LA GUERRA EN EL VALLE: STATE SANCTIONED VIOLENCE AND LATINA'S EXPERIENCES LIVING IN A MIXED STATUS FAMILY IN CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of
California State University, Stanislaus

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Social Work

By
Jennifer Morales
May 2017

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

LA GUERRA EN EL VALLE: STATE SANCTIONED VIOLENCE

AND LATINAS EXPERIENCES LIVING IN A MIXED

STATUS FAMILY IN CALIFORNIA'S

CENTRAL VALLEY

by
Jennifer Morales

Signed Certification of Approval page
is on file with the University Library

Dr. Jane Rousseau
Assistant Professor of Social Work

Date

Dr. John A. Garcia
Professor of Social Work

Date

© 2017

Jennifer Morales
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the brave immigrants of the world who are forced to leave all they have ever known in their motherland to pursue a means of survival in a different country; to the roughly 11 million undocumented people within the violent borders of the United States; and to the millions of families who live in mixed-status households and face daily fear of family separation/deportation. Thank you to all the freedom fighters, putting in work daily to make the borders fall!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the participants of this study. I appreciate your willingness to be part of this research, and for the courage of sharing all that you did. Your incredible journeys are inspirational and admirable. Thank you!

To my parents- Angeles y José Morales

A mis padres hermosos, José y Angeles Morales, que tuvieron el valor de dejar todo lo que conocían en México para una vida en el norte. Los admiro tanto, son mi fortaleza. Gracias por enseñarme con su ejemplo, a luchar y que los seños mas grandes si se pueden lograr. Gracias por todos sus sacrificios para mantener nuestra familia, me han dando la bendición mas grande, el amor incondicional. Este titulo de maestría no compara con la educación que me han dado en su hogar, los amo!

A mi madre Angeles, eres tan chula y chingona! I thank you for always being there for me, for all the joy and happiness you bring into my life, your advice y regañadas. Tu eres el amor mas grande de mi vida, te agradezco todo el amor y vida que me has dado. When I was in high school, you decided to go back to school, and in 2009 you graduated from Stanislaus State with your BA. I saw you struggle to pass your classes, I saw you cry because you were not sure you would make it, but you did! Seeing you push through challenges is what has given me the motivation to keep going and pursue a Masters degree. You have dedicated your life to ensuring my siblings and I were nurtured; I appreciate the childhood you gave me (Selena

costumes included). These past two years you have helped me so much, feeding me, listening to me, and telling me that I would be able to do it! ¡Lo logramos mami!

A mi papa, José, you are the most hardworking man I have ever met. Thinking of you crossing the border at the age of sixteen always grounds me in knowing I can overcome every struggle I face. You have taught me so much about life and I am eternally grateful for the love and life you have given me. Because of you, I know all my dreams are possible; you changed professions from a *Panadero* in Mexico, to a *campesino* in the U.S, back to a *Panadero,* owning your own bakery*,* to becoming a credentialed teacher. *El Gallito Bakery* taught me so much about our beautiful culture, our resilience & strength, and the beauty of building meaningful relationships with our community. I will always be in awe of how amazing you are and everything you have accomplished in your life. Thank you for all the advice, support, patience and love you have given me.

To my siblings-

José- I appreciate all the love and support you have given me through life and this MSW program. Your phone calls and text messages have brought joy to my life. José, you will forever be the voice in my head that says, "you can do it, Jenny!" You taught me that there is a beautiful world waiting for me to experience! I will never forget our trip to Mexico, where you told me you would always be there to support me and said I could accomplish all of my dreams. You're one of the most lovable people I know, and I admire your ability to create friends in every space you are in. I love you hermano!

Samantha- Living across the street from you the first year of this program was the biggest blessing! You have been such an important part of my life, I appreciate all the love and advice you give me and for all the laughter you bring into my life. You are one of the funniest people I know, whenever I am stressed or down, I know I can count on you to cheer me up. I will always cherish our memories growing up, dancing to Selena (literally all day); now as adults, your love and support encourage me to pursue my dreams. These past two years have been so tough, but through it all you have been there to tell me it was all going to be okay and that it would be over soon! You have given me the most important role I have in life, being a Tia. I will always be grateful for the ability you have given me to be a part of Joel and Evan's life! Te amo sista!

Diego-

You are a little piece of my heart walking around on this earth. I am so proud of the man you have become. You are smart, compassionate, kind, empathetic and are always there to help anyone out. It has been an incredible journey to see you grow into a critically conscious young man who believes in advocating for others. I will never forget the day you and I stood arm in arm with our community and shut down the freeway because black lives will always matter to us. You were always down to come with me to discussions on race, politics, and organizing. It felt so good to have you there learning with me, I know you will accomplish great things in this world. The future is ours! I love you hermanito!

Enrique-

You have been a part of my life since I was thirteen years old. I appreciate you for always being supportive of me. It was so much fun living across the street from you the first year of this program, thanks for letting me use the lawnmower *vecino!* I will always be grateful for the impact you've had our family and for giving me Joel and Evan. They are incredible kids and I know that is because you give them all your love and support. Thank you for bringing laughter into my life these past two years! PPP!

Magee-

Thank you for being part of our family. I appreciate all the support you have given me. The memories I have of us going to Mexico will always be cherished; you are a kind soul that is doing the most to create a positive change in this world, I admire your dedication to the community. I am grateful for the joy you have brought to our family and the supportiveness you have given us all.

Joel y Evan-

Mis sobrinos, my two xicanitos! You have allowed me to enjoy life throughout these last two years. I hope to make you proud, to set a good example for you, and to build a community where you can flourish. I hope this MSW leads the way for *un barrio educado,* where you can become healers, builders of community and changers of our world! You were my outlet during difficult times; spending time with you and watching you grow reminded me why this Masters degree is important, to set an example to the next generations. I hope to one day be at your graduation, and

I will help you in whatever ways I can. I will always be here for you. I love you! Our future lies in your hands!

Feliz Y Juan-

Mis tíos/padrinos que me han dado el amor de abuelos toda mi vida. Les agradezco su valor de dejar su pueblo en México para trabajar en Planada. Por su sacrificio y valor nuestra familia esta aquí. Agradezco todos los chiles rellenos, frijolitos, y tortillas que siempre me esperaban en su hogar. Los quiero mucho!

To my community

Thank you to the incredible residents of Planada, Califas (Planet X). This small, humble and resilient town has shown me how to be hard working, courageous, empathetic and hopeful. This town has taught me what it means to be resilient, how to be there for one another, and that our achieving our dreams is possible. *¡Somos guerreros, nuestro pueblo resiste porque existe!*

To the friends I have made throughout my life, I appreciate all the love and support you give me. To all my xingonas, who are building community in various ways; through academia, art, poetry, music, community organizing, healing centers, etc. It is because of you that I feel, *we gon' be alright!* Many thank yous to the mentors in my life, who have shown me empowered women, empower women. We are the change we want to see in this world.

To my co-hort members of the MSW program, thank you for being a source of tranquility for me. I will always cherish the memories we have created during this program. I have learned so much from all of you, and I can't wait to see how we

change this world! Thanks to the professors who were always available to answer questions, or provide support through this program.

To my family: mis tias, tios, primas, primos, sobrinas y sobrinos, our family is strong and resilient; I love you all so much! Thank you for always encouraging me to keep “doing what I do.” I would like to thank and honor the past 3 generations that have gotten me to this MSW, and to honor the next 3 generations to follow. I also thank Mother Earth, for allowing me to see the beauty of life and for giving us the bounty of life.

To my thesis chair, Jane-

I will be eternally grateful for all your support during these last two years. Our conversations have always left me feeling empowered, re-energized and happy. I appreciate all your hard work in helping me get this culminating project completed. It takes great courage to leave your homeland, I am thankful you did, and came to CSU Stanislaus. This program would have not been the same for me if you were not here. I admire you for being an incredible woman, mother, partner, professor and human being. I will always cherish my time spent with you and know you will always be a pillar of support for me.

To my reader, John-

I have been privileged to be your student; you are so passionate and intelligent! I appreciate all the ways you have challenged me to think critically and grow as a student and member of society. Thank you for always seeing the best in your students, and for encouraging us to explore the power dynamics that exist in the

world. I am grateful for your ability to be available and approachable to me throughout this MSW program.

To my comrade, Rodolfo-

I am so incredibly honored to be your partner in this life. For the past two years we have both been in a Masters program, staying up late (or not sleeping at all) to finish assignments, helping each other proof read papers, prepare for presentations and organizing actions in our community. In spite of working, and being enrolled in school full time, you have been supportive of my desires to stay active in the community by attending meetings, workshops, forums, and actions. You, mi *revolucionario*, inspire me everyday to fight the good fight, to work towards making this life more equitable for our communities with love. I look forward to changing this world with you, and building our *familia revolucionaria* together. ¡Felicidades, in completing your Masters degree, and good luck as you continue your academic journey in your PhD program, you got this hermoso! ¡Hasta la victoria, siempre!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Dedication iv

Acknowledgements v

Abstract xiv

CHAPTER

I. Introduction 1

Statement of the Problem 1
Statement of the Purpose 6
Significance of the Study 6

II. Literature Review 8

Living in the Shadows 8
Social Emotional Implications for Children 9
State Sanctioned Violence 11
Resilience and Protective Factors 14
Summary 16

III. Methodology 17

Overview 17
Research Design 18
Sampling 20
Instrumentation 21
Data Collection 21
Data Analysis 22
Protection of Human Subjects 23

IV. Findings 24

Overview 24
Sample Overview 25
Traumatic Experiences of Crossing Mexico/United States Border 26
Growing up in a Mixed Status Family 30
Social Emotional Implications 34
Family Planning for Deportation 38
Resilience Factors 41

Summary of Findings 43

V. Discussion 45

Overview 45
Overview of Major Findings 45
Experiences of Latinas Who Grew Up in a Mixed Status Family 46
Planning for Deportation 48
Resilience and Protective Factors 51
Limitations 55
Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy 56
Future Research 58

References 61

Appendices

A. Interview Guide 73
B. Informed Consent 75

ABSTRACT

This study explores the lived experiences of Latina women who were raised in a mixed immigration status family in Merced County. This study analyzes state sanctioned violence and the social emotional affects for mixed status families who lived in California's Central Valley. This study also explores whether families plan for possible deportation and how families build resilience through their relationships with family members, friends and community. Eight self identified Latina women who were raised in a mixed status family were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide for this qualitative exploratory study. The findings indicate that participants have experienced: trauma while crossing the Mexico/United States border as children, complex experiences while growing up in a mixed status family, social emotional impacts due to possible family separation and/or deportation, various levels of family planning for deportation, and resiliency factors that protected them from adverse effects. Additionally, findings indicated that strong family connections, detailed planning, and awareness of the issue can help increase resiliency.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Individuals who enter the United States without legal permission are classified as being undocumented and are subject to deportation (Belliveau, 2008). Roughly 11.2 million undocumented individuals reside within the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2011). In 2009, four million United States born children (younger than age eighteen) along with 1.1 million foreign born children resided with an undocumented parent in the U.S. (Passel & Taylor, 2011). In the fiscal year 2016, the Department of Homeland security deported a record 450,954 unauthorized immigrants, continuing a trend of increased enforcement that has resulted in more than two million deportations since 2008 (Department of Homeland Security, 2016). The state of California is home to more than 2.6 million undocumented immigrants (Hill & Hayes, 2015).

