a social setting where everyone could easily see the beautiful culmination of cultures can be a phenomenal community building event.”

The participants value diversity and community at College Z. As Angie reaffirmed, “continuing to honor the presence of a multicultural student body would be beneficial for everyone.” The narratives expressed by Halo-halo-Guy,
Angie and Joseph bring up the importance of the relationships FilAm students have with their invaluable campus spaces and cultures to further develop their FilAm community. Notably, Angie and Joseph’s narratives put the onus on College Z to provide these events and resources to students because institutional support is central to the survival of this community.

**Figure 9: Group Dissection**

by Joseph Shepherd (he/him)

![Image of group dissection](image)

*When I entered my first class at College Z, I was really surprised to see a majority of people of color (POC) as my classmates. As the weeks went by, the*
professor and classmates started opening up about their experiences in the workplace and as students. I was quickly drawn into the assuredness that we were all in the fight for equality together and we shared the experiences of racial bias. This photo is of a cat dissection we did in class and I love it because the class was all huddled up by our professor (also a POC). I remember looking around the huddle feeling so represented and understood. My experience so far with all the instructors, staff, and students at College Z have been incredibly positive. Maybe with the exception of the financial aid department… they have been a bit unhelpful haha!

Although a sense of belonging is sometimes desired outside of the classroom, Joseph Shepard’s community within the classroom provided him with the comfort and assurance that he was understood by his classmates and professor, all who are People of Color. In this photovoice submission, the image shows an intimate gathering of students and their professor during a cat dissection. Everyone in the photo is wearing a lab coat and protective gear during the procedure, indicating a sense of togetherness and intention. And Joseph indicates that the opportunity to learn about this process in the lab is also an opportunity to learn about his fellow classmates and professor towards a collective understanding of their social selves as People of Color. He views this dissection not only about opening up the body and learning about its different
parts, but also opening up and being vulnerable enough to share his experiences with racism.

**Theme Three: FilAm Students’ Experiences in College Are Influenced by Faculty and Staff**

Pérez Huber et al. (2021) indicated that out of the many forms that racial microaggressions can take, the absence of Educators of Color in academic spaces is one which intensifies racial battle fatigue in People of Color. Joseph felt valued and respected in the classroom space. His experience with the students, faculty and staff (minus the financial aid department) at College Z “have been incredibly positive” which indicates that cultural understanding in community college classroom environments is achieved through the presence of Instructors of Color.

In a similar fashion to the findings presented in McKinney de Royston et al.’s (2021) study which discussed that Black educators combatted the lack of support through the protection of the students and safe spaces, Joseph was able to feel that his classroom was an intentional and inclusive safe space because of his instructor. Additionally, the discussions Joseph had with his colleagues surrounding the workforce and student life were critical conversation subjects as People of Color in community college because, “violence and trauma are systematically orchestrated by aggressive and institutionalized neglect” (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021, p. 99).
Critical Race Theory Tenet 3: The Necessity and Validity of Using the Experiential Knowledge of Students of Color

These final photovoice submissions are centered around the CRT tenant of the necessity and validity of using the experiential knowledge of Students of Color which considers FilAm students’ personal storytelling of their aspirations, life in the IE, academic struggles and the sense of empowerment they gained from these experiences. Jocson (2013) expressed that stories are a manifestation of how FilAm students make sense of the world around them as well as how they perceive themselves and the identities they take on. Because the Model Minority Myth informs the public perceptions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as an American success story, it erases them from educational research, policy and practice.

Therefore, storytelling amplifies these students’ voices to help them gain a sense of agency and take control of their community’s narrative from recalling a specific moment in their life or reflecting on their experiences at home or at school. Figure 10 focused on the struggle of navigating homelife, college life and career trajectory experiences during the park of the COVID-19 pandemic while Figure 11 and 12 focused on personal and academic hardships and in the IE and finding a sense of belonging at College Z.
As a recently new student at College Z, my classes so far have been entirely online; as a first-generation American, the college system here is not something my Filipino-born parents were equipped to help guide their children through. My siblings and I were left to navigate that unfamiliar territory mostly on our own.

After the pandemic upended my life plans — my living situation, and a trade school career path that I ended up in largely out of pressure from my parents — I
ended up moving to San Bernardino and making the decision to return to school and study something I enjoy. I am now registered for a graphic design AA at College Z. This photo is my desk and laptop that I'll be spending a lot of time at! I never felt a strong desire to go to college, but am now discovering that I am excited about it while coming to terms with my lived experiences in my adulthood. My experience so far has been balancing these feelings while deciphering Canvas, Zoom, financial aid, and school as a whole.

Angie’s photo depicts a small workspace with a desk and a personal computer, keyboard and mouse, all positioned neatly in front of a window overlooking trees and clouds outside. She recalls her experience with the pandemic “upending” her life plans and the isolating work it took for her and her siblings to navigate the American college system as her “Filipino-born parents were not equipped to help guide their children through.” Despite this uncertainty and reluctance in attending college, Angie found her calling and motivation in her Graphic Design AA at College Z and came to terms with her adulthood.

