“I WISH THEY KNEW WE EXISTED”: THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES OF LATINX COLLEGE STUDENTS IN MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES

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This study is dedicated to my parents. Gracias por todo.

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Amy J. Nuñez

"I WISH THEY KNEW WE EXISTED": THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES OF LATINX COLLEGE STUDENTS IN MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES

According to the Pew Research Center (2016), there are approximately 3.9 million children in the U.S. educational system who have at least one undocumented parent. This study aims to explore the academic experiences of Latinx college students in mixed-status families to find ways in which institutions can better support them on their higher education pathways. Student participants in this study grew up with at least one undocumented parent; a few were able to witness the transition from their parent's undocumented status to U.S. residency. Thirty-one qualitative interviews oriented by Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action were utilized to center the voices of sixteen Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families.

Findings suggest that students with undocumented parents experience multigenerational punishment when it comes to their academics. Specifically, Latinx students who are U.S. citizens with undocumented parents understand that they must protect their parents at all costs (emotional, physical, financial, aspirational, time). For example, some students faced educational costs when protecting and caring for their undocumented parents by staying close to home after college, often choosing family over their educational aspirations. Students must also learn to navigate bureaucratic processes like the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) via self-advocacy efforts and by building support systems in college. Furthermore, national, state, and local immigration policies have heavily impacted Latinx college students in mixed-status families. Student participants feared their parent's deportation while in college, experienced heightened anxiety during the Trump Presidency and shared unjust conditions faced by their families during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Latinx college students in mixed-status families with U.S. resident parents also experience lingering effects of multigenerational punishment by witnessing their parents transition from a marginalized identity to a privileged identity. Findings suggest that Latinx students in mixed-status families with U.S. resident parents acknowledge their parents' privileges as residents while continuing to care about issues facing the undocumented community. Finally, findings suggest that DACA students continue to feel unprotected and unsupported as they undergo their undergraduate studies. The study provides recommendations for higher education institutions to facilitate access, retention, and completion of degrees among this student population.

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"Death toll rises to 53 after bodies of migrants found in Texas tractor trailer" (CBS News, 2022)

"Supreme Court prevents Biden administration from reinstating limits on ICE arrests" (CBS News, 2022)

"Federal appeals court hears arguments on future of DACA" (CNN, 2022)

Throughout the time I worked on my dissertation, these were just some of the headlines in the news related to immigration. These headlines were difficult to process as someone who lives in a mixed-status family working on a dissertation that hoped to bring light to the stories of other students in mixed-status families. Often, I would find myself skipping these articles and trying my best to avoid the news because of the mental, emotional, and physical toll it was taking on me. I thought a lot about my participants, and others in this similar situation; the ways we suffer in silence prompted me to continuously reflect on why this study is so important.

Growing up, I distinctly remember moments when my mom lost her father and could not attend his funeral; our family sitting together in a huddle crying as we all tried to process my

grandfather's death while being thousands of miles away. I remember the moment when my mother and my two uncles reunited with their mother, my grandmother, for the first time after two decades of being separated by U.S. borders. After numerous attempts, my grandmother was finally able to attain her U.S. tourist visa to come see her children. I remember sitting in between my parents, sobbing, as an immigration lawyer told us there wasn't anything he could do to adjust my parents' immigration status. These memories coupled with experiences I had in the classroom where teachers were blatantly misinformed about the undocumented community and the complex, sometimes impossible, process for obtaining U.S. citizenship is exactly what prompted me to engage in this dissertation topic. I had always wondered if there were any other students like me; shaking in their seats when topics of immigration came up in class or spending their lives enduring the emotional toll of living in a mixed-status family while also navigating the stress and difficulties of college.

Respecting students' decisions to participate in this study was of utmost importance to me. Given the current political climate, I anticipated that it would be difficult to find students who were willing to share their stories with me. Students in mixed-status families have often experienced racism, the deportation (or fear of deportation) of a family member, and immigration raids, among other tragedies. These experiences can be traumatizing and place a heavy emotional toll on students. When cautiously reaching out to friends and acquaintances about this study, I found that students wanted to share their stories in hopes of creating change. They wanted their teachers and administrators to know they exist and that more can be done to support students in mixed-status families in K-12 and at the college level. They are the heart of this dissertation. To the students who did not feel comfortable sharing your stories, this dissertation honors you and your families.

Background and Scope of the Study

Colonization, often disguised as "Europeans immigrating to the U.S.," is a harrowing staple of U.S. history. The Indigenous population was forcefully stripped of their cultural identities and approximately ninety percent of them were killed by diseases brought to the U.S. by European settlers (Edwards & Kelton, 2020). One of the first immigration policies created in the U.S. was the Naturalization Act of 1790 which granted naturalized citizenship to "free white men of good moral character" (Gomberg- Muñoz, 2016, p. 17). Throughout time, the U.S. has continued to implement discriminatory immigration policies based on race, class, and gender, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and quota systems placed on low-income immigrants and immigrants of color (Gomberg- Muñoz, 2016).

After the Mexican-American War of 1848, the U.S. seized over half of Mexico, creating an imaginary border that Latinxs now have to cross if they want to immigrate to the U.S. Since then, the U.S. has destabilized the economic and social living conditions in many parts of Latin America, causing many Latinxs to flee political turmoil, violence, and economic instability, among other necessary reasons for immigrating. Despite the enormous contributions of Latinx immigrants to the U.S., especially economically, the U.S. government has responded by creating laws that obstruct access to U.S. citizenship. By strengthening border security, increasing deportation rates, and separating families, the U.S. government intentionally strips some of the most vulnerable immigrants of their basic human rights, birthing the concept of an "undocumented immigrant."

It is important to note that the U.S. has opened its doors for Latinx immigrants in times of political and economic hardships. For example, the Bracero program, which began in 1942, was initially created to "respond to labor shortages during WWII" and remnants of this guest-worker

program still exist today (Gomberg- Muñoz, 2016, p. 17). Yet, efforts to bring Latinx immigrants to help the U.S. in times of need have gone unappreciated and have instead been returned with anti-immigrant laws and rhetoric.

Despite the ways in which the U.S. immigration system limits pathways to legal citizenship, particularly for low-income immigrants from Latin America, Latinxs continue to immigrate to the United States in search of a better life for themselves and their children. Due to stringent immigration laws, coupled with experiences of poverty and political turmoil instigated by the U.S. government, some Latinx immigrants enter the U.S. unlawfully by utilizing falsified documents and/or undergoing the treacherous journey of crossing the border by foot. Others enter the U.S. lawfully with a tourist visa and then overstay the time permitted by their visa, which causes them to be undocumented as well. The 1.5 generation, often referred to as Dreamers, are undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children and have often lived their entire lives in the U.S.

Due to their unauthorized status, undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are barred from accessing social services such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security funds, and unemployment benefits, among many other social services. Undocumented immigrants are also unable to travel outside of the country and will soon be barred from travelling domestically by flight due to the REAL ID Act slated to go into effect nationally in May 2025. The REAL ID limits travel because it requires a social security number and/or proof of U.S. residency via a US passport, US birth certificate, a certificate of Naturalization/US Citizenship, or a US Certificate of Birth Abroad, all documents that undocumented immigrants do not have. Fear of deportation and limited access to state IDs/driver licenses are among some of the other punishments placed on undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Due to their vulnerable status, undocumented immigrants

are provided with limited employment opportunities and are often exploited in their workplaces. Despite these systems of oppression, undocumented immigrants have settled in the U.S.; they have bought homes, built businesses, and had children, forming mixed-status families.

This dissertation provides a space for the children of undocumented immigrants to share their stories. Previous studies have explored the mental health impact on children of undocumented parents (Abrego, 2019; Brabeck & Sibley, 2016; Brabeck, Sibley, & Lykes, 2016; Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin, & Murcia, 2016; Chavez et. al., 2012; ; Daftary, 2018; Dreby, 2015; Giano, Tuttle, Merten, Gallus, Cox, Shreffler, 2018; Lovato et. al., 2018; Shreffler, Giano, Cox, Merten, Gallus, & Cox, 2018). This study builds on the idea of multigenerational punishment, particularly focusing on how the exploitation and punishment imposed on undocumented immigrants in the U.S. also affect their children, especially when it comes to their academics.

Problem Statement

There is limited research which explores the lived experiences of students in mixed-status families. Existing research studies particularly focus on the psychological impact of having parents with undocumented status and the impact of multigenerational punishment on students with undocumented parents (Daftary, 2018; Enriquez, 2015; Chavez et. al., 2012). Research that explores the academic impact of living in a mixed-status family tends to focus on children in K-12 rather than college students (Dreby, 2015; Enriquez, 2015; Lovato, Lopez, Karimli, & Abrams, 2018; Abrego, 2019). Given these limitations, there continues to be a substantial need for more research in this area, especially at the higher education level.

Secondly, research posits that students in mixed-status families, especially students with undocumented parents, undergo stressful and traumatic experiences inside and outside of the classroom (Enriquez, 2015; Lovato et. al., 2018). However, due to the vulnerability and

sensitivity of their parents' immigration status, there are no outlets to safely share these experiences, causing these students to suffer in silence. These stories are consequently left unheard and can therefore be difficult to fully understand and/or create support structures for. This can also lead teachers, college professors, administrators, and the public to be susceptible to misinformation and misconceptions regarding undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families.

The title of this dissertation, inspired by a student participant in this study, highlights another important issue that this study aims to address. After asking Salvador what he wished his college professors knew about students in mixed-status families, he responded with, "I wish they knew we existed." He described feeling invisible and unheard in his classrooms, a feeling mutually shared by all student participants in this study. The underrepresentation of students in mixed-status families within the literature, in addition to the ways they feel invisible in their schools and classrooms, also stresses the need for more research on this issue.

Furthermore, the historical exclusion of students from marginalized backgrounds combined with the limited understanding of Latinx students in mixed-status families create numerous barriers for these students when accessing a higher education, especially among first-generation college students. Current policies related to increasing tuition rates, FAFSA requirements, and other college application processes hinder the ability of these students to graduate with a college degree. Policies that facilitate access to higher education for students in mixed-status families, such as federal TRIO programs and college access programs, are constantly being threatened with budget cuts and/or a termination of program services; thereby fostering an important discourse regarding the importance of these institutional, state, and national programs.

Lastly, because members of Congress and recent U.S. Presidents continue failing to implement a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented individuals in this country, it is expected that the population of mixed-status families will continue to grow in the near future. Therefore, it is important to conduct research which focuses on how federal, state, and local immigration policies affect the academic experiences and aspirations of students in mixed-status families. This also raises important considerations for the educational system to support students who are part of these families, academically and beyond.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the academic experiences of students in mixed-status families, particularly families with U.S. citizen children who have undocumented parents and/or parents who recently became U.S. residents. The study aims to analyze the different ways in which parents' immigration status, intersected with race and ethnicity, can impact the educational experiences of students in mixed-status families. Furthermore, the goal of this study is to bridge student narratives with research and policy in order to facilitate access to higher education for these students. This study urges institutions, states, and the nation to implement educational policies that support the academic aspirations and endeavors of students in mixed-status families. Lastly, this study provides a space for students in mixed-status families to share their stories and their plight living in a country that constantly manipulates their families' futures. The intended audience for this study includes legislators, K-12 teachers, college professors, and K-12/university administrators.

Research Questions

The research questions that were explored throughout this dissertation study include:

1. **How do Latinx college students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations?**
2. **How have national, state, and institutional immigration policies impacted Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education?**

The exploration of these research questions will allow researchers to better understand the academic experiences and aspirations for Latinx/a/o students who live in a mixed-status family. The stories that students share will enable researchers to think about ways in which national, state, and institutional policies can serve as a catalyst to higher education, while also reflecting on how some existing policies might hinder educational opportunities for these children.

Significance of the Study

Reading Laura Enriquez' article titled, "Multigenerational Punishment: Shared Experiences of Undocumented Immigration Status Within Mixed-Status Families," was a powerful moment for me because for once, I saw myself, and my intersectional identities as someone in a mixed-status family, validated in a research study. Enriquez' study prompted me to further increase the representation of students in mixed-status families within the current literature by amplifying these voices through my dissertation study. My hope is that students in similar situations will see themselves represented in the literature, and that they will know they are not alone, that there are people advocating for their families' rights.