In 2008, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enacted the Secure Communities Program. This program used local jails to identify immigrants for deportation by forwarding fingerprint data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation to ICE, which determined the arrested person's immigration status. If the arrested person was identified as a non-citizen, ICE could request that local authorities detain that person until ICE moved

him or her to an immigration detention center (Phillips, Cervantes, Lincroft, Dettlaff & Bruce, 2013).

Although the Secure Communities Program purportedly intended to deport migrants with violent criminal convictions, data confirm that half of those deported through this program had either no criminal conviction or a minor conviction such as a traffic offense (Kohli, Markowits & Chavez, 2011). Programs such as Secure Communities have further criminalized undocumented individuals who provide financial support to their spouses, children and through remittances sent to family members in their country of origin. The process of criminalization occurs when an officer has the ability to detain an individual based on his or her interpretation of the crime being committed. Increased law enforcement and cruel repercussions for unlawful status creates a culture of fear, stress and silence within the lives of the undocumented individuals and the larger community. The general records from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement show that more than seventy thousand adults with one or more U.S.-born children were deported in 2013 alone, but no records are kept regarding the fate of their children.

Research has explored how deportation and detention systems affect immigrant family relationships and development of both undocumented and U.S. Citizen children (Brabeck, & Hunter, 2014). This study tells us that families with undocumented members would benefit from creating safety plans focused on guardianship of children if the caregiver is detained. However, having such plans in place does not ensure children will not be placed in state foster care. Wesler (2011)

estimates about 5,100 children whose parents have been deported currently living in foster care. When caregivers are deported, family separation can occur for lengthy and extended periods of time.

Another study provides information of the consequences major deportation raids have on mixed status families. Mixed status families are defined as those in which a family unit consists of both documented and undocumented individuals. In March 2007, ICE conducted a raid at the Michael Bianco, Inc. factory in New Bedford, Massachusetts. As a result of this raid, nearly 200 children were left in the custody of child welfare services. In addition to abrupt family separation, with no evidence of child abuse or neglect, child welfare workers struggled to locate and communicate with detained parents (Phillips et al., 2013). Media coverage of such raids creates unquestionable fear in the lives of undocumented families. Every day they make the decision to work and risk being incarcerated, separated from their families, and deported in addition to barriers defined as harsh working conditions, living situations, and fear of reporting crimes.

There is limited research on the lived experiences of mixed status families in California's Central Valley. Individuals within mixed families often experience high levels of anxiety due to being stateless; their geographical location erases their humanity and deems them deportable. Often, their anxiety goes unresolved because of limited access to mental health resources (Brabeck, Lykes & Hunter, 2014). Some studies have found that societal conditions create lifelong struggles from early childhood through adolescence and emerging adulthood. A parent's undocumented

status is a predictor of multiple adverse outcomes for children, including emotional well-being, academic performance, and health status (Yoshikawa, Teranishi & Suarez-Orozco, 2012). Research indicates that a child is psychologically and emotionally affected by a sudden absence of the parent and is also more likely to exhibit poor school attendance and performance than other children without this particular family issue (Brabeck and Xu, 2010).

Previous research has found that parents often must decide to either leave their citizen-children behind in the care of others or take them to a country the child may have never known. These options create two very harmful outcomes: creating exiles, by moving children to a new country where they might not know the language, people or culture, or orphans, by leaving children in the care of others while parents return to their homeland (Zayas & Bradlee, 2014). A return to the country of origin can be very disruptive for U.S.-born and raised children. Research estimates about 300,000 U.S.-born children have moved from the United States to Mexico since 2005 (Passel, Cohn & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012).

Deportation can affect a family in a multitude of ways and have serious long-lasting implications. Despite the significance of this separation, little has been documented about the effects of repatriation on the family (Rodriguez, 2013). These communities are at increased risk for developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as internalizing and externalizing problems (Guadiño, 2013). While much research has developed around immigration on a federal level, there is limited

research on the effects of statelessness and fear in individual families in small agricultural communities.

While some research has explored the correlation between deportation and its effects on the family unit, there is an increased interest in examining what long-lasting psychological affects it will have on young children and youth (Rodriguez, 2013). A 2012 Urban Institute Report discusses the short and long term changes in emotional behavior among children (such as increased episodes of crying, anxiety, and anger) and also examines changes in both general and financial family stability (Chaundry, 2010).

In Merced County, which is located in the California Central Valley, there is limited research on the lived experiences of undocumented families. Merced County has a population of 246,000, and 22,000 individuals are undocumented (Hill & Johnson, 2011). An estimated 23% of all children residing in Southwest and East Merced have at least one unauthorized parent. Unauthorized immigrants are often deeply rooted in their communities. In southwest and east Merced, about 59% of undocumented residents live in poverty (Marcelli & Pastor, 2015). There is a need to continue these studies; particularly in the Merced area in order to better inform policy makers and human service agency providers who might come into contact with mixed status families. Living in rural agricultural towns puts further restrictions on undocumented families such as unfair labor practices, health disparities, and limited resources to inform them of their rights and legal assistance to dispute cases of human rights abuses.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Latina women who were raised in a mixed status family in Merced County. A qualitative research design was used to gather personal narratives that provide information on family planning for deportation, daily trauma and insecurity caused by having to live in secrecy and what implications this experience has had on their lives. This study used open-ended in depth interviews to gather data to answer the questions: How do Latina women describe experiences of growing up in a mixed immigration status family? Do families create safety plans to plan ahead of a possible deportation? Are there protective and resiliency factors that Latina women experience growing up in mixed immigration status families?

The foundation of this study is based on previous research that shows family separation can have detrimental effects on a family. The study hopes to find themes and intersecting commonalities and struggles between participants using their own standpoint as the focus for theme development. The assumption is that adults who have been raised in a mixed status family have experienced higher levels of childhood adversary and an immense amount of resilience factors.

Significance of the Study

Considering the large number of individuals directly impacted by immigration policies, there is a limited amount of research available that analyzes individual lived experiences. This study is relevant to the social work profession because the National Social Work Association (NASW) Code of Ethics states we must advocate for social

justice, maintain human relationships and dignity and worth of the person (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). Marginalized undocumented individuals face the fear of advocating for themselves for various reasons including fear of losing their livelihood, police brutality, and deportation. Additionally, child welfare and other human service agencies, often come in contact with undocumented families; all while lacking formal training and procedural protocols on how to support and best assist families who experience this unique, and often life limiting, obstacle. It is clear that social justice is vital to social work practice, but it is not always clear which factors create our vision of justice, what tools we use for its promotion in education and practice, and how to build the future of this foundation (Having, 2010).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses and explores the current knowledge base regarding three main areas that underpin the current study that looks at the lived experiences of Latinas' who grew up as children in mixed status families. The first section of the literature review addresses the unique situation and experience that undocumented and mixed status families face in the United States. The second section addresses the social-emotional implications for children in mixed status families and research findings related to their health and well-being. Third, the unique challenges faced by small agricultural communities (high rates of poverty, limited access to resources, and greater isolation) are explored through the lens of state sanctioned violence. The fourth section focuses on resilience literature that examines the experiences of Latinos in the United States.

Living in the Shadows

Migration is described as a phenomenon related to economic conditions in the sending and receiving countries. Many individuals who decide to migrate to the United States hope to find better living conditions for themselves and their families (Infante, Idrovo, Sanchez- Dominguez, Vinhas, & Gonzalez-Vazquez, 2012). In addition, Infante et al. found that individuals who embark on journeys to the United States are vulnerable to human rights violations. These migrants are at elevated risk of experiencing traumatic events that might result in depression, anxiety and

symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (Rojas-Florez, Clements, Hwang, London, 2016). In mixed status families where children are growing up with undocumented parents, their homes have varying levels of risk and protective factors (Brabeck, Lykes & Hunter, 2014). Mixed status families are especially vulnerable to trauma, depression and anxiety due to caregivers' work conditions, low economic status, and high psychological distress (Garcia, Manongdo, & Ozechowski, 2014). In particular, many Mexican migrants suffer loss of family relationships, social status, safety and security.

Although migrants seek protection and sanctuary in the United States, many migrants express feelings of hopelessness, futility, meaninglessness, trouble adjusting to a new culture, hardships finding steady employment, access to medical care, and hardships preserving social contacts (Lusk, McCallister, and Villalobos, 2013). In addition, many family members risk additional consequences and interactions with law enforcement by committing small crimes in order to survive in this country, for example, driving without a driver's license and presenting false documentation in order to work. These daily stressors create a continual state of threat and stress for the entire family, as well as an inclination to 'live in the shadows'. Children interviewed for studies on the impacts of deportation state they fear law enforcement due to their fears of parental separation (Dreby, 2012).

Social Emotional Implications for Children

Ecological systems theory proposes that individual human development occurs within interconnected and embedded ecological systems; culture, politics,

relationship, social interactions and life experiences impact the attitudes, behaviors and competencies of children, adolescences and their families (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2007). This perspective can best be used to understand how a parent's legal status can impact their child (Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi & Suarez-Orozco, 2012). In 2009, four million U.S. born children, along with 1.1 million foreign born children, resided with an undocumented parent in the U.S. (Passel & Taylor, 2010). Being undocumented in the United States causes substantial amounts of insecurity in the everyday life of the family unit; a number of studies have found that children of undocumented individuals are impacted by various stressors felt by their caregivers (Brabeck et al., 2014).

Researchers have studied the short-term effects of adverse childhood experiences and its impact on healthy social emotional development. Youth who had been separated from a caregiver showed elevated levels of depression and anxiety (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011). When studying the impact of parental detention and deportation on U.S. children and families, Brabeck et al. (2014) found that the experiences of detention tend to be traumatizing to families due to the documented instances of human rights abuses while in detention. This study also found changes in young children when they were separated from a parent due to detention. In cases where parents were arrested due to undocumented status, children demonstrated significant changes in their eating and sleeping patterns (Chaundry et al., 2010; Rojas-Florez et al., 2016).

Recent studies have found that heightened enforcement of immigration laws have posed an alarming public health challenge to U.S. born children of undocumented parents. Losing a parent, or the fear of losing of parent, to deportation can result in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as serious lifelong mental and medical illnesses (Rojas-Florez et al., 2016). Children who live in a constant state of fear or trauma, such as fear of parental separation, are in an aroused state, and unprepared to learn from social, emotional, and other life experiences (Perry, 2006).