Theme One: Cultural And Geographic Context Affects FilAm Student Sense of Belonging

This finding was consistent with Solórzano’s (1998) fifth tenet of CRT of the utility of interdisciplinary perspectives to holistically understand the experiences of Students of Color within historical and contemporary contexts.
Additionally, the emergent themes of “systems of support” and “family dynamics” from the coding phase aligned with the student narrative from this photovoice submission. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was evident that being FilAm within this time and space impacted the student’s motivation in regards to their career prospects in community college but also their independence in navigating community college as a whole; with an evident lack of support from the institution in offering financial literacy or Canvas training and parents who due to cultural differences, were unable and unequipped to guide or support them in their community college transition. The cultural differences from their parents when it came to navigating community college in America also aligned with the significant racial and social disparities that exist within this community (Museus et al., 2021).
I feel a sense of belonging as a Filipino in the IE and at College Z because of the way I carry myself. Living and learning here as a Filipino definitely made my experience different from other ethnicities because of how people expect me to act. I’m sure many people can agree that living around this area isn’t the best sometimes and I’ve experienced things that would have otherwise broken me. Stuff such as racism, toxic relationships, and addiction, have made me feel that I may not have the capacity to go through such things. But since pink flowers are often associated with youth and innocence, it serves as a reminder that I am still
here and that is a statement for my resilience in itself. Though obstacles have always been present and may have altered my perception for the better or worse, I know that I always will have an ambitious glow to me. One of my own original photos that would best contribute to the advancement of Filipinos at College Z would be this pink flower one. The title is "One Sun Three Flowers." It illustrates how I as a Filipino living in the IE can proudly say I still retained my child-like wonder and drive for my dreams despite hardships. These hardships include racism and discrimination which I'm sure many of my Filipino peers have faced as well. Not only that, but how the pink flower represents the resilience our people are known to have…the people at my old local donut shop are Filipino…and they are still running strong! Many of us including myself still strive high for our dreams despite stereotypes and personal hardships!

Ross’ photovoice submission shows a trio of pink roses in a bush with a background of large trees, the afternoon sky and prominent buildings located at College Z. He recalls his difficult experiences in the IE which include racism, toxic relationships and addiction and contrasts them with his "child-like wonder" which helped him preserve his personal strength and resilience. He also mentions that he is not alone in his hardships as many of his Filipino peers have also faced racism and discrimination. Ross’ intention to capture a photo of the roses is important to note because he emphasizes that they represent the resilience his
Filipino community is known to have. His youth and innocence that keeps his fortitude is reflected in the image of the pink roses.

**Theme Two: FilAm Students Navigate Their Own Forms of Resilience**

Ross reflects that, “living and learning here as a Filipino definitely made my experience different from other ethnicities because of how people expect me to act.” The cultural expectations exclusive to his Filipino identity keep Ross emotionally restricted. Nadal (2013) emphasizes that because Filipino American men are taught and expected to maintain a masculine and emotionally reserved demeanor, they might find it difficult to express their emotions due to this restrictive cultural gender norm. Ross is aware of this narrative and counters expectations placed on Filipino men through this photovoice submission, telling his story of resilience with pride in his resistance.

This finding also has parallels to Solórzano’s (1998) study which used CRT as a guiding framework to illustrate and document the stories of discrimination against Students of Color through the intersections of race and gender. Ross’ experience of emotional distress in the IE is tied to harmful assumptions and racial expectations made about his social positioning as a Filipino male. Solórzano (1998) indicated that the systemic barriers for Students of Color are difficult to identify and overcome.
Whenever I am reminded of the impact of what College Z staff, counselor, and professors have had on me, I almost get emotional. Something that not a lot of people know about me is that I actually have attended five different colleges before coming to College Z. I was going through dark and scary times during those days and without saying too much, I failed every single class. I transferred to College Z with a 1.02 GPA and was so ashamed of myself because I knew my potential as a student. It was then when I first encountered a College Z counselor. After she heard my story and goals of becoming a nurse, I was anticipating the dreadful repeated saying of "You’re not going to be able to do
that with your grades." But instead, she says this and I will never forget it, "Even though your GPA is low, with time, effort, and the right guidance, I know you will make it." She became my first ever light to the darkness of my academic journey.

Ever since then, every teacher, every counselor, every College Z tutor, every staff has shown me nothing but belonging, respect, love, and support. College Z believed in me during a time where I didn't believe in myself. Like this photo, College Z had become my light. Fun Fact: I have maintained a 4.0 term GPA for every semester I've taken at College Z and have raised my cumulative GPA from a 1.02 to 2.89 making me eligible and competitive for the College Z nursing program.