This study brings awareness to the heart-wrenching experiences of students in mixed-status families that are often left unheard in order to protect undocumented family members. The findings of this study, molded by the stories of Latinx students in mixed-status families, provide an important foundation for scholars to continue engaging in studies that explore the experiences

of students in mixed-status families and how higher education institutions can better support these students on their educational and career pathways. Maximizing avenues to higher education for students in mixed-status families will additionally expand work opportunities and strengthen the state of education in the U.S. Furthermore, higher education institutions across the nation have begun to prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives. This study provides one way for institutions to act on these efforts by acknowledging the difficulties that students in mixed-status families face within their respective higher education institutions and to collaboratively work together to eliminate these barriers.

Lastly, this study provides an extensive overview of the different ways that existing immigration policies negatively affect students, not only psychologically and emotionally, but also academically. Current immigration policies are historically embedded with colonialism, genocide, and the policing of Black and Brown bodies in the U.S. The connections between these harmful immigration policies and student academics are important to make because they draw attention to human rights issues and issues of inequality that must be addressed in U.S. society today. Without basic rights like safety, financial stability, access to education and healthcare, we deprive these families of their humanity. This issue is also important to address given the economic contributions that Latinx immigrants have historically, and continue to, generate for the U.S.; children of these immigrants deserve access to a higher education, especially given their parents unreturned economic contributions. Furthermore, treating undocumented immigrants as the humans they are and including them in the tapestry of U.S. citizens, will consequently create positive changes for the country, economically and beyond.

Contributions of the Study

Education

It is estimated that there are 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. (Migration Policy Institute, 2019) and approximately 3.9 million children in the U.S. educational system who have at least one undocumented parent (Pew Research Center, 2016). Current research has explored the impact of Latinx students in U.S. education at the K-12 and higher education level, and there are a growing number of studies that have focused on undocumented and DACA students. There are also an increasing number of studies which have started to focus on mixed-status families, particularly with regard to children's psychological and emotional wellbeing. However, there remains a current gap in the literature regarding the experiences of Latinx college students in mixed-status families, specifically students who are U.S. citizens with undocumented and/or U.S. resident parents.

Existing studies show that even if the child of an undocumented immigrant is a U.S. citizen, they may still experience many of the systemic inequalities their parents face as undocumented immigrants (Enriquez, 2015; Chavez, Lopez, Englebrecht, & Viramontez Anguiano, 2012). In other words, though these policies are targeted at undocumented immigrants, they transcend to oppressing the entire family (Enriquez, 2015; Chavez et. al., 2012). For example, the uncertainties of deportation, financial stability, and family separation may affect students' mental and emotional well-being, which may consequently impact their academics (Chavez et. al., 2012). Because anti-immigrant laws and policies negatively affect both undocumented parents and their citizen children, Enriquez (2015) suggests that this is a form of "multigenerational punishment." Therefore, this study argues that Enriquez' concept of multigenerational punishment (2015) not only negatively impacts students' emotional, psychological, and physical wellbeing, but also their K-12 and postsecondary academics. The study finds that students with undocumented parents suffer academic consequences from policies

specifically intended to burden their undocumented parents. Applying the concept of multigenerational punishment to student academics provides an important contribution to the current literature.

Furthermore, given that approximately 28 percent of the immigrant population is undocumented in the U.S. and approximately 16.7 million people live in a household with at least one undocumented family member (Chavez et. al., 2012; Rodriguez, 2019; Delgado, 2022), it is important to note that the number of mixed-status families will continue to grow and therefore, deserve more studies which advocate for their access to equitable opportunities (Abrego, 2019). Though U.S. citizen children whose parents have U.S. residency are also considered to be in mixed-status families, this experience can be different due to the legal protections granted by U.S. residency; however, these experiences have not been explored on a deeper level. Current studies also do not examine potential differences based on when students' parents received U.S. residency, an area of research that is explored throughout this dissertation.

This study finds that the concept of multigenerational punishment expands to students who have experienced the transition of their parent's immigration status from the oppressed identity of being undocumented to a more privileged identity of becoming U.S. residents. Though the impact is minimized after students' parents received U.S. residency, remnants of multigenerational punishment continued to linger. Analyzing the experiences of students in mixed-status families whose parents have experienced various immigration statuses is also an important contribution of this study given that these experiences are seldom referenced in existing research studies.

The experiences of students in mixed-status families are critical to include in research studies because they are powerful in transforming educational policy. This research study

provides scholars, practitioners, administrators, and policy makers with a better understanding regarding the needs of students in mixed-status families, as well as ways to foster avenues toward higher education for these students and how to support these students after enrolling in higher education institutions.

Lastly, this study provides an important overview of policies intended to support the educational journeys of Latinx students in mixed-status families, particularly at the postsecondary level. The policy implications outlined at the end of this dissertation aim to enhance access to higher education and to advocate for effective retention strategies that will lead students in mixed-status families to graduate with their respective college degrees. These policy considerations also encompass an important contribution of this study.

Latinx/a/o Studies

This study contributes to the field of Latinx Studies by applying Latino Critical Race theory to explore the academic experiences of Latinx college students with intersecting identities in mixed-status families. Findings suggest that multigenerational punishment experienced by students in mixed-status families impacts their academics and ignites their desire to advocate for their families within and outside of higher education settings. Latinx Studies has well documented the history of activism and mobilization by Latinx communities in pursuit of social justice. This study further contributes to this field of research by highlighting the ways in which Latinx college students in mixed-status families have refused to accept the status quo; instead, they have forced their ways into higher education spaces that were not designed for them, uplifting their Latinx communities along the way.

Definition of Terms

Latinx/a/o

Because there are various interpretations of the term Latinx/a/o, it is important to discuss how the term is interpreted for this particular study. Latino/a broadly refers to people who are descendants of Latin America, including "20 Spanish-speaking countries located in South & Central America and the Caribbean, and who share a history of being "conquered" or "colonized" by Spain" (Torres, Hernandez, & Martinez, 2019, p. 2). Recently, the term Latinx has alternatively been used as an inclusive, gender-neutral term, which challenges the gender binary that Latino/a imposes on people (Torres, Hernandez, & Martinez, 2019). Throughout this study, participants are referred to in the way that they identified themselves at the time of their interview(s).

Because Latinx/a/o is an umbrella term, it is important to acknowledge that there exists much diversity among Latinxs in the United States with respect to ethnic background, language(s) spoken, skin color, income levels, and immigrant statuses, among various other identities. Therefore, one must be cautious of referring to Latinxs as a homogenous group. Furthermore, though this study focuses on Latinxs in mixed-status families, it is important to emphasize that not all Latinxs are in mixed-status families and the experiences of Latinxs vary greatly in the U.S.

U.S. Citizen

A U.S. citizen is broadly defined as someone who is granted full rights and privileges in the United States (U.S. Immigration, 2022). A person born in the United States is automatically granted U.S. Citizenship. The naturalization process allows some immigrants to become U.S. citizens as long as they meet strict guidelines and eligibility requirements.

Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2022), a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) is "a non-citizen who is lawfully authorized to live permanently within the United States." LPRs have a pathway to citizenship and are able to work legally without any restrictions, own property, and receive federal and state aid at public colleges and universities, but they cannot vote. Though extremely rare, lawful permanent residents can be deported to their countries of birth.

Undocumented Immigrant

The National Immigration Law Center identifies an undocumented individual as "a foreign national who: (1) entered the United States without inspection or with fraudulent documents; or (2) entered legally as a nonimmigrant but then violated the terms of his or her status and remained in the United States without authorization" (Educators for Fair Consideration, 2014). Most undocumented individuals have spent at least 10 years in the United States and do not have a current pathway to citizenship (Krogstad, Passel, & Cohn, 2016; Gomberg-Muñoz, 2017; Lopez, Passel, & Cohn, 2021).

Mixed-Status Families

Mixed-status families are defined as households that have "any combination of undocumented people with lawful residents and/or U.S. citizens" (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2017, p. 157). Lawful residents may include folks who have U.S. residency, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and/or have an approved application for asylum in the United States, among other authorized statuses. Often times, mixed-status families refer to households where U.S. citizen children have undocumented parents.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation includes five chapters. In this chapter, I introduced the aim of my dissertation which is to explore the academic experiences of Latinx college students in mixed-status families. I outlined the background and scope of this study, including the purpose, significance, and contributions, as well as a note on the terms used throughout this dissertation. Chapter Two provides an overview of the current literature relevant to students in mixed-status families, it is divided into three parts: a) Immigration, b) Education, and c) Theoretical Frameworks of the study. Chapter Three provides an overview of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, the methodological framework utilized throughout this study, as well as the methods used for collecting and analyzing data. Chapter Four focuses on the findings of this study based on the stories shared by student participants. The final chapter, Chapter Five, includes a discussion of the findings as well as policy implications and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Given the current political climate in the U.S. and the anti-immigrant rhetoric that the Trump Administration fiercely endorsed, especially against Latinxs, it is critical to engage in research which examines the plight of mixed-status families and the impact this family situation has on student academic experiences, aspirations, and achievement. By centering the voices and experiences of children in mixed-status families, educational institutions can better understand the impact these identities have on their lives and how to better support them throughout their higher education journeys.

Contributions to the Literature

This study addresses an important gap in the literature by exploring the academic experiences of students in mixed-status families within higher education settings, an experience that is scarcely included in current research studies. Current research focuses on the psychological stress and mental wellbeing of students in mixed-status families, often within K-12 settings. There is not enough research on the ways in which students in mixed-status families within higher education settings navigate their academics, educational aspirations, post-graduation plans/goals, and/or their mental and physical health, while undergoing their undergraduate studies. In order to fill this gap in the literature, this study solely focuses on stories by students in mixed-status families who are pursuing or have recently graduated with a bachelor's degree.

This study argues that multigenerational punishment, the concept that punitive laws meant to punish undocumented immigrants also punish their U.S. citizen children, heavily impacts the academic experiences of Latinx students in mixed-status families with regard to their academic, emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing at the higher education level. Whereas

previous research has focused on the impact of multigenerational punishment in areas such as 1) fear of deportation, 2) inability to travel, 3) limited opportunities for employment and economic mobility, 4) limited access to social services, and 5) negative impact on mental health for students in K-12, this study argues that multigenerational punishment transcends beyond these areas by also affecting student academic experiences, goals, and aspirations as they pursue a higher education.

Given the generational trauma caused by growing up with undocumented parents in a country that exploits, punishes, and ostracizes immigrants, it is critical for higher education institutions to create inclusive policies that support their student population who may be facing this family situation. Therefore, the contributions of this study are significant within higher education settings because they provide guidance for forming these supportive policies directly from the voices of students.

This study also makes significant contributions to the current literature in Latinx Studies/Latinx Education. The stories shared by participants throughout this study highlight an important concern among Latinx students that is often not voiced publicly in order to avoid placing their undocumented parents in danger. Though there is a growing number of studies which explore the experiences of Latinx students in higher education institutions, including DACA and undocumented students, there are limited studies which specifically focus on the challenges faced by U.S. citizen Latinx children who grew up with undocumented parents, specifically when applying to college, navigating their academics during college, and when making post-graduation decisions. Therefore, this study explores a sub-area of Latinx Education research that amplifies the stories of students whose intersectional identities deny them of many U.S. citizen privileges they are entitled to, due to their parent's legal status. Student participants

in this study also described how their role as children with undocumented parents served as a catalyst for engaging in activism, another important contribution to the literature.

Chapter Overview

In order to analyze the educational experiences of Latinx/a/o students in mixed-status families, we must engage in various bodies of literature related to immigration, Latinx education, undocumented students, state and federal education policies, higher education, and the concept of multigenerational punishment. These bodies of literature provide important context for understanding Latinx students and the mixed-status family unit, which scholars can then apply when trying to understand how these experiences might affect their academic experiences in K-12 and higher education.