State Sanctioned Violence

Legal violence is described as laws at the state and local levels that restrict and bring suffering to immigrant families who live in the United States (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). Menjivar and Abrego studied three areas of immigrant lives: family, school and the workplace. Their findings indicate that legal violence causes individuals to live in perpetual fear of being separated from their families. The participants of their study expressed fear of interacting with the community, law enforcement factors, and were less likely to report labor abuse. In addition, many undocumented individuals do not feel comfortable interacting with social service workers who might reveal their status to immigration officials (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012).

There is also fluidity that needs to be addressed when it comes to immigration status. Often, individuals move from being undocumented, to becoming a temporary worker, to being a legal permanent resident (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). Menjivar and Abrego found distinctions in levels of care for children in the same family with

different immigration status. This was due to the access to health care services that is based on legal status. They also found that families experience negative impacts due to state sanctioned violence when they are reunited with family members after long periods of separation even if parents are able to keep communication through phone calls and often send remittances to their home countries.

In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act became federal laws that greatly impacted immigrant communities. The laws made many legal immigrants ineligible for welfare programs and completely cut off assistance to undocumented immigrants (Martin & Taylor, 1998). In the early 2000's, researchers correlated these laws to increases in deportation, greater economic hardships, loss of services to U.S. citizen children, and unfavorable impact on immigrants' access to public services (Hagan, Rodriguez, Capps, and Kabiri, 2003). In 2002, low-income working immigrants were less likely to get tax credits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (food stamps), or housing vouchers (Capps & Fortuny, 2006).

As part of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, Congress added the 287(g) program to the Immigration and Nationality Act. This program allows state and local police agencies to collaborate with the federal government to enforce federal immigration laws (American Immigration Council, 2017). The program has targeted immigrants who commit crimes classified as misdemeanors and traffic offences. This kind of policing creates distrust in local law enforcement agencies (Capps, Rosenblum, Chisti, & Rodriguez, 2011). Recent

policies that specifically target undocumented individuals, such as Arizona's Senate Bill 1070, have inflicted severe restrictions on the day-to-day life of Latino families. They face discriminatory situations when they interact with various institutions; Ayon and Barrera (2013) found that participants of their study felt discriminated against by police, educators, and social service providers (Ayon & Barrera, 2013).

Merced County has a 26% rate of poverty, a median family income of 37,627, is 50% Latino, and 20% foreign-born individuals (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Poverty has been found to be a risk factor closely related to family stress, delinquency, and negative educational outcomes (McWhirter et al., 2007). Poverty rates for children of immigrants are higher than among children of natives in the United States (Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson & Passel, 2006).

The Urban Institute has conducted extensive research on the trends of immigration, policy, access to health and wellness resources and overall changing demographics of the United States. They found that children of immigrants are more likely to live in two parent households, yet still be poor (Capps et al., 2006). The research indicates that 56% of children of immigrants are low-income but family's exhibit low rates of applying for benefits due to fear and anxiety of being detected by government officials (Hagan et al., 2003). Children who live in California's Central Valley are exposed to pesticides that are linked to health disparities. In addition, children who are growing up in agricultural areas face additional exposure when chemicals contaminate water supplies or are sprayed closely to schools, homes and parks (Marquez, Shafer, Aldern, & VanderMolen, 2016). Research has found

increased risk for childhood cancers when children live in counties having moderate to high levels of agricultural activity (Carozza, Li, Elgethun, & Whithworth, 2008). A ten-year study conducted by the University of California, Davis focused on pregnancy exposures and health outcomes for children in California's Central Valley and found that women who lived near agriculture fields, where specific pesticides were used, had a sixty percent increase of having children on the autism spectrum. And women who were exposed within the last three months of pregnancy had an elevated risk for birthing a child with developmental disabilities (Shelton et al., 2014).

The state of California grossed $47.1 billion in revenue from farm crops in 2015 (California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2015). The Sierra Health Foundation's most recent publication on the well being of children growing up in the San Joaquin Valley found that eight of the nine counties studied in their report make up the top ten agricultural producers in the state of California. In stark contrast, seven of these counties also rank in the state with the highest percentage of children living in poverty. One out of three children in this region live below the Federal Poverty Level (Hartzog, Abrams, Erbstein, London, & Watterson, 2016).

Resilience and Protective Factors

Resilience is studied by various disciplines and each fundamentally has similar definitions for the term. It is described as the ability for individuals with harsh, extreme, traumatic life experiences, and impoverished environments to develop relatively normally when particular internal and external protective factors are present. There are three areas of development that are usually focused on: positive

developmental outcomes despite "high risk" status, competence under stress, and ability to demonstrate recovery from trauma (Werner, 1995; McWhirter et al., 2007). A child's social environment, through their school, community and extended social support systems, can contribute to positive developmental outcomes (McWhirter et al., 2007). However, research has found children of color are often subjected to additional stress of racism and marginalization within the majority culture (McWhirter et al., 2007).

Protective factors are characteristics, experiences, opportunities and relationships that act as shields that allow the young person to adapt to unfavorable negative environmental conditions, allowing them to continue to progress positively (Dishion & Connell, 2006) Mexican immigrants in the United States are faced with daily stressors, including language barriers, low wages, low education, discrimination, high unemployment rates and lack of health benefits (Raffelli, Tran, Wiley, Galarza-Heras, & Lazarevic, 2012). Family and cultural pride have been determined to be protective factors. Strong cultural pride promotes a strong cultural identity and sense of self (Lopez, 2014) In her study, Lopez found that immigrants who use internal, cultural and community support factors tend to do better than those who do not (Lopez, 2014). Higher levels of life satisfaction and resilience in Mexican women are associated with connections with relatives in Mexico (Sajquim de Torres, 2016).

According to the American Psychological Association, there are several ways to build resilience. Building healthy connections to family members, friends or

community members can help individuals build resilience (American Psychological Association, 2010). Group membership can also create connectedness for youth and their peers especially in school settings. Children with access to school programs, high-quality education, positive school experiences, and community connections have greater ability to build resiliency (Moreno, 2016). Moreno states reliance might be fostered through educational programs that encourage native language proficiency, cultural value activities and educating Latino/a parents about positive socialization (Moreno, 2016).

Summary

The data collected in this study contributes to the literature on implications immigration status has on individuals and families. Social Workers will benefit from this study because it uses real narratives to describe how families struggle to survive, built resistance and plan for their future. The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (2008) lays the core values of the profession as: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. This study allows the Social Work profession to gain knowledge on lived experiences of Latinas who grew up in a mixed status family and will strengthen these values within themselves. This study allows social workers to understand the value of importance of human relationships and guides their practice with immigrant individuals.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore the lived experiences of Latina/Chicana women who as children identify as being part of a mixed status family in California's Central Valley, specifically Merced County. Mixed status is defined as a family unit where members may be of both legal citizen and non-citizen (undocumented) status. According to Creswell (2014):

> Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Engaging in this form of inquiry supports a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance or rendering complexity of a situation (p. 4).

This qualitative inquiry consists of in-depth narrative based interviews using semi-structured, opened ended questions. These questions are used to gather participant descriptions of their experience as children raised in mixed status families and how it has impacted other areas of their lives. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do Latina women describe experiences of growing up in a mixed immigration status family?
2. Do families create safety plans to plan ahead of a possible deportation?

3. Are there protective and resiliency factors that Latina women experience growing up in mixed immigration status families?

Given the researcher's experience of being raised in a mixed status family, and having reviewed existing literature in this area, the belief or hypothesis is that the experience of a member of a mixed status family puts individuals in a constant state of traumatic instability and insecurity. Not knowing if they will be separated from their loved ones creates an atmosphere of fear and nervousness. Although the focus of this research is on individuals within the Merced County, it is the goal of this study to motivate other scholars to conduct similar studies to deepen knowledge and understanding in this area. In addition, there is a need for this type of research to inform current and prospective social workers of the unique family dynamics of mixed status families.

Research Design

A qualitative design was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups give to social problems. This research involves emerging questions and procedures and inductively building general themes from respondents' answers (Creswell, 2014). This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to focus on individual meanings and provide information on this phenomenon. The researcher used a transformative worldview with a narrative approach of inquiry to explore the lived experiences of Latina women who grew up as children in a mixed status family in Merced County. A transformative worldview focuses on building a relationship between the researcher

and the participants, where issues of understanding, culture, and trust are important (Mertens, 2007). The researcher hopes gathering the lived experiences of participants will change the lives of both participants and institutions where social workers are exposed to mixed status families. According to Creswell (2014), this specific design and approach "seeks to examine an issue related to oppression of individuals. To study this, stories are collected of individual oppression using a narrative approach. Individuals are interviewed at some length to determine how they have personally experienced oppression" (p. 19).

A narrative approach combines the participants' lived experiences along with the researchers' personal narrative. This allowed a collaborative process of developing themes using the similarities in our stories. Using this narrative approach allowed the researcher to better understand the complexities of participants' lived experience within mixed status families.

A qualitative approach allowed the researcher to use an in-depth interview process, observations and quotes to develop themes (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2014). These interviews were guided by a set of open-ended question and take approximately two to three hours. This allowed the researcher to engage and build a relationship with participants. The first portion of the interview focused on gathering general knowledge of the individual, their family and to build rapport. Questions focused on gathering general demographics, socio-economic status, and educational background. The second portion of the interview used exploratory questions about the participants' experiences growing up in a mixed status family. Specifically exploring

events that have occurred in and for the family unit and how the participant feels these events have impacted them and other members of their family.

Once data was gathered, the researcher used a five-stage process designed by Neuman (2012) for qualitative data analysis: sorting and classifying, open coding, axial coding, selective coding, interpreting, and elaborating the data (Neuman, 2012). This type of design provided the opportunity to gather rich data and to formulate themes among participants (Creswell, 2014). This design gave the researcher the ability to assess if certain questions lead to more meaningful themes during an interview. An advantage of using a qualitative approach is the ability to capture detailed experiences not captured by surveys.

Sampling

Purposive and snowball sampling was used to select eight individuals who meet minimum participant requirements. Purposive sampling is defined as non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researchers' judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 2007). Snowball sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling method where each person interviewed is asked to suggest additional people for interviewing. Snowball sampling was chosen because it strengthened the emerging themes felt by participants of mixed status families who live in Merced County.

Participants were self-identified Latina women over eighteen years old, who are developmentally able to provide accurate information on their lived experience. The participant had to be a member of a family who grew up in the United States

where at least one caregiver or family member was undocumented during their childhood. The sampling plan included approaching and attempting to recruit individuals in Merced County, who the researcher knows personally and meet the criteria mentioned above. The participants were also asked if they are aware of any other individuals who fit the criteria for the study who was willing to participate.

Instrumentation

In-depth open-ended narrative based interviews were used to engage participants around the focus of the study. The researcher collected descriptive demographic information and also used open-ended questions to address the research questions (see Appendix A). The researcher chose these open-ended questions to get a better understanding of the everyday experiences of Latina women who grew up in a mixed immigration status family. The questions used in Appendix A were created in order to build rapport and to get a better understanding of the participants' lived experience. It is anticipated that the narrative style of the interview, where my own experiences may be shared as part of the conversation, will lead to rich and meaningful responses from the participants (Creswell, 2014). The researcher hypothesized that resilient and protective factors will emerge through the interview process with participants. The interview questions, as outlined in Appendix A, were to be used as a guide and to strengthen the narrative style of interview.