Harana’s photovoice submission depicts a striking glow of golden light in the middle of an outdoor rock formation and campsite amidst a dark starlit sky. She prefaces recalling her experience at College Z by expressing vulnerability to readers of her narrative. She describes her emotional academic journey from, “dark and scary times” struggling with school until finding her guiding light in the “respect, love and support” from the faculty and staff at College Z. She was able to turn her life around and her self-doubt into a personal and academic success as an aspiring nurse. Her experience at College Z gave her the confidence she needed to move forward and believe in herself.
Theme Three: FilAm Students’ Experiences In College Are Influenced By Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff at College Z have changed the way Harana experienced college life and ultimately her self-empowerment. Harana was told she could make it and felt a sense of agency and emotional protection from the conversation she had with the counselor at College Z. This experience mirrors Pérez Huber et al.'s (2021) discussion of micro-affirmations that can provide a source of healing through counter spaces, working to engage students in authentic dialogue and support the cultural intimacy of safe spaces and centering the experiences of Communities of Color. By validating Harana’s experience and providing a safe space to be vulnerable, the folx at College Z helped to combat the perpetuation of systemic racial inequities.

Resilience through Photovoice Counterstories

The intersecting struggles told in each photovoice narrative end with a hopeful tone, indicative of these students’ resilience. Words such as, “excited,” “ambitious” and “light” help to emphasize the students’ optimism regardless of their struggles. Although some students found the support system they needed in school, many students still had to navigate through their college experience without much support, indicating that their sense of isolation affected their identities as FilAms in the midst of the pandemic. Most surprising from some of these findings were that even if the photovoice prompts focused on the
community college campus and a racialized campus climate, the participants chose to discuss their lived experiences at home as they relate to the family dynamic of living at home and taking online courses at home.

Nevertheless, this finding situates itself to the CRT tradition of counterstory, to contextualize the educational experiences of underrepresented AAPI (Buenavista et al., 2009). The strong cultural connections to family in this project are indicative of the FilAm student’s motivation to succeed in community college despite the struggles that came with a global pandemic.

Chapter Summary

This chapter considered the photovoice submissions from nine FilAm community college students who attended College Z during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Two overarching research questions guided the data collection: how have FilAm community college students in the IE been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? (Research Question 1) and what systems of support can community colleges create to help these students within the context of the pandemic? (Research Question 2). The use of multiple data sources from photo elicitations and photovoice submissions ensured the trustworthiness of the study. By analyzing the digital photos and written narratives from the participants, this photovoice study provided a rich, in-depth and honest look into these students’ struggles, successes and lived experiences during the pandemic.
The data was analyzed using three tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT): (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism (2) the existence and need to challenge dominant ideology and (3) the necessity and validity of using the experiential knowledge of students of color. The coding of the data resulted in five themes in relation to the two overarching research questions: (i.) *Familial relationships* play a vital role in FilAm students’ identity, (ii.) FilAm students’ *experiences in college are influenced by faculty and staff*, (iii). Multiple forms of *trauma* impact FilAm students, (iv.) FilAm students navigate their own *forms of resilience* and (v.) Cultural and geographic context affects FilAm students’ *sense of belonging*.

The first research question, *how FilAm community college students in the IE have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic* illustrated narratives of participants described the communal fear of anti-Asian violence and how the Model Minority Myth works to perpetuate racial stereotypes and a lack of academic and mental health support for FilAm students. This question also elucidated how racial trauma brought about a resilience exclusive to FilAm identities due to their strong relationships to their families, cultural expectations and means of finding a sense of belonging. Despite their personal and academic struggles, these students found new passions, joy and support from the academic programming as well as faculty and staff at College Z.

The second research question, *what systems of support can community colleges create to help these students within the context of the pandemic*
emphasized the need for mental health support, resources and specialized counseling for FilAm and the broader AAPI community. Given the culturally-specific needs of these students, it is critical to note that this community wants to feel validated and understood. The participants also stressed the importance of BIPOC faculty representation in the classroom and cultural events on campus to spread awareness of the FilAm community. Ultimately, the onus of providing these resources must be placed on the academic institution. The stories of the participants worked to develop a new narrative which underscores the importance of the academic institutions' social responsibility to aid in the resilience of these FilAm students whose racial and collective traumas have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The final chapter of this dissertation will address the recommendations and conclusions drawn from this study. It will provide an overview of the study's results, implications for the field of FilAms students in higher education, the next steps for advancing CRT, recommendations for further research, addressing the limitations of this study and a conclusion of this dissertation.
CHAPTER FIVE:
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine three critical areas related to FilAm Community College students: (a) Identity formation through narratives and (counter) narratives, (b) Trauma and resilience and (c) Sense of belonging inside and outside of academia. This study looked at FilAm student identity as multifaceted and intersectional and how resilience from racial trauma in a COVID-era affected their sense of self and internal validation.

Additionally, this study focused on this community in the culturally-diverse state of California. It set the stage for community college institutions to consider what cultural, academic or mental health resources are provided for FilAm students. The study also urges educators to examine their biases in their current practices and prompts a re-examination of the extent to which community colleges work to represent and affirm the experiences of underrepresented Students of Color to promote equity. The literature review in Chapter Two created the space to study how narratives and the sense of belonging of Students and People of Color were affected by racial trauma, academic and social spaces and the intersections and shifting with other racial identities because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Because FilAm Community College students have been historically left out of educational research, it is critical that education practitioners consider the unique cultural and institutional factors that affect their capacity to achieve academic success and validate experiences in community college. This study was critical to better understand the impact educational support systems have on academic success in order to break the stereotype that FilAm students are seen as liminal students or invisible from educational research.