This chapter is separated into three sections. Part I provides an overview of immigration from Latin America to the United States, including federal policies and laws related to immigration, the process for becoming a legal citizen in the United States, the lived realities of undocumented immigrants, and an overview of multigenerational punishment as it relates to mixed-status families. Part II provides an overview of Latinx students in U.S. Education, including students in mixed-status families and undocumented students. This section covers education policies impacting Latinx students' access to higher education, a brief review of the literature surrounding multigenerational punishment as it relates to issues of equity in education, and the role activism plays for many students who live in mixed-status families. Lastly, Part III provides an overview of the theoretical framework utilized for this study. LatCrit and Critical Race Theory (CRT) were applied to critically examine the structural inequalities that target mixed-status families in U.S. society and to work towards dismantling these structures in pursuit of social and educational justice.

Immigration

Latinx Immigration to the U.S.

After the Mexican-American War ended in 1848, Mexico ceded over 50 percent of its land to the United States, including present-day California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and parts of Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming (National Archives, 2022). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) assured Mexican citizens residing on these lands that they could choose to relocate to Mexican territories or stay on what was then considered newly occupied U.S. land (National Archives, 2022). If individuals chose to stay, they were promised U.S. citizenship along with the preservation of the land they owned, promises that were often broken. Though immigration to the U.S. existed before the Mexican-American War, this moment in history sparked the beginning of heightened immigration from Latin America to the U.S.

In the book, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, González (2022) argues that "U.S. economic and political domination over Latin America has always been, and continues to be, the underlying reason for massive Latinx presence in the U.S. (González, 2022, p. xxvi) González (2022) posits that Latinxs were pushed to immigrate to the United States due to the expansion of U.S. industries across North America, especially throughout the 1900s. Immigration from Latin America increasingly arose after the consolidation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which destabilized many Latin American economies. Latinxs were forced to flee their countries due to factors related to starvation, limited work opportunities, and worsening social conditions, issues caused by U.S. powers to strategically pull immigrants into the country to meet U.S. labor demands. Once in the U.S., Latinx immigrants were, and continue to be, exploited and treated as second-class citizens, largely due to language and ethnic differences (González, 2022). Due to forced immigration intersected with increasing

laws restricting immigration, the number of undocumented immigrants has continued to increase throughout the U.S., shaping the formation of mixed-status families. According to the Migration Policy Institute (2019), there are approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants living the United States today and at least 16.7 million people in the U.S. live in a mixed-status household (Chavez et. al., 2012; Rodriguez, 2019; Delgado, 2022).

National Immigration Policies Throughout Time

In order to better understand the experiences of Latinx/a/o students in mixed-status families, it is important to outline the national immigration policies that have greatly impacted undocumented immigrants. By providing an overview of national policies impacting undocumented immigrants, one is also able to analyze how these policies can also affect family members who hold U.S. citizenship status. These policies also provide context for the anti-immigrant treatment that oppress undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families today.

Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed IRCA into law. This federal legislation prohibited employers from knowingly hiring undocumented workers and doubled the size of U.S. Border Patrol (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). This law also provided approximately 3 million people with a direct path to legal residency (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016) and is often socially referred to as “the amnesty of 1986.” IRCA was the last federal law to allow currently undocumented immigrants a pathway towards legal residency and thus citizenship. This means that the last comprehensive immigration reform initiated by the U.S. federal government was approximately 37 years ago.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Congress created Temporary Protected Status (TPS) as part of the Immigration Act of 1990. TPS provides temporary protection, travel authorization, and legal work opportunities to migrants who may be facing the following conditions in their home countries: 1) ongoing armed conflict; 2) an environmental disaster; or 3) other extraordinary and temporary conditions. Immigrants who have TPS need to reapply for a renewal every 6, 12, or 18 months. Though the TPS policy itself does not directly provide a pathway to U.S. residency or U.S. citizenship, it does not bar individuals who have TPS to apply for U.S. residency as a separate immigration process. During the Trump administration, TPS was an immigration status that was consistently threatened, but legal battles blocked these actions. The Biden administration has recently expanded TPS protections by including new designations for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees and has also proposed legislation that creates a pathway to citizenship for TPS holders (Roy & Klobucista, 2023).

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)

In 1996, IIRIRA was among the first laws enacted to strengthen the possibility of deportation and inadmissibility into the U.S. (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). IIRIRA "expands U.S. Border Patrol, reduces public benefits available to lawful immigrants, and restricts eligibility for many immigration benefits" (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016, p. 17).

Development Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act)

In 2001, the DREAM Act was introduced to Congress and aimed to provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students. In order to qualify for the DREAM Act, immigrants had to have lived in the U.S. before the age of 18 and must have graduated from a U.S. high school, among several other requirements (American Immigration Council, 2019). Though the DREAM Act was debated in Congress several times, it has consistently failed to pass both the House of

Representatives and the Senate (American Immigration Council, 2019). Because of the difficulty in passing this bill, the DREAM Act disappeared from the national discourse when it was overshadowed by the implementation of DACA in 2012 (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, 2012).

The Dream Act was reintroduced to Congress in 2019 amid national attention to policies that separated families at the border, denied asylum for immigrants at the border, and shined a light on the experiences shared by children of immigrants in ICE detention centers. These stories sparked outrage among many politicians, while simultaneously igniting other politicians to defend these practices. In July 2019, the House of Representatives passed a version of the Dream Act which would provide a pathway to citizenship for many students and undocumented youth, including those who qualify for DACA. Dreamers were once again inflicted with a false sense of hope after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to bring the DREAM Act to a vote on the Senate floor, consequently producing another defeated DREAM Act bill in Congress.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

DACA is an executive action implemented by President Barack Obama in 2012, which allows undocumented immigrants between the ages of 15 and 30, who meet several outlined requirements, to work legally in the U.S. with a temporary visa and to have temporary protection from deportation (DACA, 2012). Before the implementation of DACA, undocumented students who made it through higher education institutions faced challenges to apply their college degrees in their field of study. According to the American Immigration Council (2021), DACA has allowed approximately 832,881 undocumented youth to obtain work employment and to legally work in their respected fields. Six years after the implementation of DACA, the Trump administration revoked this policy, which left thousands of undocumented youth with no other

status beyond being undocumented. Within the same year, a decision made by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit allowed individuals who had DACA before the policy was discontinued to continue renewing their permits every two years for a fee of $495 each time, as has been standard since the beginning of DACA. In July 2019, the Supreme Court announced that they would allow hearings for DACA starting in November 2019. One year later, on June 18, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the Trump Administration's decision to revoke DACA was unlawful, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) could continue to process applications. Despite this small sense of relief for DACA recipients, and future recipients, this law continued to be challenged in federal courts. The current status of DACA allows for renewals but does not allow the USDHS to approve first-time DACA applicants, leaving thousands of students in limbo. Due to the fragility of DACA, many fear that this federal policy can be easily removed at any moment. Congress has yet to pass a comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship for the millions of undocumented immigrants residing in the U.S., specifically for undocumented parents.

Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA)

President Obama introduced Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) in 2014 which was intended for undocumented parents 1) to gain temporary legal status; 2) to obtain a temporary work permit, and 3) to have temporary protection from deportation (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2014; Migration Policy Institute, 2016). Undocumented immigrants could qualify for DAPA if they: 1) had lived in the U.S. continuously since January 1, 2010; 2) had a son or daughter who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident; and 3) were not considered "an enforcement priority for removal from the United States" (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2014). Though this policy was

exactly what many mixed-status families had hoped for, DAPA was immediately challenged in federal courts by the state of Texas. Twenty-five other states followed Texas by also challenging DAPA in federal courts. The implementation of DAPA was indefinitely blocked when the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2016. With a 4-4 tie, the Supreme Court was unable to produce a majority ruling. This meant that decisions made by lower courts blocking DAPA from being implemented were held. Since then, there have not been any new laws, policies, and/or executive actions that have successfully created a pathway to citizenship and/or provided temporary legal status for undocumented parents. The Migration Policy Institute (2016) estimates that up to 3.6 million unauthorized parents may have been eligible for the DAPA program.

So How Does One Become a U.S. Citizen Anyway?

Gomberg-Muñoz (2016) begins her book, *Becoming Legal*, with a question that many undocumented immigrants, including my own parents, have been asked numerous times, "*Why don't you become legal?*" (p. vi). Gomberg-Muñoz continues by explaining the legal, financial, and bureaucratic limitations that families encounter when trying to undergo the legal process to become a U.S. citizen.

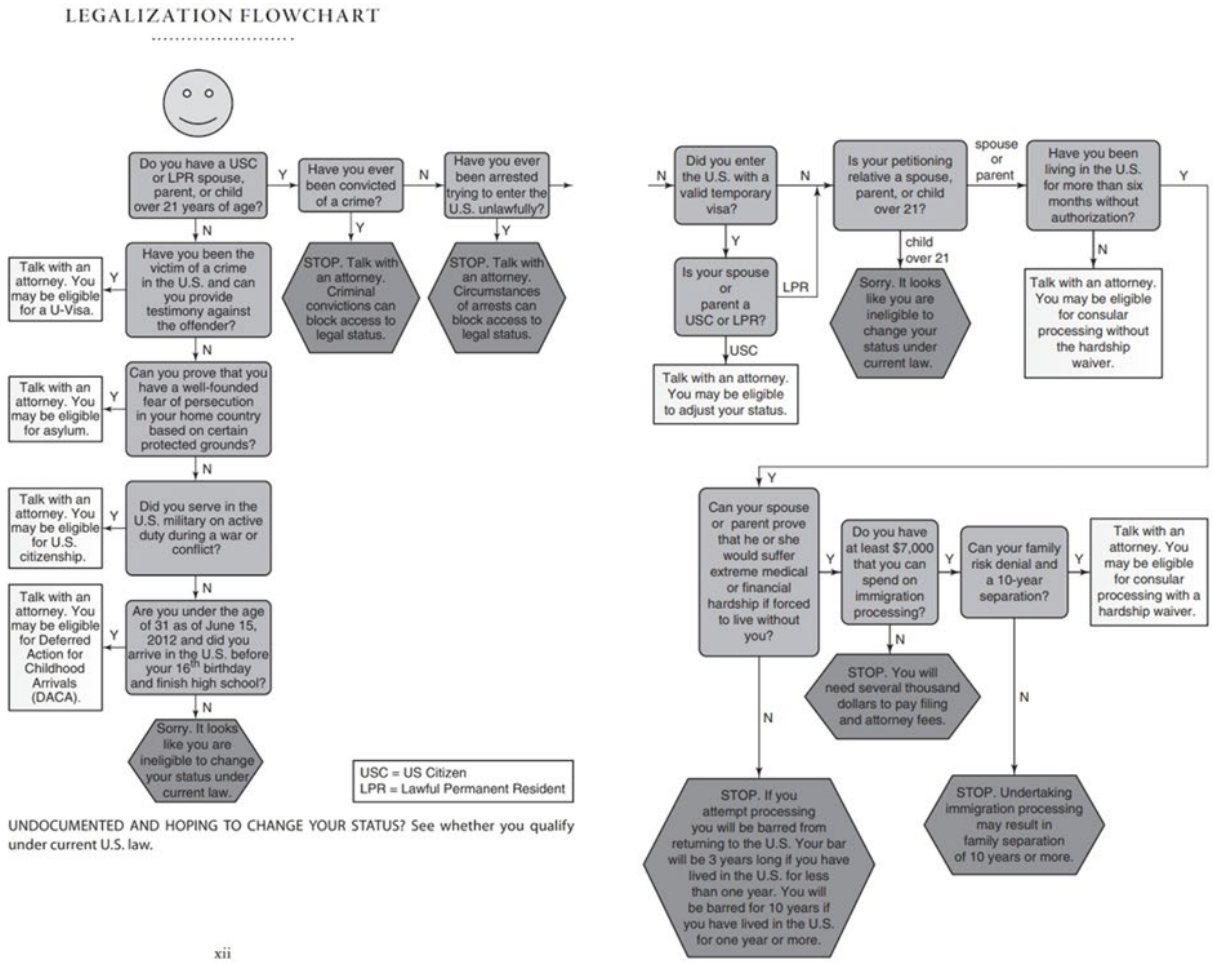
Firstly, it is important to note that laws restricting immigration to the U.S. have historically excluded racial minorities and low-income individuals, beginning with the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). Strict requirements, increased border enforcement, the formation of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), among other prohibitive immigration policies have placed a barrier to seek citizenship for prospective immigrants while in their home countries, especially for Latin Americans. These exclusionary policies have driven millions of immigrants to overstay their temporary visas or "unlawfully" enter the United States,

sacrificing their lives in search of a better future. Given this background information, legal scholars concur that the argument stating "people should wait in line" to begin the legal process is flawed, especially when millions of immigrants are urgently seeking refuge from poverty, persecution, or war, among other dire reasons for immigrating (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016; Castañeda, 2019).