Data Collection

Confidential in-person interviews occurred with participants over a two-month period of time, between January 2017 and March 2017. The researcher conducted all

of the interviews with participants. An audio recorder was used to record the entire interview and the researcher transcribed the full interview. The interviews took place in various locations, depending on the availability of confidential meeting space and where the participant felt most comfortable. Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of the identity of the research participants. All written materials and interview notes were maintained in a secure and locked location. Electronic files were secured by a protected password only available for me to complete this study. One year after the completion of the research project, all materials will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

Audio recording of the interviews allowed the researcher the ability to accurately gather data from the interviews. The researcher transcribed each interview verbatim to ensure data were properly documented and correctly analyzed. The researcher used a five-stage process designed by Neuman (2012) for qualitative data analysis. Responses were processed in five steps: sorting and classifying, open coding, axial coding, selective coding, interpreting, and elaborating the data. In the sorting and classifying stage, data were organized with the research questions of this study in mind. In the open coding stage, key terms and important events were organized, guided by the research questions, participant's language, and key terms used by families living in mixed status homes to develop a general sense of it. In the axial coding stage, data were re-evaluated to determine if any additional themes had emerged. In the selective coding stage, data were evaluated one more time to identify quotes or common meanings and solidify specific themes. During the final stage

involving interpreting and elaborating, the researcher examined if major themes and classifications are found that align with previous literature.

Protection of Human Subjects

Protection of study participants occurred through various procedures taken by following university guidelines. The researcher provided participants an informed consent, consistent with requirement of the University Institutional Review Board, to ensure that the research is clearly described and shared with the participants; the participants were also given the option to view the completed research. The researcher provided each participant with a hard copy of the informed consent that also outlined the rights and responsibilities of both the participant and researcher (see Appendix B). The interviews were audio recorded and the researcher took notes during our interview. The researcher informed the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher ensured all information is kept confidential; all participants were assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. An application to the California State Stanislaus University Institutional Review Board (UIRB) for approval to proceed with the study had been approved prior to conducting interviews and proceeding with the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Latinas who were raised in mixed immigration status families in California's Central Valley, specifically Merced County. The study aimed to gather personal narratives to provide information on family planning for deportation, daily trauma and insecurity caused by having to live in secrecy and the implications this had on their lives. The design of this study was meant to capture both the researchers' personal narrative with the participants' narrative to allow a collaborative process of developing themes and similarities in the stories. This approach allowed for the ability to explore the complexities of mixed status families and individual experiences. The semi-structured interview produced five major themes associated with Latinas who grew up in a mixed status home: the experiences of participants' crossing the Mexico/United States border as children, complex experiences of growing up in a mixed immigration status family, social emotional implications of possible family separation and deportation, family planning for deportation, and resiliency factors that protected participants from adverse effects. It is important to emphasize the major themes are fluid and may overlap in the lived experiences of participants. The guiding research questions were:

1. How do Latina women describe experiences of growing up in a mixed immigration status family?
2. Do families create safety plans to plan ahead of a possible deportation
3. Are there protective and/or resiliency factors that Latina women experience growing up in mixed immigration status families?

Sample Overview

Eight women who were raised in California's Central Valley, specifically Merced County, participated in the study. All participants identified as female Latinas, of Mexican origin and had family members with various immigration statuses. Of the eight participants, seven were born in Mexico and brought to the United States as children. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 45 years old. Those who were brought to the U.S. as children were under the age of 7 when they left their homeland. Three participants hold a high school diploma, two are students in a community college, one is a four year university student and two are graduate level degree holders. All participants were raised in a two-parent household, and all of their parents worked as farm workers when they first arrived from Mexico. Five of the eight participants' parents continue to hold employment in the agriculture field. Of the eight participants, one remains undocumented, one holds a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals permit, two are legal permanent residents of the United States, and four are United States' citizens.

Traumatic Experiences Crossing Mexico/United States Border

Seven of the eight participants were born in Mexico, crossed the Mexico/United States border as children, and were between the ages of four months to eight years old when their families left Mexico. Five of the seven Mexican born participants have vivid memories of the journey across the Mexico/U.S. border. When migrating, one participant, Aurora, describes her mother using family reunification as a tactic to ensure her three children complied with requests to run, hide and remain quiet:

> It [crossing the border] was fearful… I knew we were doing something we weren't supposed to be doing, but we weren't allowed to question it. So, it was "just do what I tell you, don't talk back, don't talk at all, this is what we have to do to get to your dad." Making it [crossing the border] a goal-oriented task, like we're going to get to your dad, kind of made it easier.

Aurora's family was the only one in this study who did not travel as a complete family. The other six participants who crossed over from Mexico as children completed the journey as a family unit. Despite taking the journey together, many were separated briefly and left with a 'coyote', a paid human smuggler, in order to successfully cross. Margarita was seven years old the first time she crossed and explains her brief separation as fearful,

> [I did feel fear] I felt like where's my mom and my dad? Where's my mom, because I knew my brother is with me, but I was like where's my mom? You know, so I was worried. My mom just said "*Mija*, just go there with them.

> I'm going to see you at the other side at the store." I was like what other side, because I didn't know. We crossed; luckily we crossed the border with no problems or anything. And later we met with my mom and my dad.

Margarita explained during our interview how her family would take several other trips to Mexico and had to cross through the desert three times with others being smuggled by coyotes. She recounts the feelings of danger and fear she felt when crossing through the desert:

> [I remember] the danger that we all went through, I think I was small so sometimes I think about it and you know what if something bad would have happened? You know you see a lot of rapings, you know? It's sad, you know people have to run; there was an older lady, she kind of stayed behind and the guys you know the men that were running, they wouldn't let her stay. So they would get her from both arms and carry her because they're all a group. We were lucky that we were with good people. Yeah, you do feel scared. You feel scared because you know, they're watching out for INS, for *la migra*. So you're running away from them, you do see the trucks coming at you. So you have to run. I do remember seeing that. I remember seeing the truck, you have to duck, and you have to hide. So until the leader tells you "okay it's okay, now we go". Then you go, you run, you have to cross, you have to run and whatever you need to do.

Participant interviews highlighted a common experience of not having spoken of their crossings and how they were affected with their families. Two of the

participants expressed no recollection of crossing the border other than what was shared by family members. The sole participant who was born in the United States recalled learning about her parent's journey of crossing the border by hearing them speak of their experiences. Another participant, Gloria, described her journey as something that has left her traumatized as she still experiences fear and anxiety when she remembers details of her journey:

> It was scary for me. And then after that, I remember I thought that was the happy ending for me. Just from all the fear I was feeling, like being with strangers. I mean when I've done some reflection, I really try to go back and try to go into my subconscious, but it's just like darkness and a lot of fear. I remember a can, I think they were trying to play with it, make noises like make rhythm or whatever, and that rhythm just resonates with me because I remember the fear that came along with that rhythm. Like trying to self-soothe.

All of the participants shared that their parents labored in the agricultural fields when they first arrived in the United States from Mexico. Six of the eight participants' parents are currently farm workers in Merced County. Three of the participants have also been employed as farm workers to help their family gain financial resources. Miranda describes working in the fields in order to pay for her tuition for community college. She described her motivation for obtaining a college degree is to one day be financially stable enough to provide her parents with financial support. She states farm workers have a very laborious job, that is not paid

well, and does not provide medical insurance coverage, but her parents still save money to help her pay for school:

> They help me to pay for school; people don't understand how hard it is to pay for school. I see them [parents], how they struggle sometimes when it rains and they don't have work and bills come. I mean it's not like they tell us, "we're struggling with money" but I know sometimes it is that way. It's just basically sometimes I feel like us not having our papers, like for example, if I would have had my papers or my sister [had papers] we would have already finished school. Maybe my parents wouldn't have to work as much as they do. Then worrying about what can happen to us when they're in the same position [undocumented] it's been hard.

In conclusion, five of the seven participants who remember the journey of crossing the Mexican/United States border express having experienced traumatic feelings during the experience. The five participants who remember the experience spoke of emotions of fear, anxiety and specific moments that have impacted their life. All five participants expressed the journey is not something they like to think about because it brings about negative emotions. Gloria specifically expressed deep trauma felt due to the anxiety she felt being separated from her family, being forced to cross over with strangers and having to run from Immigration and Customs Enforcement. All of the participants crossed with at least one sibling, a strength they state helped them feel safer during the experience.

Growing up in a Mixed Status Family

The women interviewed shared feelings of depression and isolation their family members felt due to having to live in secrecy once they arrived in the United States. All participants expressed understanding what deportation meant and knew of families that had been separated due to deportation. Aurora experienced parental separation when her father was forced to leave to Mexico after an arrest warrant was made for him. He left her family for months, and Aurora explains this was a pivotal moment in her family's story, as her mother had to become the sole breadwinner and depended on her older siblings to help with the housework usually done by her father. When asked about how the participants understood their legal status within the United States, one of the common themes found was they had to keep the information secret, not call attention to themselves, and assimilate. Aurora explains:

> [My parents would tell me] "Don't draw attention!" It was kind of like blend in and be the culture…you don't want to draw attention, because the minute you draw attention it affects the entire family. And we were all very aware of that.

Participants expressed awareness that they felt they were "different" than their peers. Gloria explains her mother used her immigration status as a way to ensure she behaved and focused on her education. She also explains her mother would emphasize the differences between her and her U.S. born siblings:

> My parents would highlight it a lot, "*El es nacido aqui, el es pocho*" (He was born here, he is a *pocho*)... I don't know as a child how that would make a difference, but they would always emphasize the differences and how we had to be more careful.

Of the eight participants, four participants expressed their frustration with not being able to access public resources that were available to their U.S. born siblings (e.g low cost health insurance, financial aid for college). Carmen explained obtaining health care was a challenge for three children in her family who were undocumented. However, her younger brother, who was a U.S. citizen, qualified for low-cost healthcare insurance:

> I never questioned it, I just always thought, why is he [younger U.S. born brother] always at the doctor, why is he always so sick? And my mom once told me because when you would get sick, I would take him so they would give me the medicine and then I would give it to you or your siblings. Sometimes we didn't have money to buy medicine that was expensive [due to no health insurance] so that's how sometimes we would get medicine for the rest of us. When I was little, I saw that in a different way, but now I see she had to do whatever she could.

In addition, participants expressed frustration at the inaccessibility of financial aid to obtain a college education. Aurora spoke about the traumatic experience of realizing she would not be able to qualify for financial aid to help her pay for college and instead would have to pay out of state tuition rates.