This study implemented a photovoice methodology to visualize the lived experiences of the participants. Through documentary photography and written narratives in this two-week study, participants were able to share their thoughts on what it meant to be a FilAm community college student living in the IE during the peak years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photovoice works in concert with the Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenant of creating counterstories to elevate minority voices, experiences and realities in challenging traditional narratives of minoritized populations. This methodology works to bridge this gap as it “interrogates a citizen approach to documentary photography, the production of knowledge, and social action” (Latz, 2017, p. 66). The empirical results of this study revealed important information about the educational trajectories of FilAm community college students in the IE, the intersections of their racial identity and ways educational institutions can work to support their educational and professional needs.
Connections to Literature

There is a large body of work discussing the racialized experiences of Students of Color in educational settings. The aforementioned studies in the Literature Review indicate that the systemic barriers to academic success and resilience that White supremacy imposes on racially minoritized populations positions Students of Color to have a disadvantage over their own educational agency. These racial disparities can include *racial microaggressions* (i.e., lowered expectations from educators, failure to recognize cultural differences amongst Students of Color) and a *lack of educational resources* (i.e., Educators of Color, mental health support, student services, etc.). A number of studies also discussed the risk and protective factors of racialized experiences associated with campus climates and student perceptions of racism and resilience in school.

The Damaging Effects of the Model Minority Myth

The stereotype that Asian Americans are seen as high-achieving masks the significant racial, social and economic disparities that exist within this ethnically diverse community (Museus et al., 2021). This stereotype known as the “Model Minority Myth” assumes that as a collective whole, Asian Americans are well-educated and successful, thus minimizing their experiences into a narrow narrative. It also depicts the false narrative that the academic achievement of AAPI students takes priority over their mental health (Johnston-Guerrero & Pizzolato, 2016). Additionally, Yi et al. (2020) further discussed that the myth was both politicized and weaponized by White supremacy to pit non-
Asian American People of Color against each other by claiming that systemic
inequalities exist because of their cultures.

Museus, et al. (2021) add that the Model Minority Myth essentializes the
experiences of Asian American communities, causing racial exploitation of Asian
Americans in the United States. White supremacy is further amplified when Asian
Americans are excluded from social justice agendas and discourses, therefore
shifting the responsibilities of racial oppression and the burden of addressing
them onto the shoulders of other communities of color (Museus et al., 2021).

To combat the damaging narrative of the Model Minority Myth, this study
played a critical role in developing counterstories from participating FilAm
community college students. The findings indicated that although the Model
Minority Myth treats AAPI groups as successful and independent of academic or
mental health support, the participants were not experiencing the affordances of
this stereotype because racism, anti-Asian violence and racial microaggressions
are even more pronounced in a society that is experiencing a pandemic where
“the perpetrators of this violence see all of these bodies as foreign and
threatening” (Tessler, et al., 2020, p. 642). Students feared to walk in public for
their safety as FilAms as well as the safety of their family. FilAms also discussed
how the stereotype affected their family relations with increased expectations and
more academic pressure. Additionally, FilAms see their racial identity as a critical
catalyst for the ways they navigate their college experience.
Bringing Visibility Back to FilAms

Because the Model Minority Myth informs the public perceptions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as an American success story, it erases them from educational research, policy and practice. Buenavista (2010) urges that the racialization of Filipinos in the United States as “model minorities” are harmful to themselves and to other Asian American populations who experience limited academic and social support from educational practitioners. These pervasive experiences render the Filipino identity invisible (Nadal, 2021). Additionally, the “invisibility of Filipino Americans in the educational curriculum influences how these students construct knowledge” (Andresen, 2013, p. 70).

This research also indicates that in physical and digital spaces, racial discrimination in the U.S. fueled by White supremacy is further amplified in the midst of heightened political tension, fear and insecurity. In particular, the studies examined the negative psychological effect that racism, both subtle and explicit, had on Students of Color. The studies illustrated how Students of Color negotiate their ethnic and academic identities and their own capacity to achieve academic success while taking charge of their mental health.

Students of Color include Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students and their distinct ethnic communities. The studies indicated that the lack of research issues surrounding AAPI students is because of the politicized and harmful nature of the Model Minority Myth, which falsely assumes AAPI communities as a monolithic group and ultimately perpetuates their marginalized
status. This marginalization, according to the studies, pits AAPI communities against each other and to a greater extent, does social and psychological harm to other Communities of Color. Nevertheless, the narrative of resilience in education is problematic because macro traumatic events can leave lasting effects on these students.

Because the stories of FilAms in community college and especially in the IE are severely lacking or nonexistent, this project sought to shine the light on the lived experiences of these students during a time where they felt their stories were most affected by the peak years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 through 2021) and the peak years of their educational experiences. Stories of FilAms are not told and remain forever locked in a memory. These stories give an honest and humanizing reflection on lived experiences and are critical for social change.