The legalization flowchart shown below was designed by Gomberg-Muñoz (2017) to offer a visual representation of the legal process to acquiring U.S. residency, the first step in applying for U.S. citizenship. As shown, there are various factors that can impede individuals from accessing a pathway to citizenship. Firstly, individuals must have a spouse, parent, or child over 21 years of age who is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident who can sponsor their application. Though it is possible for individuals to apply for residency without this sponsorship by proving that they have "well-founded fear of persecution in their home country," and/or "have been a victim of crime in the U.S.," these cases are much less common and difficult to prove in immigration courts (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). If individuals are able to move forward with the application, they must not have: 1) been convicted of a crime, or 2) been previously arrested for trying to enter the U.S. unlawfully in order to continue the process.

Individuals who initially entered with a valid temporary visa and overstayed their time in the U.S. often have a less complicated process to legal residency compared to individuals who entered the country without legal permission (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). Because immigrants who overstayed visas can prove that they entered the country "lawfully," they can often adjust their immigrant status without having to leave the country (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). Contrastingly, immigrants who did not enter via legal channels are automatically inflicted with "the punishment/el castigo," which places a 10-year bar on them returning to the United States before

they can begin the legal process (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2015, p. 2235). Though it is possible to waive the 10-year bar, this is often rare due to the difficulties in proving "extreme hardship if they were to leave country," in front of immigration courts (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). The flowchart below provides more details on the legal process and the roadblocks that can be imposed at any step in the process.



"Legalization Flowchart" reproduced from *Becoming Legal: Immigration Law and Mixed-Status Families* (pgs. xii-xiii), by R. Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016, Oxford University Press. Copyright 2016 by Oxford University Press. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

It is important to note that even if an individual meets every single requirement to apply for citizenship, costs associated with the legal process can also be a hindrance to applying.

According to Gomberg-Muñoz (2015), "visa overstayers will typically spend up to $3000 in filing and attorney fees to adjust their status while unlawful entrants spend upwards of $10,000 on consular processing" (p. 2241). If unlawful entrants are legally able to waive the 10-year bar inflicted on them, costs increase by $5000-$7000 solely for attorney fees, not including any expenses that may be incurred to travel to Ciudad Juarez and their indefinite stay in Mexico as they undergo medical examinations and wait on the process to unravel. The exponential costs for undergoing this legal process can be a major hindrance given that many immigrant families cannot financially afford these expenses (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2015).

Overview of Undocumented Immigrants in the U.S.

It is estimated that there are over 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today (Abrego, 2019; Migration Policy Institute, 2019). Numerous limitations imposed on undocumented immigrants by the U.S. government include el castigo/the punishment, limited access to state IDs/driver licenses, limited employment opportunities, economic hardships, and limited access to social services. In addition to these limitations, there are also many misconceptions surrounding undocumented immigrants in the U.S., two of the main misconceptions emit the false perception of undocumented immigrants as economic burdens with criminal backgrounds.

Limitations/Challenges Imposed on Undocumented Immigrants in the U.S.

"El Castigo." In her book, *Becoming Legal*, Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz (2017) describes the complexities and difficulties with adjusting one's immigrant status. For many working-class Latinx/as/os who arrived to the U.S. by crossing the border, there is an automatic 10-year bar in which they must leave the U.S. in order to apply for citizenship. Even if immigrants do decide to undergo this process, they can risk never being granted permission to reenter the U.S. based on

"federal criminal prosecutions" and "grounds of inadmissibility" due to having crossed the border without authorization (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). This directly conflicts with many of the reasons that immigrants leave their home countries in the first place. Though many immigrants come to the U.S. in search of economic mobility, to flee violence, and to seek better educational opportunities for their children, they are penalized, exploited, and criminalized when they arrive and are expected to return to the countries that many of them have left in search of survival.

Access to State License/Photo Identification. Given the difficulties, and in some cases, the impossibility of receiving legal status in the U.S., many undocumented immigrants are not able to obtain their state identification/driver's licenses (Navarro, 2015). This can inhibit their ability to travel in a train or plane, to request medications at the pharmacy, and to drive legally in the U.S. (Navarro, 2015).

Limited Employment Opportunities. Undocumented immigrants are also faced with limited employment opportunities since they do not have the necessary paperwork to work legally in the U.S. This can often lead undocumented immigrants to work for companies who exploit their labor. For example, in his book, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation*, Gonzales (1990) finds that farmworkers, many of whom are undocumented, have historically been exploited in the agricultural fields. These workers are often paid less than the minimum wage laws for their labor while also being exposed to harsh working conditions. Exposure to pesticides has led to serious health issues, and in some cases has led to death (Ferris & Sandoval, 1997; Lopez, 2007). Atkin (1993) states that exposure to pesticides can also lead to illnesses such as "typhoid, infectious hepatitis, and dysentery," among others (pp. 29). Workers have also been exploited by working more than eight hours under the scorching sun, often without any breaks for food or water. Victor Villaseñor describes the conditions as being "treated like animals"

(Ferriss & Sandoval, 1997, pp. 22). Due to the legal status of these workers, it can be intimidating to challenge their working conditions in courts for fear of deportation.

Economic Hardships. As was mentioned earlier, many undocumented individuals experience limited occupational opportunities due to the limitations they face with working legally in the United States (Daftary, 2018; Enriquez, 2015). According to Enriquez (2015), "estimates suggest that they earn 14-24 percent less than their documented peers" (p. 941). These economic inequalities lead many mixed-status families to experience poverty and/or low-income households which can then affect individuals' educational opportunities, health disparities, ability to pay immigration fees, and beyond (Daftary, 2018).

Limited Access to Social Services. Despite the fact that undocumented immigrants pay taxes and contribute to the government funds that are utilized for public social services, they are often barred from seeking access to these services. As an undocumented individual, there is an exhaustive list of social services that cannot be accessed including access to welfare, food assistance, and healthcare (Brabeck et. al., 2016). Aside from these services, research shows that undocumented parents do not take advantage of the little resources they do have access to for fear of exposure and deportation (Page & Polk, 2017). Though children of undocumented immigrants who are U.S. citizens do qualify for state and federal social services such as early childhood education programs and Medicaid, parents often still fear being asked about their status and/or that they may face legal repercussions if they take advantage of these services for their children (Abrego, 2019; Brabeck et. al., 2016; Chavez et. al., 2012). Some undocumented parents also fear that taking advantage of social services that their citizen children qualify for will impact their ability to seek a legal pathway in the future (Castañeda, 2019).

Misconceptions surrounding Undocumented Immigrants

Economic. Contrary to the belief that undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes, recent economic studies find that undocumented immigrants contribute billions of tax dollars into the U.S. economy, whether it be via sales tax, payroll taxes or federal taxes with the use of an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, ITIN (Nadadur, 2009; Lipman, 2006; Banks, 2013). In his economic analysis, Nadadur concludes that undocumented immigrants positively impact the U.S. economy as consumers and employees in the U.S. labor market (Nadadur, 2009). Similarly, Hinojosa (2005) estimates that immigrants spend 90 percent of their wages in the U.S., therefore circulating thousands of dollars into the U.S. economy. Undocumented individuals cannot claim social security and retirement funds due to their legal status, therefore, these additional funds are utilized by the state and country in other ways.

Criminalization of Undocumented Immigrants. Many scholars argue that undocumented immigrants can often be harshly criminalized in U.S. society (Abrego, 2019). For example, media portrayals of undocumented immigrants being arrested and/or detained by Immigration Enforcement and Customs (ICE) can send certain messages to the general public regarding the "criminal status" of undocumented immigrants – that undocumented immigrants should be seen as criminals because they broke the law when entering this country illegally. The reality is that undocumented immigrants often immigrate to the U.S. without proper documentation because they do not have the luxury of waiting in a nonexistent line for applying to be a legal citizen, as they flee situations related to poverty and violence, among many other valid and urgent reasons. The idea that all undocumented immigrants are criminals is a serious misconception of people who are often only searching for employment and/or educational opportunities for themselves and/or their children.

Mixed-Status Families in the United States

There are approximately 4 million children in mixed-status families who are under the age of 18 across the United States and approximately 16.7 million people who have at least one undocumented family member in their household (Abrego, 2019; Delgado, 2021). This means that millions of people in the United States live in mixed-status families, where there is a combination of different legal statuses present in the household (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). Though mixed-status families are sometimes physically separated by national borders, meaning that some family members reside in the United States while other family members reside in another country, this study focuses solely on nuclear families who all currently reside in the U.S. Often, mixed-status families refer to households where citizen children have undocumented parents. Mixed-status families could also refer to various other family situations including citizen children whose parents have U.S. residency, DACA recipients whose parents are undocumented, and/or families where some children are U.S. citizens, some have DACA, and some are undocumented; constituting a diverse range of experiences and limitations for students in mixed-status families across the U.S.

Multigenerational Punishment

Given the legal limitations and structural inequalities that undocumented immigrants face in the U.S., Enriquez (2015) introduces the concept of "multigenerational punishment," which she defines as, "a distinct form of legal violence wherein the sanctions intended for a specific population spill over to negatively affect individuals who are not targeted by the laws" (p. 939). Enriquez (2015) posits that students in mixed-status families who hold U.S. citizenship still share the limitations of their family members when it comes to laws related to deportation, driving, travel, employment, and economic hardships, as well as lack of access to social services (Brabeck et. al., 2016; Chavez et. al., 2012; Daftary, 2018).

Deportation. Though citizen children cannot legally be deported under U.S. laws, it is important to note that if their undocumented parents are deported, then they may need to leave the country as well (Enriquez, 2015). In her study, Enriquez (2015) finds that some mothers "planned to take their children with them if they were deported," whereas other families planned to leave their children in the U.S. with a family relative (p. 945). Enriquez (2015) suggests that even though deportation proceedings target undocumented immigrants, there is a "shared potential for deportation as citizen children" (p. 945). Similarly, if parents decide to undergo the legal process and are penalized with el castigo/the punishment, also known as the 10-year ban, this could be another way in which citizen children might be imposed with oppressive laws not intentionally meant for them. Lastly, the ways in which U.S. citizen children may fear deportation and/or family separation just as their parents do, is another example of multigenerational punishment (Enriquez, 2015).

Inability to Travel. Enriquez (2015) argues that "citizen children share in their undocumented parents' inability to travel" because as a child, it can be difficult to travel domestically and internationally without their parents (p. 947). Even though citizen children are not restricted from travelling, "their young age and dependence on their parents often translate[s] to a shared inability to travel" (p. 947). Enriquez (2015) further argues that travelling plays a major role in developing social and cultural capital. Therefore, because citizen children in mixed-status families are often unable to travel due to their parents' legal status, they are not able to "develop the same social and cultural capital" as their peers, which can then impact their ability for economic and social mobility in the future (Enriquez, 2015, p. 947).

Employment. Due to policies such as E-verify, it can be difficult for undocumented immigrants to attain a secure job that offers financial stability. Though U.S.-born children are not

directly prohibited from legally working in the U.S., given the financial dependence between parent and child, they are still affected by their parent's limited employment and economic opportunities (Enriquez, 2015). Multigenerational punishment posits that these limited employment opportunities may have a substantial impact on the future employment, educational, and economic mobility opportunities U.S. citizen children (Enriquez, 2015).

Another example of multigenerational punishment centers the experiences of migrant children in mixed-status families who often accompany their parents to work in agricultural fields. Though U.S. citizen children have access to job opportunities that are safe and secure, migrant working conditions often expose children of undocumented parents to harsh conditions such as sun exposure, exposure to pesticides, and potential health issues over time; thereby fostering a discourse surrounding the impact of limited employment opportunities on children in mixed-status families (Gonzales, 1990).

Economic Hardships. Economic hardships can also lead mixed-status households, including citizen children, to experience stress, fear, and anxiety as they struggle to survive in this capitalistic society. Again, though these economic "sanctions are intended for undocumented immigrants, the consequences of this economic instability are experienced broadly within the family context," (Enriquez, 2015, p. 948). The limited resources and opportunities that citizen children have access to due to these economic constraints can impact their ability to generate economic wealth in the future (Enriquez, 2015).