> She [counselor] said, "you're getting a $3,000 scholarship and unfortunately if you can't provide documentation proof, they're going to charge you out of state fees." And when I was looking at the out of state fees instead of paying like $7,000 or $6,000 per year, it was going to be like $25,000 per year. That's when I realized like whoa, this really affects me. So it was kind of crazy, that was kind of traumatic.

All eight participants were raised in Merced County and attended public schools. Out of the eight participants, four had experiences where teachers spoke to them about the topic of immigration. Miranda explains she received encouragement from her fifth grade teacher, Mr. Ibarra (not his real name), who shared his experience of having been undocumented for many years of his life and encouraged her to continue to invest in her education. This same teacher also spoke to her sister, Naima, who was older and also undocumented. Miranda explained the influence this teacher's revelation had on her:

> I was surprised because you don't expect a teacher to be in that same situation. So [I was] surprised but at the same time it was nice to hear from [Mr. Ibarra] the struggles but at the same time that everything would be okay.

Four of the eight participants elaborated on the impact of having unsupportive school staff that could explain their options for education after high school. The four participants who felt unsupported stated they took all the college prep courses in high school believing they would be able to attend a four-year institution. It was not until their senior year, they realized their options were limited and they would have to pay

out of state tuition to attend. These same four participants expressed frustration and anger at the lack of resources and information available to them in the transition from high school to college. Aurora explains she was traumatized by the lack of support she felt from her counselor when she went to her office to discuss her plans of attending college. Aurora had over $3,000 in scholarships, was an honor roll student, participated in extracurricular activities and did not know she would have to pay out of state tuition until the end of her senior year:

> She told me to be more realistic and aim more for like a junior college, which was kind of like [okay] I guess. [I went] from being accepted to universities and CSU's, going from that and thinking that was my future to like a junior college, [that] was kind of like, crushing all my dreams. And that's all she said, be more realistic, apply for a junior college, you don't need like SAT's or anything. You don't even need to take like a placement test, just go to junior college and if your residency status changes then come talk to me and I can help you. And that was it. There was nothing else.

Five out of eight participants state they were part of a specific action in their adolescent years that dealt with deportation. In 2007, a family in their shared hometown was picked up and detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This caused a lot of anxiety and fear in the participants who felt like this brought the issue “home” and directly impacted them. They explained the school formed a six-mile march from Le Grand to Planada in solidarity with the family. Marissa, the only

participant born in the United States, who had undocumented parents explains her feelings about the incident:

> I remember in high school…ICE picked up a family and there was a protest and a march from Le Grand to Planada in support of the family. [I thought] that it was sad, that it was an invasion. You know, you felt like, they're just like us you know? It didn't feel right what they [ICE] were doing.

Participants elaborated that joining in a collective action gave them a sense of empowerment and a feeling of unity with other classmates and the community at large. They explain this was a pivotal moment in their life, when they realized a shared reality of their community and the strength in supporting actions like the march.

Social Emotional Implications

All of the participants expressed they felt fear growing up due to their families mixed immigration status. Many stated their families taught them to "duck" or "hide" from police because they could report them to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Three of eight participants described their mixed feelings about law enforcement because of the contradiction between learning in school that they could trust and should call police for any concerning matters, and the reality of their situations where they were aware that police could bring harm to their families and any contact with them would result in family separation. Margarita elaborated:

> You know you question yourself, like is it good or bad? It's mixed emotions because you're afraid for your parents because you're afraid of them [cops

> who can report to ICE] but when you go to school they tell you cops are good. So you're in between, so it's kind of like you're unsure.

All of the participants reported feeling anxiety while growing up due to the possibility of family separation. Many spoke of *susto* (fright) they witnessed their parents have whenever there was unexpected guests at the door. All participants stated they knew of community or family members who had been deported and often feared it would eventually happen to their family. Gloria reports that even when she became a legal permanent resident, the fear of deportation never went away. Carmen describes witnessing fear and anxiety in her mother as they sought to apply for permanent residence:

> She would get really sad and very nervous; if someone knocked on the door it would scare her. I remember that fear specifically, even though they [my parents] didn't have a deportation paper or warrant.

Carmen is the only participant without any current form of legal status. She is married to an undocumented man and has a three-year-old daughter; she expressed how she currently feels high levels of fear and anxiety:

> [I feel] Fear. I still have that fear, not only for myself but also for my daughter. I question if I get deported what I am going to do? I am going to go to a country that I love with all my heart, because my parents taught me to love it, they showed me the customs and culture, but I've been here [in the United States] my whole life. And I can't imagine not being here... I feel like

> we're going backward, I feel like this is not the country my parents wanted us to come to. I feel like many doors are closing for me.

In addition to reported impacts on social and emotional wellbeing, participants expressed anger at the lack of comprehensive laws to allow them to adjust their legal status. Carmen, who remains undocumented, states she still lives in fear and in the shadows and described her feelings as:

> Anger, I feel angry sometimes because I just I know my parents wanted the best for us. I know in my heart they have always looked for the best for us, but in doing the good for us, they didn't realize the bad they were doing. I don't think they thought that here I would be twenty-seven years old with a daughter and not being able to go back to Mexico. To have this fear that their kids might be deported. I think that's one of the hardest things, I am grateful that they took on this journey of bringing us to a whole different country…but we are living in fear.

The experience of graduating from high school was life altering for Aurora. Since she did not have a social security number at the time, she was unable to attend a four-year university as she had planned. She was forced to move to Oregon for one year to become a state resident in order to obtain a valid driver’s license. She described the change in her living situation as an isolating time for her, she disconnected from friends, her boyfriend, and her work colleagues. She described making the decision to move:

> I was working at a restaurant, for a year, watching my friends go to college, go beyond high school and I couldn't do anything. I felt like I was wasting my life, it was the moment [I realized] that society doesn't accept me and my family. We're not part of this society. We're not welcomed here, we're not wanted. And that, that was like the year that changed my life. I had to move to Oregon just to get a driver's license. I moved Oregon, for a year because I couldn't get a driver's license in California. And I had to prove my residency; it couldn't just be like mail or anything. I had to move and get a job and work there for like six months and leave my family, and be on my own. But I didn't have anything, anyone or anything to help me. It was kind of like sink or swim, and it was just for a license. It wasn't for legal status, it was just for a basic [license] you know that everyone has…and that's when I realized that I can't, you can't live like that forever, unless you're okay living, and working dead end jobs. Like jobs where there's no progress, and I just felt like I was too smart to work in the fields and be a cash register lady forever, you know. So it was, that was hard.

Aurora described feeling depressed during the time she lived in Oregon although she kept in touch with her mother. Ultimately, she married her boyfriend, a U.S. Citizen, and was able to adjust her status. She explains getting married and adjusting her status “brought life back to me.” After getting married, she moved back to California and was able to eventually become a naturalized United States Citizen.

Family Planning for Deportation

All of the participants described varying degrees of family planning for possible separation. Carmen’s parents did not detail any plans for her to follow in case they were deported. However, she explains her older siblings knew of a plan, in case their parents were ever picked up while working in the fields. Aurora’s family not only planned for the possibility of family separation, but they talked about it on a regular basis:

> Our plan was that our mom had stashed money like under the closet under the board. So if they were ever not to come home, we were to take that stash of money and run like four blocks and to my aunts’ house and stay with her until they contacted us. And so we would like not practice it, but kind of go over it every year that the raid would get closer and closer. So every year, it [raids] started in Northern California, by the time it got to Sacramento, my mom was like okay the raid is in Sacramento, they would go based off of the news, so there's a chance you know just know that we're going to be okay, we'll contact you guys, but this is the plan. And we were always with a plan, and it was always like if you see a van and it says ICE, you don't talk to them, you run home, you lock the door and you don't open the door for anyone. So it was like very detailed, as to what we could and could not do.

Other participants’ families also spoke with them and their siblings about seeking refuge with relatives. Some expressed their fear of this plan because it made it a reality for them; there was a chance they too might have to leave with their parents.

Only one participant, Aurora, experienced parental separation because of deportation as a child; in that case, her mother was left to be the sole caregiver. The participants who had a plan in place for the possibility of deportation expressed high anxiety due to knowing the possibility of their fate. Many describe having forgotten what life was like in Mexico, and felt like home was here in the United States. Lupe describes the fear she felt at knowing there was a possibility of family deportation:

> Because when we're little we don't understand, I didn't really understand. I didn't know if that meant that I would be permanently sent back to Mexico and I would never see them [U.S. born siblings] again. So you can say it was kind of scary. It was scary. To some people it can be traumatizing just thinking about it. But I mean, yeah it was hard.

The participants whose parents currently remain undocumented expressed how they continue now as adults to worry about the possible deportation of their parents. They shared that there is a current plan set in place to ensure their youngest siblings know who to contact in case their parents do not come home. Naima and Miranda are sisters and have developed a plan for their parents who remain undocumented:

> My parents don't have their papers. I was telling them the other day, we see so many ICE [officers] in the streets, so I told my sisters, our parents are going to stay home. They're not going to be able to work obviously; I don't want them out like in the streets or anything. I told them like it's going to be [my siblings] my husband and I, four of us will work and support two households. My

> parents are not going to go anywhere; I mean they're not even going to look out the window. And I even told my mom... if we have to cut cell phones, if we need to cut how much food we eat, if we need to cut like any bills or anything we can do that just for you guys. To make sure you're not at risk by being out of the house, driving, or things like that.

Carmen also expressed her fear of being deported since she has a United States born child who depends on her. She stated she has spoken to her family and they have a plan in place in case ICE raids ever occur and she is taken with her husband. Another participant, Margarita, experienced family separation as an adult. She married an undocumented man from El Salvador who was detained in New Jersey in 2009 during an ICE raid at his workplace. Their daughter was fifteen years old when this happened. Margarita explains they had never explained this was a possibility to their daughter, when the separation occurred, her daughter developed significant behavioral changes. She became suicidal, and Margarita sought mental health counseling for her.

> Before [the deportation] she was a happy kid, always running around playing with her cousins she was a good student, she was always played soccer. So she was a soccer player, at that time you know her dad and I on weekends we would take her on a traveling soccer team to different places. You know we were really family oriented, then all of a sudden that's all gone, so things change, you're not a family anymore. Even though I tried to keep up with things we were doing, they were still not the same because her dad was not

> here. And being our only child, it's even harder because there are no other siblings; it's just her and I. So everything is directly impacted on her and me. Her grades dropped, she wasn't focused in school anymore. I had to enroll her in three different schools…then finally I couldn't do it anymore because I had to work too. I just wanted for her to focus, I just wanted her to be happy. At first, she didn't want to be in [in her current school] because they [her friends] knew that her dad was deported. She felt embarrassed, or mad or sad. Or maybe, I don't know, just different things that were going through her head. So I changed her to a different school, maybe a different school would be better for her. But no, it wasn't better.

Margarita stated her partner spent a total of nine months in detention before he was ultimately deported to El Salvador where he currently is. Her daughter remains in touch with her father through phone calls and social media, but it has been a difficult experience in their lives. As a partner and mother, Margarita stated she felt helpless when she would hear how anxious her partner was inside the detention center. Once back in El Salvador, he was never able to adjust to living there, he had spent twenty-seven years in the United States. Ultimately, he moved to Mexico, and keeps in communication with her and their daughter.