Through documentary photography, photovoice works to bridge this gap as it asks participants to document aspects of their social worlds and giving researchers access to spaces, insights and realities not accessible otherwise (Latz, 2017, p. 76). From daily activities to major life moments, I could describe all of the photos as representative of the students’ needs on campus, illustrations of their successes and struggles as FilAms in college during a pandemic and how family, friends, racial trauma, racial identity, and navigating this space all contribute to their resilience.
Defining the Emergent Themes from This Study

One critical aspect about photovoice as a participatory action research (PAR) method is that it necessitates a collaborative design with participants as co-creators of knowledge. As the participants expressed in the previous chapter, there is a need for mental health and academic support from College Z. Even so, the participants also expressed that they found joy and pride in their FilAm culture. Five essential themes were derived from the data:

1. *Familial relationships* play a vital role in FilAm students’ identity.
2. FilAm students’ *experiences in college are influenced by faculty and staff*.
3. Multiple forms of *trauma* impact FilAm students.
4. Cultural and geographic context affects FilAm students’ *sense of belonging*.
5. FilAm students navigate their own *forms of resilience*.

I defined the study’s themes based on the specific findings in the previous chapter:

**Familial Relationships Play a Vital Role in FilAm Students’ Identity**

Family members heavily influence the development of FilAms’ perceptions of class, immigration status and gender identity. FilAm students may feel unsupported in their career endeavors because of the generational gap or literacy gap which exists between them and their parents. Further, there are societal expectations of FilAms which put pressure on them to pursue a specific
career or acting according to gender stereotypes. Even so, they may also find
great pride and joy with their family members in sharing cultural wealth together.

FilAm Students' Experiences in College Are Influenced by Faculty and Staff

FilAm Students feel empowered and in community when they feel racially
represented by educational leaders. These leaders at the college include but are
not limited to faculty, counselors and staff. In addition, establishing a culture of
care is necessary to motivate FilAm students to pursue the degrees they want,
graduate on time and persevere through their community college experience.

Multiple Forms of Trauma Impact FilAm Students

FilAm students recognize that multiple pandemics exist, including the
COVID-19 pandemic, the racism pandemic and the mental health pandemic. In
addition, generational trauma and the trauma of isolation in multiple areas of their
college journey put a tremendous amount of pressure on FilAm students in the
way they navigate their educational, social and familial settings.

Cultural and Geographic Context Affects FilAm Students’ Sense of Belonging

FilAm students who live in the Inland Empire find ways of negotiating what
community means to them. For some it means finding other like-minded FilAms
in college while for others it means having a supportive faculty and staff to guide
them on their journey. Additionally, FilAms value cultural events and celebrations
to bring members of the community college together and create a sense of
solidarity and understanding of FilAm culture.
FilAm Students Navigate Their Own Forms of Resilience

As a response to FilAm students’ experience with multiple traumas, FilAms continue to persist in their educational and personal journeys. For some, this involves relying on their greatest strengths such as optimism and being reflective through present-moment awareness in the face of trauma while others rely on the support from classmates, faculty and staff for guidance.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

Given the above understandings, it is critical to note that educational leaders are in a position of hyper-privilege and have the capacity to change the community college experience of FilAm students. With regard to addressing the systemic barriers which affect educational leadership, the recommendations I draw from this project reflect the literature and speak most directly to community college faculty, student affinity groups, student support professionals, counselors, student affairs professionals, librarians and academic advisors-stakeholders who interact with students most frequently. The following recommendations for educational leaders focus on establishing a humanizing campus community centering FilAm mental health, cultural visibility and advocacy for the academic and social advancement of FilAms and ultimately the broader AAPI community:

1. Establish an accessible and culturally competent committee of both educational leaders and student affinity groups composed of People of
Color and AAPI individuals to foster a solidary pipeline of empathetic leaders at the community college institution.

2. Reassess the diversity talent pipeline at the community college towards championing for the need to hire tenure-track FilAm faculty and permanent FilAm counselors of linguistic diversity and diverse immigration statuses.

3. Amend the mission and values of the community college as an institution which provides a culturally responsive and holistic campus culture of support for student mental health.

4. Reinforce the visibility of FilAm culture and community by recognizing its cultural wealth through showcasing annual cultural events, community festivals and local artists at the community college campus.

5. Provide FilAm students a humanizing and affirming platform to share their personal narratives of racial trauma with the campus community through student-centered projects including student and faculty-led photovoice projects and exhibitions, monthly webinars, Zoom-modality healing and processing spaces and campus community panel discussions.

Next Steps for Educational Reform

In regard to policy change, the recommendations I draw from this project speak most directly to the vice chancellors for student affairs, student support
professionals at 4-year university institutions, California community colleges, California state legislature and for community colleges across the US. The next steps for educational reform focus on culturally-sustainable racial equity for advancing FilAm community college student resilience and AAPI community advocacy:

1. Invest in academic, counseling and mentorship opportunities for FilAms in community college similar to Puente and Umoja programs, which serve Latinx and African American students, respectively.

2. Develop cross-curriculum AAPI faculty-developed courses and curriculum in AAPI studies and AAPI literature as part of the Ethnic Studies admissions criteria towards transfer to 4-year universities with recognition of the experiences of FilAms within the curriculum.

3. Invest in the development of a dedicated permanent space on campus for FilAm students as a cultural home for racial healing with a permanent staff, permanent budget and a permanent FilAm director who recognizes the specific cultural and mental health needs of FilAm students.