Limited Access to Social Services. If undocumented parents cannot access social services related to education, healthcare, and beyond, this can lead their citizen children to be unaware of the state/federal services that they may qualify for. Accurate information and resources that explain access to these social services are critical for citizen children in mixed-

status families. For example, often, students who are U.S. citizens and have at least one undocumented parent, are uncertain as to whether they qualify for federal or state financial aid given their parents' legal immigration status. If schools do not make an effort to explain these financial aid policies via a "FAFSA Night" and/or by sharing other presentations related to federal and state aid, then it can be difficult to know what kind of financial aid students in mixed-status families qualify for and/or if they can access a college education at all. Access to this information is important to ensure that students and parents are aware of the social services they can utilize.

Multigenerational punishment has not been examined in the context of education, thereby creating a need for research in this area. This dissertation study fills this gap in the literature by exploring the different ways that multigenerational punishment can also impact the educational goals, experiences, aspirations, and decisions of students in mixed-status families. Whereas previous research has found evidence of multigenerational punishment in the above-mentioned areas including 1) Deportation; 2) Inability to Travel; 3) Limited Employment Opportunities; 4) Economic Hardships; and 5) Access to Social Services, this study argues that when taking all these areas into account, the effects of multigenerational punishment can also punish U.S. citizen children of undocumented parents throughout their schooling experiences. For example, if a parent is deported during their child's K-12 or higher education experience, this may have a negative impact on the child's academic performance due to the stress, anxiety, and trauma of losing their parent(s). Students who are U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants may also choose to forego employment opportunities granted to them with a college education in order to stay close to home due to their family's situation.

The Effects of Multigenerational Punishment on Mental Health

The effects of multigenerational punishment can often cause a lot of stress for U.S. citizen children with undocumented parents as they learn to navigate and recognize their U.S. Citizen privileges. These different levels of privilege can consequently lead to a negative impact on their mental health (Abrego, 2019; Brabeck & Sibley, 2016; Brabeck et. al., 2016; Brabeck et. al., 2016; Chavez et. al., 2012; Daftary, 2018; Dreby, 2015; Giano et. al., 2018; Lovato et. al., 2018; Shreffler et. al., 2018). The research questions explored throughout this study hypothesize that the psychological effects of multigenerational punishment can spill over to impact educational pursuits.

Recognizing Privilege. Abrego (2019) discusses the privilege, responsibility, and guilt that U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families often carry with them. Citizen children in mixed-status families witness the realities of their undocumented loved ones regarding fear of police and deportation, unequal access to social services, and awareness of structural inequalities facing their undocumented siblings when accessing a higher education (Abrego, 2019). Abrego (2019) states that, "witnessing their loved ones' suffering is difficult and informs their legal consciousness in ways that [can] make them feel alienated from their own citizenship, sometimes filling them with a desire to resist its associated privileges" (p.664) Given the guilt that children with undocumented parents often experience, it is important to think about the ways in which these children may forego educational opportunities, such as pursuing a college education, in order to avoid acting on the privileges they have, knowing that their undocumented family members do not hold those same privileges. The impact this sense of guilt has on student academics and higher education experiences is one area explored throughout this dissertation study.

Embracing vs. Resisting U.S. Citizen Privileges. Abrego (2019) suggests that there are two ways in which citizen children in mixed-status families can engage in legal resistance when recognizing their privilege as U.S. citizens. One of these ways is by taking full advantage of the privileges granted to them as U.S. citizens and when possible, sharing these resources with undocumented family members. For example, Antonio in Abrego's study finds ways to protect his undocumented family members and share his privileges with them by 1) driving his parents around so they do not risk getting pulled over, 2) working to help his undocumented sister pay tuition fees for college, and 3) sharing the financial aid he receives as a U.S. citizen with his older undocumented siblings who do not have access to these financial resources. Abrego (2019) and Louie (2012) refer to this form of sharing benefits as "the immigrant bargain" (p. 664). This sharing of federal student aid is a form of multigenerational punishment within the context of education because it does not allow Antonio the full financial privileges of going to college since he chooses to share those funds with his siblings. Other examples of the impact of multigenerational punishment on student academics are explored throughout this study.

Contrarily, some citizen children in mixed-status families might engage in legal resistance by rejecting the opportunities and privileges they are entitled to as U.S. citizens. Abrego (2019) finds that the pressure and guilt of being one (or one of few) family members who have heightened access to opportunities and resources solely based on their U.S. citizenship status can be "unbearable" for some folks (p. 664). Abrego (2019) states that citizen children who experience this immense pressure can "sometimes forgo higher education or well-paid employment, precisely the benefits only available to them," which can then "be damaging to their own and to their families' well-being" (p. 664).

The first research question of this study examines the ways in which U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families understand their educational experiences, expectations, and aspirations, thereby further exploring the potential impact of resisting certain U.S. privileges when it comes to educational opportunities. This study consequently fosters a discussion about how to support U.S. citizen children with undocumented parents as they ponder their higher education decisions and the educational resources available to them as U.S. citizens.

Both of these situations "demonstrate the legal violence that not only affects undocumented immigrants, but also U.S. citizens in their midst" (Abrego, 2019, p. 664). Therefore, it is important to note that multigenerational punishment can be seen in both of these examples: 1) when citizen children share the resources they have access to as U.S. citizens; or 2) when citizen children attempt to forgo their privileges and opportunities due to the guilt and pressure they encounter as the only members who have access to these privileges. Again, both of these examples also provide insight regarding the ways in which multigenerational punishment transcends to impact the educational experiences of Latinx college students in mixed-status families.

Mental Health. There are several research studies which have also shown the negative impact that social, economic, and bureaucratic inequalities can have on the mental health of children and parents in mixed-status families (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016; Brabeck et. al., 2016; Brabeck et. al., 2016; Chavez et. al., 2012; Daftary, 2018; Enriquez, 2015; Potochnik & Perreira, 2010; Vargas & Ybarra, 2017). Scholars concur that citizen children in mixed-status families undergo significant stress which negatively impacts their psychological, physical, and emotional health (Daftary, 2018; Enriquez, 2015; Chavez et. al., 2012). This study adds to the current literature by exploring how the negative impact of multigenerational punishment on the mental

health of students in mixed-status families plays a significant role in the ways they understand and navigate their educational opportunities.

Often, these psychological and emotional strains are instigated by fear of deportation and/or family separation. Enriquez (2015) suggests that even though citizen children may not need to fear deportation for themselves, they constantly worry about their parents and other family members who are vulnerable to deportation. For example, when driving, citizen children may acquire behaviors similar to their parents such as looking out for police cars and/or checkpoints (Enriquez, 2015). This is one example of the way that fear of deportation can extend to citizen children. The stress and anxiety of fearing deportation may also negatively impact their ability to do well in school.

The psychological and emotional stress that students in mixed-status families experience due to concerns for family member(s) and/or parent(s) that are undocumented are forms of multigenerational punishment. Whereas some students choose to take advantage of the privileges granted to them as U.S. citizens, other students do not act on these privileges because they feel as though it is unfair to their undocumented family members. Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin, & Murcia (2016) state that, "as U.S.-born citizens, these children should be enjoying every privilege and advantage of their citizenship; yet they are at a disadvantage because of the ways in which their parents are marginalized" (p. 246). Chavez et. al. (2012) augment this discussion by stating that "children are often the unintended victims of [anti-immigrant] rhetoric and policy" (p. 647). Though pursuing a higher education may provide U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families with the possibility of social and economic mobility, it may be a difficult avenue to pursue while undergoing the psychological impact, emotional stress, and sense of guilt that citizen children may be experiencing. This dissertation study aims to further understand these complexities in

order to find ways that institutions may support and facilitate access to higher education for these students.

Aside from the repercussions that multigenerational punishment can have on citizen children, many mixed-status families often have to face ridicule, discrimination, and/or hostility due to the misconceptions that surround mixed-status families in the U.S., which is yet another issue that students in mixed-status families may be facing within their school settings. Often, these misconceptions are perpetuated by the news, media, and in some cases, by government authorities, especially in the era of Trump.

Whereas state and national policies target undocumented immigrants, research suggests that these limitations can negatively impact the children of undocumented immigrants as well (Enriquez, 2015; Castañeda, 2019). Given these findings, it is important to engage in research which focuses on the impact that multigenerational punishment can also have on the academic experiences of students in mixed-status families. In order to address this need in the research, one of the research questions for this study explores how national, state, and institutional immigration policies impact Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education. It is important to note that the existing literature regarding the generational impact of these state and national immigration policies provides important background information for further exploring the impact of multigenerational punishment on student academics and college decisions.

Education

Overview of Latinx Students in U.S. Education

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), Latinx/a/o students comprised approximately 28 percent of all K-12 students in 2020. Roughly 82 percent of Latinx

students successfully attained a high school degree in 2019, an increase from 75 percent in 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). The National Center for Education Statistics (2022) also estimates that approximately 3.3. million Latinx/a/o students are enrolled in postsecondary institutions across the U.S., constituting 20 percent of the student population at U.S. colleges and universities, one-fifth of all postsecondary students. Lastly, it is estimated that about 20 percent of Latinxs between 25-29 years old had earned a bachelor's degree in 2021 (Mora, 2022) and approximately 24 percent of Latinx adults 25 and over had earned an associate degree or higher in 2018 (Excelencia in Education, 2020).

When focusing on students in mixed-status families, research finds that there are approximately 3.9 million children in the U.S. educational system who have at least one undocumented parent (Pew Research Center, 2016; Passel & Cohn, 2016). This accounts for approximately 7.3 percent of the total K-12 student population in the U.S. It is unclear how many K-12 students have immigrant parents who are U.S. residents. Data shows that Latinxs make up the majority of the entire immigrant population in the U.S. and are estimated to make up approximately 90 percent of the undocumented immigrant population in the U.S. (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). This data suggests that the majority of children in mixed-status families are of Latinx origin.

Additionally, there are about 725,000 undocumented children in the U.S. (Passel & Cohn, 2016; Zong & Batalova, 2017). According to Perez (2015), approximately 122,600 high school seniors are undocumented every year. Gonzales (2008) and Perez (2015) concur that approximately 65,000 of these students graduate from high school each year and only 31,850 of these students are likely to attend a postsecondary education (Gonzales, 2008; Perez, 2015). Factors related to socioeconomic status and institutional barriers often force many undocumented

students to pursue employment opportunities after high school so that they can financially assist their parents and/or financially support themselves (Figueroa, 2012). This leads scholars to believe that there are a minimal number of undocumented students who graduate from college due to financial, systematic, and bureaucratic barriers, including limited access to state and federal financial aid, lack of sense of belonging, and experiences with discrimination (Contreras, 2009; Suárez-Orozco, Katsiaficas, Birchall, Alcantar, Hernandez, Garcia, Michikyan, Cerda, & Teranishi, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), approximately 5-10 percent of undocumented students pursue a higher education, while the remaining 90-95 percent go straight into the workforce.

Educational Outcomes of Latinx Students in the U.S.

Several studies concur that disparities exist among the educational outcomes of Latinx students with differing ethnic backgrounds (Lutz, 2007; Nuñez & Kim, 2011; Bohon et al., 2006). For example, Lutz (2007) found that students of Mexican descent were less likely to graduate from high school compared to their other Latinx peers. Students of Mexican descent were also less likely than their peers to enroll in a four-year institution (Lutz, 2007). In a similar manner, Nuñez & Kim (2011) found that Latinxs from Central and South American backgrounds are more likely to enroll in a 4-year institution than Latinx students of Mexican descent (Nuñez & Kim, 2011). Cubans consistently held the highest educational levels among all Latinx groups (Bohon et al. 2006; Lutz, 2007; Kao & Thompson, 2003).

Studies which have focused on the educational attainment of Latinxs based on their immigrant generational status have also acquired mixed findings. Some studies have found that educational attainment increases with each immigrant generation (Zsembik & Llanes, 1996; Kao & Thompson, 2003). Others have argued that second-generation Mexican and

Latinx immigrants are more likely to pursue a college education than first and third-generation immigrants (Keller & Tillman, 2008). Contrarily, some studies have found that recent immigrant arrivals achieve higher levels of educational attainment compared to second and third-generation immigrants (Stamps & Bohon, 2006). Several other studies have found that immigrant generational status does not impact educational attainment for the Latinx population (Gonzales et al., 2013; Jasinksi, 2000; Lutz, 2007; Kao & Tienda, 1995).