Resilience Factors

Many participants described not being able to maintain close relationships with their loved ones in Mexico due to the complexity of living in low income homes and scarce resources to make long distance phone calls. Carmen explained how her

family made it a family ritual to speak to her grandparents every Sunday after breakfast:

> I just think it's so amazing how my parents were able to [maintain a connection] I love my grandparents, even though I don't remember them physically, I don't remember hugging them. I love them. And I think that's one of my weaknesses now as an older woman. That I never got to have that you know Christmas with your grandparents, or weekend at your grandparents. But I have to thank my parents for that, for the phone calls every Sunday morning.

Five of the eight participants state their parents had eventual plans to return to their homeland of Mexico. Two participants stated their parents have only discussed the possibility going back to Mexico if they are deported. Five participants reported they felt comfort in being together as a family unit. Two participants stated they felt they gained strength from understanding their parents' tremendous sacrifice to embark on a journey to a new country and felt a sense of obligation to work hard to be able to provide financial support to them. Two participants stated their parents used prayer and religion to help them deal with fear, depression and anxiety. Four participants felt that their connections to extended family members in Mexico gave them the ability to stay strong.

Since the introduction of social media and technology such as Skype, they state they have been able to increase those connections even more. Two stated hearing their parents plan for a future made them feel as if they were going to be

okay in the United States. Five participants stated they knew other members of the community who were in the same situation as them, making them feel as if they were not alone. Two specifically named the march in their high school as a point of resilience, which allowed them to feel great connectedness to their peers. Two expressed support from the teacher, whose encouragement motivated both of them to continue taking college courses. Naima described her contact with the teacher:

> I think [hearing Mr. Ibarra] that's one of the most memorable moments. Because it's not everyday life that a teacher will tell you don't give up, you can do it. It made me feel special because I remember you know I would see Mr. Ibarra and he would give us advice. Every time I saw him, he would say, see now I am a teacher, you guys can do it. If I did it, you guys [sisters] can do it. I used to work here and there but if you put the effort and the courage…you can do it. Just follow your dreams and he made me feel really good.

All eight participants experienced protective factors in their family and community that assisted them to deal with the uncertainty of deportation. Forming a plan for possible deportation, although at times frightening, allowed participants to feel prepared for the worst-case scenario.

Summary of Findings

The themes that emerge from this study indicate various levels of preparation, discussion and protective factors within families who must anticipate possible deportation. This study also found Latinas' experiences are very unique. They all have experienced social emotional impacts mitigated by protective factors that have

enabled them to cope with their environment, and in many cases to thrive through their resilience. The women in this study all described traumatic experiences of crossing the United States-Mexico border as young children. They shared the complexity of their lived experiences growing up in a mixed status family and the social emotional implications of knowing their families could be separated due to deportation. They also described the various ways their families planned for the possibility of deportation. All the participants expressed how they felt fear, anxiety and depression when they thought of the possibility of family separation. They also shared how peers and community members allowed for them to feel safe and secure despite the threat of deportation. Although many of the women described differing levels of trauma due to insecurities of possible family deportation, many found comfort in their community, knowing they were not the only family living in a mixed status family.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Latinas who were raised in a mixed immigration status family in California's Central Valley, specifically Merced County. This study also aimed to gather personal narratives to provide information on family planning for deportation, daily trauma and insecurity caused by having to live in secrecy, and the implications this had on their lives. For this study, in-person, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. There were a total of eight participants, all of which identified as female Latinas of Mexican origin. This chapter discusses the major findings of this study, connects the findings to the guiding research questions, and compares findings to the existent literature. This section also discusses the limitations of the study, implications for social work practice and policy, and provides recommendations for future research.

Overview of Major Findings

The major findings of this research study provide answers to the guiding research questions. The findings help give voice and acknowledgement to the unique experiences individuals of a mixed status family have in their lifetime. This study allowed for an in depth understanding of participants' extraordinary journeys fleeing economic hardships in Mexico to the United States in pursuit of a better life. Through their words, readers of this study can be better informed about variables that impact

families who live in fear, secrecy and hope for a day when legislation will allow them to come out of the shadows. The findings also provide information on how state sanctioned violence has impacted their social and emotional well-being.

The findings resonate with previous research on immigrants' feelings of exclusion, isolation and fear of individuals who pose authority and repercussion to their existence (e.g, police officers, public health programs) (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). The findings also imply state sanctioned violence occurs when undocumented family members do not have access to public resources (e.g. low cost health insurance, financial aid) that hinders their life trajectory and impacts their ability to flourish in this country. In addition, the research provides findings on how mixed status families develop protective factors and resilience.

Experiences of Latinas Who Grew Up in a Mixed Immigration Status Family

All participants experienced negative social emotional implications due to the instability of living in a mixed status family. These findings are consistent with the existing literature that notes people's social interactions impact their ability to form positive social emotional connections with others (Lusk et al., 2013). This study identified the impacts to human development though an ecological system lens. Bromfenbrenner (1979) theorized that social interactions and life experiences impact the attitudes, behavior and competences of children, adolescences and their families (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McWhirter et al., 2007).

The study findings provided a deeper contextualization of the implications of what it is like for a child growing up in a mixed status family. The majority of the

participants felt some level of fear, anxiety, and depression at various points of their childhood due to their traumatic migration experiences coming from Mexico, as well as being part of a mixed status family. Two participants also shared their fathers turned to heavy drinking in order to deal with the trauma of leaving their life in Mexico behind and having to adjust to life in the United States. This is consistent with the findings of Brabeck et al. (2014) who found that many of the stressors felt by caregivers often trickle down and have implications on the lives of the children who compose that family.

All of the participants expressed a level of fear knowing their caregivers (e.g., parents) could possibly be deported; all participants said their families had developed some level of planning for possible family deportation. The degree of expressed psychological impact felt by the participants varied. These findings are consistent with Rojas-Flores et al. (2017) who found that migrants from Mexico are at elevated risk of experiencing traumatic events that might result in depression, anxiety, and symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Many of the participants in this study discussed various levels of trauma due to their border crossing experiences, moving to a new country, and discussions about possibly being separated from their caregivers.

Lusk et al. (2013) found that Mexican migrants are particularly prone to losing family connections after migration. The findings in this study support this. Of the eight participants interviewed, only two stated they felt like they were able to maintain a good family connection to relatives in Mexico.

Planning for Deportation

Menjivar and Abrego (2012) conducted research that explores how laws at the state and local level have direct negative impacts on the lives of particular families. This study provides a framework for how families in California's Central Valley are directly impacted by immigration laws that limit their access to resources to help sustain a healthy home environment. Data from this study supported Menjivar and Abrego's (2012) concept of state sanctioned violence. Specifically, participants expressed perpetual fear and anxiety of being separated from their family due to immigration status. In order to prepare for possible deportation, participants talked about planning for possible family separation due to deportation. All of the participants of this study had engaged in various levels of planning for possible family separation due to deportation. The range of plans were family conversations about what children should do in case parents did not come home from work, to participants who discussed a complete "run through" of what children should do if their parents were detained. It is important to note, four participants are still part of a mixed status family. They describe the current negative implications of having family members who could be deported. They describe having regular family planning conversations around possible deportation. Research findings from this study suggest families plan for the possibility of family separation. This was not previously found in the literature and sheds new light on one of the stressors with which mixed immigration status families must cope with.

Participants also confirmed the negative impact mixed immigration status had on their family's ability to gain resources and experience a sense of inclusion in society. Dreby (2012) states children fear law enforcement because of concerns of possible family separation. This study is consistent with those findings, as three participants expressed having fear of police and described their parents teaching them to hide from law enforcement. Three participants expressed feeling fear whenever they saw police officers as their parents taught them to fear the police. However, messages they often got in school gave them a countering narrative, where police were there to help them. The findings of this study coincide with Menjivar and Abrego's findings that laws at state and local levels have negative impacts on the lives of families. In this case, state sanctioned violence can be described as laws that prevent individuals from obtaining proper immigration status, and cause negative views of law enforcement and exclusion from their new environment**.** In addition, all of the participants of this study state they felt impacted emotionally because their families were of mixed immigration status.

Martin and Taylor's (1998) research found that after the Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act became law, immigrants had a harder time obtaining services through state sponsored programs. The findings in this study suggest families navigated these hardships by relying on the services provided to members of their family who did qualify for services. In some cases, families would take the child eligible for low cost medical care to the doctor to obtain medicine, and then would use that medication for other members in the family who were sick but

did not qualify for medical coverage. In addition, participants of this study state they were more likely to “wait it [sickness] out” because it was too expensive to go to the doctor and get medicine without health insurance.

Capps et al. (2006) found that children in immigrant families are more likely to live in poverty than native-born children. This study is consistent with this finding and other research (Capps et al., 2004) on poverty and its impacts on immigrant families. In addition, Capps et al., 2004, reports that children of immigrants are less likely to be eligible for public benefits and are less likely to participate in programs because their parents are unaware they qualify for public resources (Capps et al., 2004). Participants described the difficulties faced by farm worker families. In addition to working in a physically grueling occupation, participants described the hardships of low wages and living conditions they had. This study found that even when family members are able to adjust their status and become legal permanent residents, many individuals still live with fear of being deported. This research study found that for the majority of participants, a goal is to help their parents leave the agricultural occupation. In pursuing these goals, participants focused on their education as a means to obtain financial stability to help their parents. Many participants had high academic achievement and aspirations to obtain a higher education. However, many experienced difficulty navigating the transition from high school to college. Many cited uninformed, unsupportive high school staff that did not provide adequate information on participants’ options of continuing to pursue a higher education. These data are consistent with findings by Lauby (2017), who

observed a lack of preparation by staff and teachers to ensure undocumented students can move on to higher education (Lauby, 2017)

In conclusion, this study found state sanctioned violence could be best viewed on a spectrum. This research is highly consistent with Menjivar and Abrego's (2012) research that examines how laws at the federal, state and local level can have negative impacts in the lives of families. Specific to mixed status families, many felt daily insecurity due to not having proper status to reside within the United States. They expressed hardships in obtaining jobs that can provide their families with a stable living condition and also put their families at risk of developing health related illnesses because they were unable to qualify for medical insurance. Participants also reported feeling a heightened sense of fear, anxiety and need to prepare for deportation due to the recent political climate focused on immigration and increased raids and deportations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. All of the participants expressed having increased conversations about the possibility of deportation since the 2016 presidential election. Their concerns became more urgent after hearing the President speak negatively about Mexicans, stating he would increase deportations, build a border wall and speaking negatively about Mexicans made them feel the urge to plan ahead.