4. Interrogate and investigate moments of AAPI-racial microaggressions, targeted violence expressions of White Supremacy and discriminatory practices inside and outside of academic institutions to recognize the racial harm done to this community and put the onus back on the
institutions to improve their conduct and campus strategic communications.

There are practical implementations of this work that need to be carried out with the ongoing input of FilAm students. FilAms who feel a great sense of support in their community college years will expect similar support systems once they transfer to university. There are significant barriers in 2023 that we need to be mindful of in the way we lead in both the community college level and 4-year institutions.

Most notably, *misinterpretations* of resilience for FilAms are problematic because they reinforce notions of the Model Minority Myth, and damage-centered narratives and the systemic inequities that White supremacy perpetuates. It is this framework of resilience that is used against FilAms and how institutions value certain kinds of resilience at the expense of understanding the broader context of inequities, violence, oppression and multiple traumas. Educational Leaders need to do the work of reframing narratives of FilAms away from racial trauma through humanizing interventions. This can be done by centering their unique needs and lived experiences to ultimately uplift the experiences of other distinct ethnic groups of AAPI students and this is a function of equity-minded leadership.
Recommendations for Future Research

Because this project revealed nuanced Understandings of FilAm student identity and unique cultural experiences, it is critical to interrogate the systems which prevent support and understanding of this community’s needs. Therefore, three research questions for future researchers are as follows:

1. What barriers prevent institutions from adopting programs that support the cultural wealth, college experience and mental health of FilAm community college students in the IE?
2. To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic changed how institutions view the specific needs of FilAm community college students in the IE?
3. What are some ways photovoice projects can examine the lived experiences of FilAm community college student experiences in the IE as they transition to 4-year institutions?

Limitations of the Study

This study had two main limitations which included the limited sample size and the singularity of the site. Because the call for FilAm participants was sent during the summer of 2022, I received multiple responses of interested participants but could have potentially had more during the fall semester when more students were active on their student email accounts. Additionally, the study was conducted at a community college in the Inland Empire which
comprises San Bernardino and Riverside counties and therefore only accounted for the lived experiences of the FilAms who attended the chosen site.

Triangulation “From the Lens of (In)visibility” Photovoice Exhibition (2022)

In the months following the data collection process of my project, I named my project, “From the Lens of (In)visibility” with a focus on interrogating the word and the concept of invisibility in order to bring attention to this discussion of FilAm existence in higher education. I wanted to share this work with College Z and found the perfect opportunity to do so during Filipino American History Month in October 2022.

With the help of the Office of Student Life and Asian and Pacific Islander Association of College Z, the Community College District and College Z’s English Department, I was able to help curate a public in-person photovoice exhibition showcasing twenty-one photovoice submissions from the cohort of participants in my project. I was able to have the photos and narratives printed into foam boards and displayed on easels. Additionally, the participants were able to tell me which specific stakeholders and guests they wanted me to invite. Their favorite professors, local dignitaries and student affinity groups were invited and attended the exhibition. Figures 13 and 14 illustrate the exhibition and its attendance by the College Z and IE community.
This exhibition was a celebratory event and a visualization of the resilience of FilAms, celebrating this community and the work the participants have done to make this project happen and we were proud to have this photovoice gallery displayed in commemoration of Filipino/a/x American History Month.

**Figure 13: Panoramic View of “From the Lens of (In)visibility”**

Photovoice Exhibition (2022)

Photovoice exhibitions are typically shown after the dissertation has been completed to account for the data analysis and implications based on the data collected. With the exhibition taking place in the middle of my dissertation process, this exhibition has informed the ways I have analyzed the photos.
because I was able to see how specific photos elicited a specific reaction to each photo. It also reinforced how important this work was to the student participants of the study as a few were able to attend the opening reception and were proud of their work. Speaking about this project that night with critical stakeholders including the Dean of Instruction of the Arts and Humanities Division as well as the Academic Senate President and the Mayor of San Bernardino also helped strengthen the intentionality and urgency of my dissertation. We spoke about how FilAms and the broader AAPI community need to have their voices heard now more than ever and a project in the form of this public photovoice exhibition was the perfect way to listen to them and understand how the pandemic and racial trauma has impacted their college experiences.
Figure 14: Participants in Attendance of “From the Lens of (In)visibility” Photovoice Exhibition (2022)
Figure 15: Website of “From the Lens of (In)visibility”

Photovoice Exhibition (2022)

I also designed a website shown in Figure 15 which would be accessible to anyone with the link and so I included a QR code which could be scanned via a smart device and would direct viewers to the website. The intention was to showcase the photovoice submissions that participants selected for the in-person show in an accessible digital space while educating viewers on the project and showing archived photos from presentations of this project in conferences and exhibitions as a “tour” of our project.
Conclusions

This dissertation has generated significant new knowledge about the FilAm community college student population in the IE and it matters for policy, practice and reform. There are few studies that illustrate the systems of institutional and mental health support for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities in a COVID-era. Additionally, there is a dearth of research on the pandemic’s impact on Filipino/a/x American (FilAm) Community College students’ academic performance and emotional well-being.