It is difficult to discern patterns regarding the educational attainment of Latinx immigrants based on generational status because this population is vastly diverse. For example, second-generation immigrant students with undocumented parents have very different experiences than second-generation immigrant students whose parents are naturalized citizens or U.S. legal residents; this difference is one limited area of research that is explored throughout this study. Given this limitation, it is important for researchers to continue studying the impact that immigrant generational status may have on educational attainment.

Gonzales et al. (2013) explore generational differences even further by studying the context in which Latinx immigrants have settled. The authors in this study find that Latinxs living in emerging immigrant communities hold high college-going aspirations, but unfortunately do not view their ability to go to college as equally high, due to perceived barriers and limited resources (Gonzales et al., 2013). Contrary to these findings, Stamps and Bohon (2006) find that Latinx immigrants who live in new Latinx immigrant destinations achieve higher educational attainment levels than those who live in established immigrant gateways (Stamps & Bohon, 2006). The combination of these studies suggests that even though Latinx immigrants in emerging immigrant gateway cities do not view college as attainable as Latinx immigrants in immigrant destinations, they tend to achieve higher levels of education.

Again, it is important to apply an intersectional approach to these research studies by acknowledging the diversity among immigrants based on generational status, citizenship status, age, and gender, among other identities, in both emerging and established immigrant gateways. By acknowledging these intersectional identities, one can gain a better understanding of the educational attainment and aspirations based on the various identities that Latinx immigrants may have. Though this study acknowledges the intersectional identities of second-generation immigrant students when exploring their educational experiences and aspirations, more research with an intersectional lens should be conducted to further explore these experiences based on whether they reside in an emerging or established immigrant gateway.

Latinx Students' Access to Higher Education

Several studies have found that Latinxs possess high educational aspirations and place a strong value on higher education (Bohon et al., 2006; Hill & Torres, 2010; Kao & Thompson, 2003). These studies have also found that though Latinx students aspire to pursue a postsecondary education, they are often limited from reaching this goal due to financial hardships, unfamiliarity with the college application process, and limited access to information about college, among other limitations (Bohon et al., 2006; Hill & Torres, 2010; Kao & Thomspon, 2003; Jasinki, 2000; Martinez & Cervera, 2012; Nuñez & Kim, 2012).

Research also shows that Latinx students are most likely to attend community colleges, but often have a difficult time transitioning to four-year universities (Keller & Tillman, 2008). This research has prompted recommendations from scholars to create a partnership between 4-year universities and community colleges with the intention of creating a direct pipeline from 2-year colleges to 4-year universities (Rivas, Perez, Alvarez, & Solorzano, 2007).

Furthermore, because a predominant number of Latinx/a/o students come from first-generation college-going backgrounds, they are often unaware of the steps needed to acquire a higher education. Kimura-Walsh et al. (2009) found that school resources and information for college are unequally dispersed only to high-achieving Latinx students, leaving those who do not achieve within the top ten percent to seek this information on their own. Despite the numerous factors working against Latinx students from accessing a college education, studies show that college enrollment rates among this student population have reached new highs at 4-year colleges with a recent decline in numbers due to the pandemic (Mora, 2022).

Education Policies that Facilitate Access to Higher Education for Latinx Students

There are numerous federal, state, and institutional policies that have been implemented with the purpose of facilitating access to higher education for historically underrepresented students, including racially minoritized students, low-income students, and first-generation students, among other marginalized student populations.

Several national programs aim to increase college enrollment and graduation rates among historically underrepresented students in the U.S. Some of these programs are briefly described below:

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). GEAR UP is a national program intended to develop a pathway to college as early as 7th grade. This federal grant provides support services to high poverty middle and high schools for a time span of 6-7 years. Though program services vary across schools, most provide access to scholarships, entrance exam fee waivers and preparation resources, and college campus visits, among other resources intended to prepare students for college (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). The College Assistance Migrant Program provides support services to students with farmworking backgrounds in their first year of college. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2022), services include "outreach to persons who are eligible, counseling, tutoring, skills workshops, financial aid stipends, health services, and housing assistance." These 5-year grants serve approximately 2,000 students each year.

Federal TRIO Programs. The Federal TRIO Programs provide outreach and support services to underprivileged students including low-income students, first-generation college students and students with disabilities. TRIO Programs include: 1) Educational Opportunity Centers, 2) Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement, 3) Student Support Services, 4) Talent Search, 5) Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs Staff, 6) Upward Bound, 7) Upward Bound Math-Science, and 8) Veterans Upward Bound. Though each of these programs offer a variety of different services, all are intended to create a pipeline from middle school to higher education for underprivileged students (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

Many states have also implemented their own programs and policies to ensure equitable access to higher education within their respective states. Some examples of these state programs are described below:

Washington State - College Bound Scholarship. The College Bound Scholarship provides financial assistance to middle school students who plan on pursuing college after graduating from high school. The scholarship covers the average tuition costs and fees at over 65 postsecondary institutions in Washington state (Washington Student Achievement Council, 2022). Students must make a pledge to 1) graduate from a Washington State high school, 2) have

no felony convictions, and 3) apply for FAFSA or WASFA their senior year in high school. This state scholarship is currently open to undocumented and DACA students.

Indiana State - 21st Century Scholars Program. Funded by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the 21st Century Scholars Program provides eligible students with four years of paid tuition at any 2-year or 4-year higher education institution in the state of Indiana. In order to qualify for the 21st Century Scholars Program, students must: 1) Be an Indiana resident, 2) Be a U.S. citizen or authorized immigrant, 3) Be enrolled in 7th or 8th grade at the time of applying, and 4) Meet income eligibility guidelines. The overall goal of the 21st Century Scholars Program is to encourage low-income and middle-income students to access and pursue higher education (21st Century Scholars, 2022).

Wisconsin State - Wisconsin Tuition Promise. The Wisconsin Tuition Promise is expected to go into effect beginning Fall 2023. The program aims "to increase the number of state residents who graduate with a bachelor's degree – especially first-generation students and those from low-to-moderate income families throughout Wisconsin – thereby improving individual lives and communities and helping meet the state's workforce needs" (University of Wisconsin System, 2023). The scholarship is intended to cover tuition and fees for students enrolling in any of Wisconsin's public universities, except for UW-Madison. Students must be Wisconsin residents and their families must make no more than $62,000 in order to qualify.

Some institutions have also stepped up to offer support programs for students from low-income, first-generation, and/or racially minoritized backgrounds. Scholarship programs implemented by Indiana University, the University of Washington, and Texas State University are described below:

Indiana University - GROUPS Scholars Program. The GROUPS Scholars Program aims to "increase college attendance among first-generation, underrepresented students at Indiana University" (Indiana University Bloomington, 2023). Since 1968, the program has provided academic, financial, and social support to first-generation college students via services such as "advising, tutoring, and enrollment in specialized courses" (Indiana University Bloomington, 2023). In order to qualify, students must: 1) Be an Indiana resident, 2) Be a U.S. citizen or authorized immigrant, 3) graduate high school with a minimum 2.5 GPA, and 4) meet income guidelines. Additionally, students must apply and be selected to be a part of this program.

University of Washington - Husky Promise. The Husky Promise "guarantees that all tuition and fees will be covered by grant or scholarship support" for students who are 1) Washington State residents, 2) Meet eligibility criteria for the Pell Grant, 3) Complete their FAFSA or WASFA, and 4) Enroll full-time (at least 12 credits). The promise specifies that if tuition costs and fees are not covered by federal and state grants, then the University of Washington will cover the difference via institutional grants or scholarships. The Husky Promise is only valid for 12 quarters, which is equivalent to 4 years of undergraduate studies. Undocumented and DACA students currently qualify for this policy.

Texas State University: Bobcat Promise. The Bobcat Promise aims to increase access to higher education for first-year students whose income does not exceed $50,000 (Texas State University, 2023). The policy provides free tuition and mandatory fees for 15 credit hours up to eight semesters (fall, spring). Students must be accepted to Texas State University and must complete their FAFSA each academic school year, in order to qualify.

Each of these programs offer support services to help low-income, first-generation, and racially minoritized students successfully pursue their higher education aspirations. Support

services include financial assistance, tutoring, assistance with completing the FAFSA, college campus visits, and access to advisors, mentors or other institutional agents who can provide guidance on college application processes, among many other services. It is important to note that some of these federal, state, and institutional programs require a social security number; thereby limiting access to these programs for undocumented students. Furthermore, though U.S. citizen students in mixed-status families often qualify for these programs, they may not take full advantage due to misinformation and/or because they are unaware of these opportunities.

Retention Strategies for Latinx Students

Though Latinx students are enrolling in colleges and universities at higher rates than ever before, research shows that institutions struggle to retain these students (Montalvo, 2012; Banks & Dohy, 2019; Hernandez & Lopez, 2005). Retention as defined by Montalvo (2012) refers to "the successful process of completing a bachelor's degree" (p. 239). Systemic barriers include increasing tuition costs, limited access to financial aid and scholarships, and issues of racism, among others (Montalvo, 2012; Banks & Dohy, 2019; Hernandez & Lopez, 2005). These issues complicate higher education attainment for Latinx students who come from low-socioeconomic status and first-generation college backgrounds (Hernandez & Lopez, 2005; Osegura, Locks, & Vega, 2009; Thile & Matt, 1995; Pappamihiel & Moreno; 2011; Gonzales, Brammer, & Sawilowsky, 2015; Montalvo, 2012; Medina & Posadas, 2012).

A review of the literature on retention provides five main strategies for retaining students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students. These strategies include 1) Financial Assistance, 2) Mentorship Programs, 3) Hiring Faculty of Color; 4) Retention Support Programs, and 5) Institutionalizing Safe Spaces (Hernandez & Lopez, 2005; Osegura, Locks, &

Vega, 2009; Thile & Matt, 1995; Pappamihiel & Moreno; 2011; Gonzales, Brammer, & Sawilowsky, 2015; Montalvo, 2012; Medina & Posadas, 2012).

Financial Assistance. Though several programs, policies, and scholarships provide funding with the purpose of increasing college enrollment rates, it is often difficult for Latinx students from low-income backgrounds to secure funding for additional years beyond their first year in college (Montalvo, 2012; Banks & Dohy, 2019; Hernandez & Lopez, 2005; Osegura, Locks, & Vega, 2009; Pappamihiel & Moreno; 2011; Medina & Posadas, 2012). This can create financial barriers for students to successfully complete their undergraduate studies. Though some students work full-time or part-time jobs to maintain financial stability while in college, studies find that it can be difficult for students to balance their schoolwork and job responsibilities while in college (Banks & Dohy, 2019). Therefore, scholars suggest that it is important for institutions to continue providing financial assistance opportunities throughout students' college trajectories (Montalvo, 2012; Banks & Dohy, 2019; Hernandez & Lopez, 2005; Osegura, Locks, & Vega, 2009; Pappamihiel & Moreno; 2011; Medina & Posadas, 2012). Some institutions, such as the University of Washington and Indiana University Bloomington, currently have policies in place to provide this continuous financial support for a selected group of students.

Mentorship Programs/Opportunities. Research shows that mentors are critical in providing academic, emotional, and professional support for students of color when pursuing a higher education (Thile & Matt, 1995; Hernandez & Lopez, 2005; Banks & Dohy, 2019; Osegura, Locks, & Vega, 2009). Institutional mentors are critical in ensuring that students are aware of the financial and academic resources needed to enroll and graduate from college. Mentors can also refer students to educational and internship opportunities they may not know

about otherwise, gaining social capital networks that may aid future career options (Hernandez & Lopez, 2005).

Hiring Faculty of Color. Institutions that make an effort to hire Latinx faculty and/or faculty of color aid in providing Latinx/a/o students with faculty whom they can relate to and/or whom they can reach out to as mentors to help them navigate the college experience (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Medina & Posadas, 2012). By hiring more faculty who identify as Latinx/a/o, students are able to see themselves represented within the institution leading students to feel a sense of belonging on campus (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Medina & Posadas, 2012). If institutions fail to hire Latinx/a/o faculty, this can lead Latinx students to believe that higher education is not a space for them, which can be detrimental when these students consider applying to college and/or while undergoing their studies.