Resilience and Protective Factors

Lastly, this study found that many mixed status families experience resilience and protective factors. Resilience is defined as the ability for individuals with harsh, extreme, traumatic life experiences, and impoverished environments to develop

relatively normally (Werner, 1995; McWhirter et al., 2007; Dishion & Connel, 2006). This study confirms that mixed status families face increased risk factors that can lead to negative life outcomes for youth. Some of these risk factors are racism, poverty, sexism, fear, anxiety, and depression. The women in this study describe how their families developed protective factors to enable the children in the family to better cope with the uncertainties they and their families faced. Some of these protective factors were family cohesiveness, family planning for possible deportation, and community connections.

The findings of this study relate to Raffelli et al. (2012) findings that Mexican immigrants in the United States experience daily stressors such as language barriers, low wages, low education levels, discrimination, high unemployment rates, and lack of health benefits. Specific to mixed status families in this study, many felt daily insecurity due to not having proper status to reside within the United States. The findings of this research study confirm what the American Psychological Association (2010) found on the topic of building resilience. The study participants had strong family, friend, and community ties that allowed them to feel safer in spite of their mixed status. The participants described many experiences that helped them to build resiliency. All participants described a specific event that built community cohesion between the study participants, who lived in a specific area of Merced County, and the community at large.

A classmate and her family were detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during their high school years in the town of Planada. In solidarity

against the detainment of the student and her family, hundreds of students, staff and community members marched from Le Grand to Planada. This resulted in participants feeling that community members would advocate and stand with them if they or their family were detained. Lopez (2014) found that family and cultural pride was a protective factor; this study also found that a strong sense of family cohesion provided participants with a sense of resilience. Sajquim de Torres (2016) found that individuals had better life satisfaction and resilience when they had strong ties to relatives in Mexico. This study also demonstrates Mexican immigrants have better experiences in life when they are able to maintain family connections to relatives in Mexico.

Many of the participants in this study felt that their school teachers, administrators or counselors never spoke to them about immigration, what it mean to be undocumented, or what paths undocumented students could take once they graduated from high school. Lauby (2017) conducted 60 interviews with undocumented high school students where it was also found that a common theme was a lack of information regarding higher education tuition and accessibility. Overall, staff and teachers did not have the knowledge to adequately guide students beyond their high school education (Lauby, 2017). The consistent results of this study speaks to the importance of sharing this research with school teachers, administrators and counselors, so they can create best practices on how to approach the large population (especially in the Central Valley where this study was conducted) of students who live in a mixed immigration status family. It can also help them

develop additional resources for students who are undocumented and do not know what options are available to them once they graduate from high school. Research conducted by Perez, Cortes, Ramos, and Coronado (2010), found that many undocumented students who graduate from United States high schools are high academic achievers, like several participants in this study, and have great opportunities to obtain a higher education. However, undocumented students who are college qualified are forced to delay or withdraw their college aspirations due to high costs of tuition and limited resources (Perez, Cortes, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010).

In relation to the current knowledge base, this study confirms there are unique social emotional implications for Latinas as children, and in to their adult lives, when they are a part of a mixed status family. This study confirms the impacts of state sanctioned violence felt by mixed status families who experience high levels of anxiety, daily fear of family separation due to deportation, fear of authority figures such as police, social services and anyone who can "out" their family status and report them to immigration officials. The study also demonstrates how state sanctioned violence prevents mixed immigration status families from obtaining necessary resources. It also confirms the importance of building resilience through strong family, friend, and community relationships. In addition, this research indicates individuals who maintain transnational communication with their family have stronger ties, which eases the stress of possible deportation and further instills feelings of resilience.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study that may have impacted the major findings of this study. First, this study focused on a small sample size of mixed status families in California's Central Valley. Only Mexican women were included in the study. As a result, the findings of this study only include the lived experiences of these particular Latina women in mixed status families. It is not inclusive of any other nationalities that also make up mixed status families in the United States. While this study provides some insight in to the experiences of Latina women who as children grew up as part of a mixed status family, it is not generalizable to all Latinas of Mexican descent who grew up in a mixed status family.

The goal of this study was to deeply explore the lived experiences of Latinas who grew up in a mixed status family. In addition, because the researcher also has similar lived experience, it is important to note that experience affects the gathering, representation and interpretation of the data in the study. The sample size of this study was chosen due to time requirements; using a larger population would have possibly provided a larger diversity in nationality and gender, which could have resulted in, lived experiences of various mixed status families. The counterpoint to this is the in-depth nature of the interviews and the rich depiction of individual experiences that the methodological approach allowed.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy

The findings of this study are meaningful to social work practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. The study has implications for direct practice, policy

development and implementation, community and organizational practice aimed at challenging the societal oppression that children within mixed immigration status families face. It sheds light on the intricate family dynamics and experiences of mixed status families, giving voice to those who are directly impacted by the issue. Social work and other professionals would benefit from this study by gaining a deep personal perspective of the issue, which allows them to become better informed on how to interact with mixed status families. It is relevant to the social work profession because the Social Work Code of Ethics states we must advocate for social justice, maintain human relationships and dignity and worth of the person (NASW, 2008). Marginalized undocumented individuals face the fear of advocating for themselves for various reasons, including fear of losing their livelihood, police brutality and deportation.

As outlined in this study, the major findings overlap, as families face daily social emotional impacts due to the possibility of family separation through deportation; however, they also have a tremendous amount of resilience. Social work professionals can better serve children and adults within mixed status families if they have a better understanding of their lived experiences, challenges, resilience, and the impacts of state sanctioned violence. It is critical for social workers to provide direct services to clients using cultural humility. This study assists social workers to understand the complexity of the issues mixed status families experience. This research also informs social workers who are intent on challenging the status quo at various levels and who strive to transform their respective fields by creating

awareness and a movement towards comprehensive approaches to best serving mixed status families.

At a policy level, this research can inform legislation and policies aimed at improving the health, development and well being of children of undocumented immigrants (Capps & Fortuny, 2006). Social workers play an integral part in informing the creation of laws, policies and procedures specific to their field of work. The research provides information on state sanctioned violence and the consequences of laws at the federal and state level that bring suffering to mixed status families. The National Association for Social Worker's Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice states:

> Social Workers shall possess and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding that is inclusive of, but not limited to, the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions such as race and ethnicity, immigration and refugee status, tribal groups; religion and spirituality, sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; social class; and mental or physical abilities of various cultural groups. (NASW, 2015)

The findings of this study demonstrate the unique experiences for each mixed status family who often experience elevated levels of fear, anxiety and depression. These findings can help organizations focus on developing competent policies and procedures to help bridge communication and practice with mixed status families and advocacy to limit the effects of state sanctioned violence. By ensuring agencies take

into consideration the deep implications of immigration status on their client population, they can be better prepared to serve the community adequately.

According to the National Association of Social Workers (2015), the social work profession has a history of ensuring all people have equal access to resources and opportunities that help them meet their basic needs. The NASW has a Public Policy Department that advocates on behalf of the thousands of social workers who are members. It is imperative the members of the NASW Delegate body understand the importance of advocating for legislation that promotes the well being, access to resources. Advocacy should also aim to shield undocumented individuals from state sanctioned violence, unfair labor practices and push for a path to legal immigration for all.

Future Research

This study focused on a small sample of Latinas' lived experiences of growing up in a mixed immigration status family. The findings of this study are important and provide a base of knowledge of the unique experiences and resilience factors felt by the participants. However, future research should include additional research questions that can assist in gaining extended in-depth knowledge on what implications being part of a mixed status family has on the lives of children, parents, and communities. It is imperative social workers, and other professionals who work with children (teachers, health care providers, etc.) understand the experiences of these families who are driven to come to this country in search of a better life. Additional focus areas might include parents' lived experiences of being

part of a mixed status family and the inclusion of school based employees to understand what impact they play in the role as a center location in the lives of newly arrived immigrants.

There is emerging research on immigration and deportation; however, the specific studies that research mixed immigration status families are limited. Due to the current focus on immigration, both at the state and federal level, it is imperative that future research focuses on the increased persecution of undocumented individuals in the United States. Future studies should continue to build the knowledge base by exploring the magnitude of the issue and how immigration policies (or lack thereof) can have detrimental impacts on the lives of mixed status families within the United States. By identifying the impacts, social workers can advocate at the state and federal level for comprehensive immigration reform that puts the lives of the most marginalized first.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

American Immigration Council. (2017). *The 287(g) program: An overview.* Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/the_287g_program_an_overview_0.pdf

American Psychological Association. (2010). *The road to resilience: 10 Ways to build resilience*. Washington, DC: U.S. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx

Ayon, C., Barrera, D. (2013). *Mexican American families under siege: The impact of Anti-immigrant policies, Discrimination, and the Economic Crisis.* Advances in Social Work. Vol 14:1. Pg. 206-228. Retrieved from http://journals.iupui.edu.libproxy.csustan.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork/article/view/2692/13452

Babbie, E. R., (2007). *The practice of social research.* Belmont, Ca: Thomson Higher Education.

Belliveau, M. (2007). *Navigating the policy context: Experiences of undocumented mexican mothers in a new suburban immigrant community* (Order No. 3271722). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (304820987). Retrieved from

http://libproxy.csustan.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/304820987?accountid=10364

Brabeck, K. M., Lykes, M. B., & Hunter, C. (2014). The psychosocial impact of detention and deportation on U.S. Migrant children and families. *American Journal Of Orthopsychiatry*, *84*(5), 496-505.

Brabeck, K. , & Qingwen X,. (2010). The impact of detention and deportation on latino immigrant children and families: A quantitative exploration. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *32*(3), 341-361.

Bronfrenbrenner U. 1989. *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

California Department of Food and Agriculture. (2015). *Agricultural statistics review, 2015-2016.* State of California. Retrieved from https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/statistics/PDFs/2016Report.pdf

Capps, R. & Fortuny, K. (2006). *Immigration and child family policy.* The Urban Institute. Washington, DC. Retrieved From http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/51501/311139-The-Health-and-Well-Being-of-Young-Children-of-Immigrants.PDFhttp://webarchive.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311362_lowincome_children3.pdf

Capps, R., Fix, M. Ost, J., Reardon-Anderson, J., Passel, J.S. (2004). *The health and well-being of young children of immigrants.* The Urban Institute. Retrieved

from http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/51501/311139-The-Health-and-Well-Being-of-Young-Children-of-Immigrants.PDF

Capps, R. Rosenblum, M.R., Chishti, M., Rodriguez, C. *Delegation and Divergance: 287(g) State and Local Immigration Enforcement.* (2011). Migration Policy Institute Report. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/delegation-and-divergence-287g-state-and-local-immigration-enforcement

Carozza, S., Li, B., Elgethun, K., & Whitworth, R. (2008). Risk of Childhood Cancers Associated with Residence in Agriculturally Intense Areas in the United States. *Environmental Health Perspectives, 116*(4), 559-565. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40040113

Chaudry, A., Capps, R., Pedroza, J. M., Castañeda, R. M., Santos, R., & Scott, M. (2010). *Facing our future: Children in the aftermath of immigration enforcement.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/28331/412020-Facing-Our-Future.PDF

Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design.* Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Dishion, T. , & Connell, A. (2006). Adolescents' resilience as a self regulatory process. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1094*(1), 125-138.