The data for this study were analyzed using three tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT): (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, (2) the existence and need to challenge dominant ideology and (3) the necessity and validity of using the experiential knowledge of students of color. The coding of the data resulted in five themes in relation to the two overarching research questions: (i.) Familial relationships play a vital role in FilAm students’ identity, (ii.) FilAm students’ experiences in college are influenced by faculty and staff, (iii). Multiple forms of trauma impact FilAm students, (iv.) FilAm students navigate their own forms of resilience and (v.) Cultural and geographic context affects FilAm students’ sense of belonging.

The first research question, how FilAm community college students in the IE have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrated narratives of participants described the communal fear of anti-Asian violence and how the Model Minority Myth works to perpetuate racial stereotypes and a lack of
academic and mental health support for FilAm students. This question also elucidated how racial trauma brought about a resilience that was exclusive to FilAm identities as a result of their strong relationships to their families, cultural expectations and means of finding a sense of belonging. Despite their personal and academic struggles, these students found new passions, joy and support from the academic programming as well as faculty and staff at College Z.

The second research question, what systems of support can community colleges create to help these students within the context of the pandemic, emphasized the need for mental health support, resources and specialized counseling for FilAm and the broader AAPI community. Given the culturally-specific needs of these students, it is critical to note that this community wants to feel validated and understood. The participants also stressed the importance of BIPOC faculty representation in the classroom and cultural events on campus to spread awareness of the FilAm community. Ultimately, the onus of providing these resources must be placed on the academic institution. The stories of the participants worked to develop a new narrative which underscores the importance of the academic institutions’ social responsibility to aid in the resilience of these FilAm students whose racial and collective traumas have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recommendations for the future of educational leaders and educational reform is to prioritize FilAm student voices in decision-making processes while elevating the cultural competence of the institution and making
space for these students to share their personal narratives and stories of their lives as they impact the direction of mental health services as well as academic and counseling support of FilAms, ultimately uplifting the college experiences of other AAPI communities.
APPENDIX A:

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER OF APPROVAL
June 15, 2022

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Expedited Review

IRB-FY2022-301

Status: Approved

Dr. Karen Escalante and Rangel Zarate

COE - Doctoral Studies, COE - TeacherEduc&Foundtn TEF

California State University, San Bernardino

5500 University Parkway

San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Dr. Karen Escalante and Rangel Zarate:

Your application to use human subjects, titled “How Community Colleges can Advance Filipino American Student Resilience in a COVID-era” has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risk and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants. The study is approved as of June 15, 2022. The study will require an annual administrative check-in (annual report) on the current status of the study on July 15, 2023. Please use the renewal form to complete the annual report.
This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's COVID-19 Prevention Plan for more information regarding campus requirements.

If your study is closed to enrollment, the data has been de-identified, and you're only analyzing the data - you may close the study by submitting the Closure Application Form through the Cayuse Human Ethics (IRB) system. The Cayuse system automatically reminds you at 90, 60, and 30 days before the study is due for renewal or submission of your annual report (administrative check-in). The modification, renewal, study closure, and unanticipated/adverse event forms are located in the Cayuse system with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission Webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. Please note a lapse in your approval may result in your not being able to use the data collected during the lapse in the application's approval period.
You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy.

- Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.
- Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.
- Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.
- Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risks and benefits to the human participants in your IRB application. If you have any questions about the IRBs decision please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2022-301 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive regarding your research from participants or others should be directed to Mr. Gillespie.
Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG
APPENDIX B:

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL
June 15TH, 2022

Dear College Z Community,

This letter is a request for College Z’s assistance with a research project I am conducting as part of my Doctorate degree in the Educational Leadership Program at California State University, San Bernardino under the supervision of Dr. Karen Escalante.

I am recruiting self-identifying Filipino/a/x American College Z students for an online asynchronous self-paced 2-week study on how this community has been impacted by racial trauma heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will be conducted using a photovoice methodology which empowers minority communities and addresses their needs through photos and written narratives. Participants will use their smart devices to share their stories and narratives and reflect on their experience with this study.

The first 10 participants who communicate with me (Rangel Zarate) via email that they would like to participate in the two-week study will be eligible to receive a $100 Amazon e-gift card. Participants who withdraw from the study prior to its completion will not be eligible for this incentive.

Interested participants should contact me via email (zarar300@coyote.csusb.edu) by July 27th, 2022. The study will begin August 1st, 2022 and will conclude August 14th, 2022.
Thank you for your time and consideration in this study.

Kind regards,

Rangel Zarate
(Co-Principal Investigator)

Dr. Karen Escalante
(Primary Investigator)

This study has been approved by the California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board

IRB-FY2022-301.

APPENDIX
APPENDIX C:

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FLYER
FILAM PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

WE ARE RECRUITING FILIPINO/A/X AMERICAN STUDENTS FOR AN ONLINE SELF-PACED 2-WEEK STUDY ON HOW THIS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY RACIAL TRAUMA HEIGHTENED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

PHOTOVOICE EMPOWERS MINORITY COMMUNITIES AND ADDRESSES THEIR NEEDS THROUGH PHOTOS AND NARRATIVES. USE YOUR SMART DEVICE CAMERA TO SHARE YOUR STORY.