Retention Support Programs. Programs that are intended to provide support services throughout students' college experience often provide a much-needed foundation for students to successfully matriculate throughout their college journeys. Programs such as TRIO Student Support Services offer advising, tutoring, and mentoring services that are critical to supporting first-generation, low-income students throughout their college trajectories (Osegura, Locks, & Vega, 2009). Though CAMP only provides financial and academic resources throughout students' first year in college, one study found that CAMP students were more likely to continue onto their second year compared to all Latinx students at California State University (Ramirez, 2012). Ramirez (2012) posits that this is due to the "positive learning environment" and "strong sense of community" that CAMP establishes for its students within the first year, which they can then transfer to their future years in college (pp. 10). This finding, along with other research,

suggests that implementing retention programs positively impacts student enrollment and retention in college.

Institutionalizing Safe Spaces. Lastly, institutions that foster safe spaces for historically underrepresented campuses also increase student retention rates among these student populations (Gonzales, Brammer, & Sawilowsky, 2015). For example, institutions that support the implementation of cultural centers, ethnic studies courses, and/or culturally responsive pedagogies on their respective campuses are on the right track towards cultivating inclusive campus cultures that provide marginalized students with a sense of safety and belonging, while also offering additional support services for these students to access if/when needed (Gonzales, Brammer, & Sawilowsky, 2015; Medina & Posadas, 2012).

The discrepancy between the number of Latinx students who enroll in college compared to those who graduate from their respective institutions, suggests that higher education institutions can do more to support the academic outcomes of Latinx students, especially students who have DACA or are undocumented. Research suggests that there are different ways institutions can implement retention strategies including, but not limited to, financial support, mentorship opportunities, hiring faculty of color, retention support programs, and institutionalizing safe spaces. This study additionally explores how institutions can continue supporting these policies and programs to address the needs of Latinx students with undocumented parents as well.

Education Policies Impacting Latinx Undocumented Students

At the national level, there is one law which provides access to K-12 education for undocumented students. National laws that guarantee access to higher education for undocumented students are currently nonexistent. Furthermore, undocumented students do not

qualify for federal financial assistance to enroll in college, despite often meeting income guidelines.

Plyler v. Doe (1982). In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled that undocumented immigrants have the right to access K-12 educational institutions throughout the U. S. in the Plyler vs. Doe case (Gonzalez, 2008). This case was a historical landmark because it allows undocumented students to have educational rights in the U.S. up through their high school education. This ruling consequently allows undocumented students to graduate from high school but does not guarantee their access to higher education (Glenn, 2011).

Some states have implemented policies with the intention of facilitating access to higher education for undocumented students, while others have implemented laws that hinder access to postsecondary institutions in their respective state. Currently, there are three states including Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina which strictly prohibit enrollment to any of their public postsecondary institutions. State tuition and financial aid laws are described below:

In/Out-of-State Tuition Policies for Undocumented Students. Undocumented students are often barred from accessing higher education because they do not have the financial means to pursue college (Abrego, 2006; Buenavista & Chen, 2013; Perez et al., 2010; Contreras, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; Diaz-Strong et al., 2011). Given the national political context, undocumented students do not qualify for federal financial aid and often have difficulties securing scholarships which fully cover their costs for college (Pérez, Cortés, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Currently there are seventeen states in the U.S. that mitigate this barrier by allowing undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition (National Conference of State Legislators, 2021). Six states including, Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri and South Carolina, prohibit in-state tuition rates for undocumented students (National

Conference of State Legislators, 2021). In states where this policy is not specified, it is implied that undocumented students are required to pay out-of-state tuition rates. This is a significant barrier for undocumented students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds because they do not have the financial resources to afford a higher education.

State Financial Aid for Undocumented Students. There are currently eleven states which have implemented policies to diminish financial barriers for undocumented students by allowing them to access state financial aid (National Conference of State Legislators, 2021). Some of these states "allow public universities to utilize private sources of funding to support financial aid to undocumented students" (National Conference of State Legislators, 2021).

Financial difficulties are one of the prime challenges for undocumented students in acquiring a higher education today. State laws govern the ways in which undocumented students can or cannot access college. Though in-state tuition policies decrease the intended cost of higher education for undocumented students, they do not completely eliminate financial barriers. Some states provide state financial aid intended to reduce equity gaps, but access to these financial resources is limited and not all undocumented students are promised with these funds to pursue higher education avenues.

Latinx Students in Mixed-Status Families

Educational policies which explicitly refer to Latinx students who are U.S. citizens in mixed-status families currently do not exist. However, it is important to note that the national, state, and institutional policies listed above impact these students in many ways. For example, the Urban Institute (2019) posits that immigrant families are more likely to have lower incomes, even though they tend to work significant more hours. This research suggests that students in

mixed-status families are more likely to live in low-income households and therefore, qualify for federal and state programs intended to increase college opportunities for low-income students.

Latinx students in mixed-status families may face additional pressures when it comes to their academic experiences. Emotional and psychological stress, limited educational opportunities, and fear of family separation are some examples of the ways in which multigenerational punishment can impact the academic aspirations and achievement of Latinx students in mixed-status families.

Multigenerational Punishment Revisited – Impact on Academics

Emotional stress can affect the academic experiences of students in mixed-status families (Chavez et. al., 2012). For example, in their study, Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin, & Murcia (2016) found that children between the ages of 7-10 who had undocumented parents performed lower on test scores than their peers who were not in a mixed-status family. Similarly, another study found that children who had at least one undocumented parent held negative views about their ability to achieve academic success compared to their peers (Shreffler, et. al., 2018). These studies suggest that even though children who are U.S. citizens may not face the same educational barriers that undocumented immigrants face, especially when pursuing a higher education, many do face psychological stress that can negatively impact their academics and perceived academic ability. Therefore, this study aims to address the specific ways in which psychological and emotional stress can consequently impact the academic experiences of students in mixed-status families.

Not only do children who are in mixed-status families live in constant fear and stress related to their family members' legal status, but they are also often affected academically due to limited educational opportunities. In conjunction with studies regarding preschool attendance among Latinx/a/o families, Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin, & Murcia (2016) find that undocumented

parents do not take advantage of educational services, such as preschool, Head Start, and other pre-kindergarten programs at the same rate as parents who have legal status. This preschool gap can have significant implications when students begin their schooling trajectory because they may already be academically behind some of their peers who did have access to these programs (Brabeck et. al., 2016). Furthermore, Enriquez (2015) found that students in mixed-status families were often not able to take advantage of extracurricular activities due to cost, consequently limiting their opportunities to cultivate the social and cultural capital needed for future upward mobility. By eliciting the stories of students in mixed-status families, this study provides valuable insights regarding the ways in which limited educational opportunities and access to educational services may impact students in K-12, thereby influencing their experiences when applying to college, going to college, and graduating from college.

Lovato et. al. (2018) further examined the experiences of children whose parents had been detained or deported. They found that children who had experienced forced family separation had "poor grades and low attendance at school due to fear of further family separation" (p. 113). Dreby (2015) and Abrego (2019) similarly found that some students whose parent(s) had been deported were forced to drop out of school and work so they could provide a source of income for their households. Some students who had lost a family member to deportation experienced "discrimination from teachers and classmates through derogatory statements," while other students referred to their school as a "safe haven" where they could cope with the emotional difficulties (Lovato et. al., 2018). The support and trust that teachers, staff, and counselors provided for these students allowed the students to "feel a sense of belonging" in the school and provided a safe place for students outside of their homes (Lovato et. al., 2018, p. 113). These findings are critical for school administrators, personnel, and other

institutional agents to consider given that schools can provide some sense of protection for these students; therefore, this study addresses the role that schools may need to take on to support a student's academic, social, and emotional well-being after losing a family member to deportation.

One particular study found that children of undocumented parents have lower academic aspirations and expectations than children with parents who are U.S. citizens (Giano et. al., 2018). Compared to students with authorized parents, Giano et. al (2018) found that students who have undocumented parents had a lower sense of belonging in school, lower perceptions of how much importance their parents placed on their education and had lower expectations of graduating from high school (Giano et. al., 2018, p. 287). Other scholars challenge these findings by suggesting that living in a mixed-status household can motivate children to do well in school and to pursue a higher education (Abrego, 2019). Chavez et. al. (2012) suggest that students who have immigrant parents actually have higher educational aspirations and expectations than their peers. In her study, Langenkamp (2019) includes the parent perspective. She finds that immigrant parents have high academic expectations and aspirations for their children, despite the obstacles they perceive that their children may face. These findings are important to analyze because academic aspirations can significantly impact educational outcomes and achievements (Giano et. al., 2018, p. 280).

The contributions of this study expand on the current literature by providing additional perspectives regarding the academic aspirations and expectations of students in mixed-status families and additionally prompts students to think about the ways in which their educational journeys have been impacted by their experiences in a mixed-status family. This study also provides students in mixed-status families with an opportunity to reflect on their educational

journeys and to describe their reasons for pursuing college, while also pinpointing the educational roadblocks and triumphs they have experienced along the way. Gathering this information is critical to creating policies that support students in mixed-status families on their educational journeys.

Education as a Tool for Activism – Latinx Students Rejecting the Status Quo

Despite the misconceptions, challenges, and limitations that mixed-status families must learn to navigate, they have proven to be a resilient community. The misconceptions that undocumented immigrants and their citizen children face in their workplaces, schools, and beyond can often prompt activism efforts among mixed-status families. Furthermore, when anti-immigrant policies are implemented, such as out-of-state tuition policies for undocumented students and/or state laws barring undocumented immigrants from obtaining a driver's license, these can also often serve as a catalyst for undocumented immigrants and their families to engage in political protests/demonstrations and lobbying efforts as they advocate for equitable policy changes.

Several scholars highlight the activism that immigrant families have engaged in to advocate for their communities (Abrego, 2008; Abrego, 2019; Figueroa, 2012; Gates, 2017; Gonzales, 2008). Gates (2017) draws specific attention to twelve undocumented mothers in the Pacific Northwest who have continuously participated in civic engagement at the state level by speaking with state representatives about important issues affecting their communities, including but not limited to in-state tuition for undocumented students and permission to retrieve driver's licenses. Similarly, Gonzales (2008), Abrego (2008), & Figueroa (2012) find that undocumented students and their U.S. born siblings also engage in activism to resist the policies which negatively affect their lives. Gonzales (2008) and Abrego (2019) also find that undocumented

students and the children of undocumented immigrants often identify their parents' sacrifices as a motivator for pursuing a higher education.

Current research suggests that most students in mixed-status families engage in activism efforts. By exploring the ways that students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences in K-12 and higher education spaces, this study provides important insights regarding the ways in which activism may, or may not, have an impact on student academics and how students balance these efforts with their schooling demands.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) provide theoretical frameworks central to promoting the educational equity of Latinx students in mixed-status families in this study. CRT and LatCrit critically examine the structural inequalities, in the form of laws and policies, that oppress marginalized populations in U.S. society (Bernal, 2002). According to Bernal (2002), these theories "challenge the dominant discourse on race, gender, and class as it relates to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice, subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups" (p. 109). Both theories aim to dismantle these structures in pursuit of social justice (Bernal, 2002); thereby creating a theoretical framework to address the research questions of this study.

LatCrit expands from CRT and focuses on the injustices that the Latinx population face with respect to "race, class, gender, and sexuality, while also acknowledging the Latinx experience with issues of immigration status, language, ethnicity and culture" (Perez Huber, 2010, p. 79). The intersecting identities of participants in this study are critical to understanding their educational experiences in the U.S. Therefore, LatCrit was utilized as a complementary

framework to CRT throughout this study because of the ways in which it places a special significance on these intersectional identities.

There are five major components of CRT and LatCrit include: 1) The centrality of and intersectionality of race and racism; 2) The challenge to dominant ideology; 3) The commitment to social justice; 4) The centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) The interdisciplinary perspective (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Each of these tenets were applied when exploring the two research questions of this study: 1) How do Latinx college students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations? 2) How have national, state, and institutional immigration policies impacted Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education?