Dreby, J. (2012). The Burden of Deportation on Children in Mexican Immigrant Families. *Journal Of Marriage & Family*, *74*(4), 829-845.

Faulkner, S., Faulkner, C. (2014). *Research Methods for Social Workers: A Practice-Based Approach.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Gudiño, O. (2013). Behavioral inhibition and risk for posttraumatic stress symptoms in latino children exposed to violence. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *41*(6), 983-992.

Hagan, J., Rodriguez, N., Capps, R., & Kabiri, N. (2003). The Effects of Recent Welfare and Immigration Reforms on Immigrants' Access to Health Care. *The International Migration Review, 37*(2), 444-463. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037845

Hartzog, C., Abrams, C., Erbstein, N., London, J.K., Watterson, S. (2016). *California's san Joaquin valley: A region and its children under stress.* Sierra Health Foundation & UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Sacramento, CA: U.S. Retrieved from https://www.sierrahealth.org/assets/pubs/A_Region_and_Its_Children_Under_Stress-Web.pdf

Having, K.K. (2010). *Empowerment for social justice: A grounded theory study of social work field instruction strategies* (Order No. 3488609). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. Retrieved from http://libproxy.csustan.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/911786613?accountid=10364

Hill, L. & Hayes, J. (2011). *Unauthorized immigrants in California: estimates for counties.* Public Policy Institute of California. Retrieved from http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_711LHR.pdf

Infante, C., Idrovo, A., Sánchez-Domínguez, M., Vinhas, S., & González-Vázquez, T. (2012). Violence committed against migrants in transit: Experiences on the northern mexican border. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *14*(3), 449-459.

Kohli, A., Markowitz, P. & Chavez, L. (2011). *Secure communities by the numbers: an analysis of demographics and due process.* Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy. Retrieved from https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Secure_Communities_by_the_Numbers.pdf

Lauby, F. (2017). "Because She Knew That I Did Not Have a Social". *Journal Of Hispanic Higher Education*, *16*(1), 24-42. doi:10.1177/1538192715614954

Lopez, S. A. (2014). *Assets associated with well-being among mexican immigrants: The development and psychometric evaluation of the mexican immigrant assets scale* (Order No. 3645666). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (1626384427). Retrieved from http://libproxy.csustan.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1626384427?accountid=10364

Lusk, M., McCallister, J., & Villalobos, G. (2013). Mental Health among Mexican Refugees Fleeing Violence and Trauma. *Social Development Issues*, *35*(3), 1-17.

National Association of Social Workers. (1996). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.* Revised and approved by 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly. Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp

National Association of Social Workers. (2015). *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice.* Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/NASWCulturalStandards.pdf

Neuman, L. (2012). Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Qualitative Approaches. 3rd Ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ, Pearson Publishing

Marcelli, E. A., & Pastor, M (2015). *Unauthorized and uninsured: building healthy communities in California.* Retrieved from https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Web_00_California_All_BHC_sites_Final1_updated.pdf

Marquez, E. C. & Shafer, K. S., Aldern, G., VanderMolen. K. (2016). *Kids on the frontline: how pesticides are undermining the health of rural children.* Pesticide Action Network. Oakland, CA: U.S. Retrieved from https://www.panna.org/sites/default/files/KOF-report-final.pdf

Martin, P., & Taylor, J. (1998). Poverty Amid Prosperity: Farm Employment, Immigration, and Poverty in California. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics, 80*(5), 1008-1014. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1244195

McWhirter, J. J., McWhirter, B. T., McWhirter, E. H., & McWhirter, R. J. (2007). *At Risk Youth: A comprehensive response for counselors, teachers, psychologist, and human service professionals* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

Menjivar, C. & Abrego, L. (2012) *Legal Violence in the lives of immigrants: How immigration enfocement affects families, schools and workplaces.* Retrieved from https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/MenjivarLegalViolenceReport.pdf

Mertens, D. M. (July 2007). Transformative paradigms: mixed methods and social justice. *Journal of mixed methods research, Vol. 1.* Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com.libproxy.csustan.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/1558689807302811 .

Moreno, D. R. (2016). *Promoting resilience in Latino/a youth: An examination of resilience research and its implications for the developmental outcomes of U.S.-born Latino/a youth* (Order No. 10092291). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (1780004535). Retrieved from http://libproxy.csustan.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1780004535?accountid=10364

Passel, J.S., & Cohn, D. (2011). *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends.* Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved From http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf

Passel, Jeffrey S., Cohn, D'Vera & Gonzalez-Berrera (2012). *Net migration from Mexico falls to zero- and perhaps less.* Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/

Passel, J. S., & Taylor, P. (2010, August 11) *Unauthorized immigrants and their U.S.-born children.* Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2010/08/11/unauthorized-immigrants-and-their-us-born-children/

Perry, B. (2004). *Applying principles of Neurodevelopment to clinical work with maltreated children and traumatized children: The neurosequential model of therapeutics.* Retrieved from

https://childtrauma.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Perry-Bruce-neurosequentialmodel_06.pdf

Pérez, W., Cortés, R. D., Ramos, K., & Coronado, H. (2010). 'Cursed and blessed': Examining the socioemotional and academic experiences of undocumented Latina and Latino college students. *New Directions For Student Services*, *2010*(131), 35-51. doi:10.1002/ss.366

Phillips, S.D., Cervantes W., Lincroft Y., Dettlaff, A. J., & Bruce, L. (2013). *Children in harm's way: criminal justice, immigration enforcement, and child welfare.* Retrieved from http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/LatinoPracticeAdvisory/Children_in_Harms_Way_final.pdf

Raffaelli, M., Tran, S. P., Wiley, A. R., Galarza-Heras, M., & Lazarevic, V. (2012). Risk and Resilience in Rural Communities: The Experiences of Immigrant Latina Mothers. *Family Relations*, *61*(4), 559-570.

Ramírez García, J. , Manongdo, J. , Ozechowski, T. , & Zarate, M. (2014). Depression symptoms among mexican american youth: Paternal parenting in the context of maternal parenting, economic stress, and youth gender. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *20*(1), 27-36.

Rodriguez, C.D. (2013). *The effects of deportation on the family.* (Thesis). Retrieved from http://sdsu-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.10/3931/Rodriguez_Cynthia.pdf?sequence=1

Rojas-Flores, L., Clements, M. , Hwang Koo, J. , & London, J. (2016). Trauma and psychological distress in Latino citizen children following parental detention and deportation. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*.

Sajquim de Torres, Maria,del Carmen. (2016). *Becoming resilient: A positive deviance inquiry into the resilience of mexican immigrant women* (Order No. 10118178). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (1803588909). Retrieved from http://libproxy.csustan.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1803588909?accountid=10364

Shelton JF, Geraghty EM, Tancredi DJ, Delwiche LD, Schmidt RJ, Ritz B, Hansen RL, Hertz-Picciotto I. 2014. Neurodevelopmental disorders and prenatal residential proximity to agricultural pesticides: the CHARGE study. Environ Health Perspect 122:1103–1109; http://dx.doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1307044

Suarez-Orozco, C., Yoshikawa, H., Teranishi, R., & Suarez-Orozco, M. (2012). Growing up in the shadows: The developmental implications of unauthorized status. *Harvard Educational Review*, *81*(3), 438-473.

United States Census Bureau. (2015). *ACS demographic and housing estimates: 2010-2015 American community survey.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk

United States Department of Homeland Security. (2016). *DHS Releases End of Year Fiscal Year 2016 Statistics.* Washington, DC: U.S. Retrieved from https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/12/30/dhs-releases-end-year-fiscal-year-2016-statistics

Werner, E. (1995). Resilience in Development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 4*(3), 81-85. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20182335

Wessler, S. (2011). *Shattered families: The perilous intersection between immigration enforcement and the child in th Kohli, A., Markowitz, P. L., & Chavez, L. (2011).e Welfare system*. New York: Applied Research Center

Zayas, L. , & Bradlee, M. (2014). Exiling children, creating orphans: When immigration policies hurt citizens. *Social Work*, *59*(2), 167-175.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Where were you born?
2. Where were your non-citizen family members born?
3. How many of your family members lack immigration status?
    a. Who are they (mother, father, etc.)?
4. How did you come to learn about the unique situation of your family? (Being mixed status)
5. Was the possibility of family separation explained to you as a child? How was it explained?
6. Growing up, how did you understand the legality of your families' mixed status?
7. Did your family plan for the possibility of deportation?
8. How did your family discuss current trends in immigration policy?
9. How did you feel sharing with others the fact that your family was mixed status? Did you have family members in another nation?
10. Where you able to learn about your family's history of migration?
    a. Specifically, did you hear stories of the journey your parents embarked on to get to the United States?
11. Did you parents tell you or any of your family members of desires to return to their motherland?
12. Did your family ever-express depression, anxiety, fear of being deported?

13. Did any of your family members receive counseling/therapy?
14. What parts of your experience growing up in a mixed status family provided you comfort?
15. What parts of your experience growing up in a mixed status family provided you security from the uncertainty that you and your family experienced?
16. Did teachers, administration, counselors ever talk to you about immigration, or being part of a mixed status family?
17. Did you ever confide in friends about your experience of growing up in a mixed status family?
18. Did you ever hear of families being separated due to deportations?
19. Is there anything else you want to add?

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant:

You are being asked to participate in a research project that is being done to fulfill requirements for a Master's degree in Social Work at CSU Stanislaus. We hope to learn about the lived experiences of Latinas who grew up in a mixed status home. Mixed status refers to the immigration status of the family unit. If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to meet with interviewer a minimum of one time for a one-hour interview. These interviews will be an attempt to gather information on a minimum of eight women who resided in Merced County the majority of their childhood and who had some potential deportable family members. We hope to find the effects in the mental health of the participants and develop recommendations on how the social work profession should advocate for mixed status families. The total length of this study, if you choose to participate is one session for two to three hours. There are no known risks to you for your participation in this study. It should be known participants will be asked to reflect on childhood experiences which can result in sensitivity or psychological impact to participants. The researcher will provide support and appropriate referral for any individuals who experience this. It is possible that you will not benefit directly by participating in this study. The information collected will be protected from all inappropriate disclosure under the law. All data will be kept in a secure location. Participants will be given a copy of the final research project and their names and personal information will remain confidential.

There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedure(s) described above. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

If you agree to participate, please indicate this decision by signing below. If you have any questions about this research project please contact me, Jennifer Morales, at (209) 667-3091 or my faculty sponsor, Jane Rousseau at (209) 204-0467. If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator by phone (209) 667-3493 or email IRBAdmin@csustan.edu .

Sincerely,
Jennifer Morales
Master of Social Work Candidate

I have read and understand the information provided above. All of my questions, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature Date

Name (printed)

Signature of person obtaining consent Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview audio recorded.

Signature Date

Name (printed)