WHEN? AUGUST 1ST, 2022 TO AUGUST 14TH 2022

TO PARTICIPATE, CONTACT RANGEL ZARATE BY JULY 29TH, 2022

RZARATE@EMAIL.EDU

This study has been approved by the College Z Institutional Review Board.
APPENDIX D:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the sense of belonging, identity formation and resilience from trauma of Filipino American community college students in a COVID-era. This study is being conducted by Rangel Zarate under the supervision of Dr. Karen Escalante, Assistant Professor-Teacher Education and Foundations, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purposes of the research are to examine three critical areas related to Filipino American Community College students: (a) Identity formation through narratives and (counter) narratives; (b) Trauma and resilience and; (c) Sense of belonging inside and outside of academia. This study will look at Filipino American college student identity as multifaceted and intersectional and how resilience from trauma in a COVID-era affects their sense of self and internal validation.

DESCRIPTION: This research will elevate the voices of self-identifying Filipino American community college students in the Inland Empire through the arts-based research method of photovoice and photo elicitation. Guiding questions around themes of Filipino identity in the Inland Empire, finding resilience after racialized trauma, the COVID-19 pandemic, and support systems from their community college will guide the
photo-taking and the written narrative process. This two-week, self-paced online project will seek to collect data in the form of photos and written narratives the first week and a written reflection on the experience of this process. The process will ask participants for 15-20 minutes per day to take photos and write up a narrative describing each photo as they relate to the prompt of the day. Five prompts will be posed the first week, one per day.

**AVOID TAKING PHOTOS OF**: Individual people, illegal, hateful and sexual/pornographic imagery and personal identifying information (social security information, driver’s license, etc.).

**PARTICIPATION**: Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and can freely withdraw from participation at any time. There are no repercussions to withdrawing from this study and your grades will not be affected.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**: Photos, written narratives and reflections in this project will be chosen for publication and scholarly presentation use by the researcher. During the process of data collection, all data collected, including photos and written narratives will be saved and secured on a CSUSB Google Drive account on a password-protected computer only accessible to the researcher. All texts and email communication with participants will be deleted and destroyed after the completion of the study.
PHOTOGRAPH: Photo Waiver Release Form

I understand this research will use my photographs, written narratives and reflections on the project for publication and scholarly presentation use. Yes □ or No □

DURATION: The expected duration of participation will be two weeks of self-paced online responses using photos and written narratives.

RISKS: There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research, although these risks are very minimal. It is possible that talking about trauma and mental health might be emotional for some people, and may be stressful. This research project will discuss the impact of trauma on mental health and resilience in Filipino American community college students in the era of COVID-19. Foreseeable risks include potential discomfort; thus, participants are highly encouraged to seek psychological services for students and Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) if they feel that they are in need of emotional or mental health support services during the duration of this study and beyond:

CSUSB Counseling & Psychological Services

(909)-537-5040

https://www.csusb.edu/caps
Filipino American Mental Health Resource Center
(951) 563-0049
inlandfilam97@gmail.com

Perris Valley Filipino-American Association Inc. - Resource Center

San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health
Mental Health 24-Hour Hotline
(888)-743-1478
DBH Internet Website

Asian Mental Health Collective
US Therapist Directory
info@nqapia.org

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
https://www.nqapia.org/wpp/healthandhealing/

Inclusive Therapists
https://www.inclusivetherapists.com/therapy/pacific-islander-oceania-cultures
connect@inclusivetherapists.com
**BENEFITS:** Participating in this research project will enhance policymaker decisions in creating spaces for Filipino American community college students to improve their sense of belonging, mental health and overall academic success.

**COMPENSATION:** Completion of this online two-week self-paced study includes a monetary compensation of one (1) $100 Amazon e-gift card sent to the participant’s email address within two weeks of completing the study. Participants who withdraw from the study prior to its completion will not be eligible for this incentive.

**CONTACT:**

Rangel Zarate (Researcher)

Email: rzarate@email.edu

Dr. Karen Escalante (Principal Investigator)

**IRB CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Michael Gillespie (Research Compliance Officer)

CSUSB Office of Academic Research

Phone: 909-537-7588

Email: mgillesp@csusb.edu
RESULTS: Results from this research can be obtained through California State University’s College of Education in Room 335 at CSUSB 5500 University Parkway San Bernardino, CA 92407.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:
I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

SIGNATURE:

Name (Print): ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date: __________
APPENDIX E:

“FROM THE LENS OF (IN)VISIBILITY” PHOTOVOICE EVENT FLYER
From the Lens of (In)Visibility:
A Photovoice Inquiry Into How Community Colleges
Can Advance Filipino/a/x American Student Resilience

Curated by Professor Rangel Zarate

October 27 – 31, 2022

Opening Reception
Thursday, October 27
5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Join us for a Photovoice Exhibition showcasing the photography and written narratives of our Filipino/a/x student community!
Light refreshments will be served
REFERENCES


American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73. 
https://www.jstor.org/stable/2696265