The Centrality and Intersectionality of Race and Racism

The first tenet of CRT and LatCrit provides a foundation for discussing the implications of race and racism in attaining a higher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). This is especially important for Latinx/a/o students who pertain to mixed-status families because their intersectional identities, based on race, ethnicity and skin color, impact the ways in which they view their ability to attain a higher education. The higher education system was designed to exclude students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students, identities that all of the participants in this study identified with. Therefore, CRT and LatCrit provided a framework for thinking about these racist structures and how they are working against the students who participated in this study, leaving students with no other option than to resist the status quo and persist in an institution that was meant to exclude them. The stark inequalities among the experiences of Latinx/a/o students on college campuses, often with intersections of

race, immigrant status, and socioeconomic status, reflects the first tenet of LatCrit theory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000).

The Challenge to Dominant Ideology

The second tenet of CRT and LatCrit focuses on challenging the status quo. The educational system has established a dominant ideology which emphasizes certain types of knowledge in the classroom, often with disregard to the contributions that people of color have made in the United States and beyond. Educational narratives related to "objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity" are problematic because they "act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society" (Delgado & Bernal, 2001, p. 313). These ideologies are challenged throughout this study to address the needs of students in mixed-status families with a critical examination on power and privilege. This tenet was especially applied when thinking about the national, state, and institutional immigration policies that impact Latinx college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education. These immigration policies have been created to reflect the economic and social interests of the dominant group in the U.S., consequently instilling fear and punishment among the student participants in this study. Yet, student participants did not accept the status quo. Instead, they challenged these ideologies by creating a space for themselves within institutions that upheld colonized ways of thinking. Within these spaces, students protested inequitable policies affecting them and their families, advocated for themselves, and joined communities that upheld their interests as students of color. The mere presence and enrollment of these students on their respective college campuses was a challenge to the dominant ideology.

The Commitment to Social Justice

The goal of this study is to propose policies that will transform the educational status of Latinxs is the U.S. by providing more access to higher education avenues. These proposed policies are aimed at working towards a more equitable and just curriculum, culture, and system for applying to, enrolling, and graduating from a higher education institution. The social justice lens of CRT and LatCrit is applied to this study when providing recommendations for institutional policies and creating avenues to higher education for Latinx students in mixed-status families (Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera 2005). Furthermore, social justice was often at the center of the ways in which Latinx students understood their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations. Not only were they pursuing a higher education to challenge generational poverty and pursue social mobility, but also to prove to this country that their parents deserve to be in the U.S. without fear of deportation, and that their parents' lived experiences being exploited and denied human rights are not socially just when compared to the privileges of U.S. citizens.

The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

This study highlights the experiential knowledge of students in mixed-status families by centering their voices, their experiences, and their stories regarding their educational and life journeys. The counterstorytelling component of CRT and LatCrit amplifies the stories of Latinx students from mixed-status families to better understand their schooling experiences as well as how these experiences might affect their opportunities to achieving a higher education and pursuing post-graduation plans. These stories also draw attention to the ways in which students resist structural inequalities by aspiring to achieve a higher education, thereby directly addressing research question one in this study.

The Interdisciplinary Perspective

Lastly, this study weaves research from various disciplines including education, immigration, policy, sociology, and health disciplines, in order to provide a holistic understanding of the academic experiences of Latinx students in mixed-status families. This interdisciplinary perspective thereby provides comprehensive insight behind student decision-making processes before, during, and after college.

LatCrit and Critical Race Theory (CRT) provide a framework for analyzing power, privilege, and oppression within the context of national, state, and institutional policies directed toward Latinx/a/o immigrants (Daftary, 2018). According to LatCrit & CRT, these immigration policies are designed to uphold white privilege and oppress people of color in the United States, creating a power dynamic at the institutional level that excludes and ostracizes the student backgrounds included in this study. Yet, they continue to persist. At the same time, activist efforts have continuously fought for and successfully enacted policies like scholarship and college access programs, that challenge the power dynamics traditionally held by higher education institutions. LatCrit & CRT provide a framework for amplifying these counternarratives and challenging dominant ideologies. Weaving the five tenets of LatCrit throughout this study provides a critical lens and connects the stories of participants to broader societal systems that either hinder or facilitate access to higher education for these students.

Conclusion

The literature surrounding Latinx/a/o undocumented immigrants and individuals in mixed-status families reveal the many difficulties and inequities that these individuals face in the U.S. on a political, economic, and academic level. Given this review of the literature, this dissertation study focuses on the experiences of Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families, specifically with regard to their academics. Though most studies focus on the impact

that multigenerational punishment can have on student academics and psychological well-being at the K-12 level, this study explores the impact that multigenerational punishment can have on access to higher education, retention in higher education, and post-graduation plans for students in mixed-status families. Furthermore, because education has historically been one avenue for oppressed populations to pursue social mobility and to fight for social justice issues, this study will propose educational policies aimed at supporting the needs of these students in schools as a way to promote educational equity for students in mixed-status families.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action

This dissertation study was completed with a critical methodological orientation from Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action (Habermas, 1984). Habermas introduces the concept of the Lifeworld and the System and makes a connection between the two in order to better understand people's communicative acts and experiences (Habermas, 1984; Dennis, 2018). This theoretical framework underpins action oriented toward understanding (Habermas, 1984; Dennis, 2018), thereby providing a foundation for my study to center an inclusive, diverse, and equitable dialogue. Furthermore, the interview process is meant to establish a dialogue in the form of conversation between the interview and the interviewee; thereby, applying an epistemological tool to understand and center the interviewees experiences (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016).

Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action complements LatCrit, the theoretical foundation for this study, because it aims to level the playing field as much as possible when engaging in research with participants. Similarly, LatCrit aims to diminish the power dynamics and institutional structures that hinder society from centering the voices and experiences of marginalized students (Bernal, 2002). By utilizing Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action in relation to LatCrit, this study provides a solid foundation for identifying equitable strategies to better support students in mixed-status families achieve their higher education goals; strategies that were introduced by participants themselves and that were prompted by exploring the implications of existing educational policies on students. Furthermore, when we focus on listening to the stories of the most vulnerable in our society, we are able to catalyze change that is oriented towards social justice, an over-arching goal of this dissertation study.

Lifeworld and the System

According to Habermas, lifeworlds are created by communication in which his theory of Communicative Action emerges (Habermas, 1984). Habermas theorizes that all knowledge is structured communicatively (Dennis, 2018; Habermas, 1984). Communicative Action Theory, therefore, suggests that individuals produce meaning-making interpretations based on their communicative acts with other people and that the purpose of communicative acts is to achieve understanding (Dennis, 2018; Habermas, 1984). Given this theoretical basis, the interviews for this study were facilitated with the intention that one should create communicative opportunities to understand each other.

When discussing the Lifeworld, Habermas suggests that it is internal to us, that it is how we conceive of the world, and that we are always in the lifeworld (Verde, 2017). Because I share lifeworlds with my participants, I was able to interact with their meaning-making process through interviews. Despite this, Habermas suggests that meaning is always uncertain (Dennis, 2018). In other words, when two or more people engage in dialogue, the meaning behind the words said can never be fully understood by all who are engaged in the dialogue. This means that as much as I wanted to fully understand my participants' meaning-making process, I could only get a glimpse into their perspectives and experiences. The knowledge gaps of the meaning behind participants' words were slightly mitigated by my own background knowledge and experiences of having grown up in a household with undocumented parents and siblings. Utilizing this theory allowed me, as the researcher, to apply a first-person perspective to the interviews that were conducted in order to engage with participants' meaning-making processes and to learn from their claims to truth.

My participants' claims to truth emerged from their experiences in the lifeworld when sharing happy, challenging, and vulnerable moments with their families. Their claims to truth were also shaped by their experiences living a mixed-status family and the ways in which they were impacted academically, emotionally, physically, and mentally. These experiences are not external to them; they are how participants live their lives and therefore, shape their claims to truth (Dennis, 2018; Habermas, 1984).

Habermas also discusses the System which is entwined with the lifeworld and is objective/external to us. The System refers to the economic, political, and bureaucratic institutions that impact humans' ability to live freely and facilitates the ways in which communicative action occurs between people in the lifeworld (Bohman, 2017). Whereas the lifeworld creates a space for humans to communicate freely, the System impacts this communicative act by primarily orienting understanding toward success, rather than toward understanding (Dennis, 2018). In other words, the System coordinates actions in a way that allows people to get what they want and/or need (i.e. food, money, etc). The System, therefore, can serve as a helpful way for humans to interact and communicate with each other on a grand scale. One example of the System is the use of currency which provides countries with a common structure for people to exchange money for goods, needs, and/or services; a communicative act that would be difficult to implement on a grand scale without the System facilitating people's universal use and understanding of currency.

Habermas defines the lifeworld as "social integration involving the coordination of action in face-to-face contexts at one social site", whereas "system integration involves the coordination of action between sites separated by time and space," (Dennis, 2018). Whereas the lifeworld involves face-to-face interactions, the System refers to the conditions in which actions take place

across time based on one's access to resources, money, and power. Whereas the basis of the lifeworld is to understand one another, there are complexities that arise in our society that can sometimes impede one's ability to achieve actions solely oriented toward understanding. The System is then introduced as a way to "coordinate actions with one another" (Habermas, 1984).

Habermas (1984) suggests that actions oriented toward understanding can sometimes be too difficult to achieve, in which case, the System integrates money (i.e. economic systems) and power (i.e. elected officials) as a way to mediate actions oriented toward understanding. When it is too difficult to work something out via communication, the System contributes as a way to mediate these difficulties. For example, whereas it would be difficult for all 329.5 million people in the United States to address societal issues (i.e. economy, climate change, gun control, etc.) by communicating with each other one-on-one, the System, as Habermas suggests, imposes a structure that allows for people in the United States to vote for elected officials that can then address societal issues on everyone's behalf. In the U.S. context, U.S. citizens and residents give elected officials the power to make decisions on the country's behalf because this would be impossible to do by individually conversating with one another. Though the System provides a helpful way to coordinate actions with one another via elected officials, there can still be issues that arise from the System as well. One of the issues that comes to the forefront and is at the center of this study, is that the political structure created in the United States does not provide undocumented immigrants with the right to vote. Therefore, there is a dissonance here between the ways in which the System intends to work, with the ways in which it actually works. It is important to note that Habermas does not take into consideration whether the actions oriented toward success in the System are morally right or wrong; it is purely descriptive. Though these actions exist in a way that have implications for people's lives, they do not serve to make claims

related to values, truths, or identity. It is the Lifeworld where the basis for these claims take place.

Lastly, people's actions oriented toward success do not always align with those that would take place if the System was not imposed on the lifeworld (Bohman, 2017). The System can drive people to act in a way that may not allow for equal power relations depending on their identity claims and the social conditions they are living in. Alternatively, the System can also drive people to work together towards a more equitable society; one of the ways the System can create this structure is via policy implementation methods. Despite the ways in which the System impacts communicative acts, this study leans on Habermas' concept of the lifeworld, which posits that all actions are oriented toward understanding and that all understanding draws on the lifeworld (Verde, 2017).

Given these important considerations, the methodological foundation for this study does not include an in-depth analysis of the System as described by Habermas, but instead acknowledges that participants' experiences do indicate System phenomena when sharing their stories navigating FAFSA, immigration policies, socioeconomic struggles, among other experiences. Instead, the methodological orientation for this study focused on understanding participants in order to explore ways in which educational institutions can better serve the needs of students from mixed-status backgrounds.

The distinction between the lifeworld and the System is important to make because it provides a critical orientation to the qualitative approach that was taken for this study. When analyzing the stories shared by participants, the researcher engaged in communication as action oriented toward understanding, while acknowledging that there could be other methodological considerations at play, including action oriented toward success. The main intent by the

researcher was to center the stories of participants in a way that foregrounded their claims to truth in the study. Furthermore, given the ways in which this research aims to mitigate power dynamics as much as possible in the research process, while also addressing societal inequalities, this methodological orientation allowed the researcher to integrate a critical approach and social justice values into their research process.

Ideal Speech Situation

My approach to facilitating interviews was oriented towards the assumptions for an Ideal Speech Situation introduced by Habermas as 1) openness to hearing other's perspectives, and to 2) mitigating power dynamics as much as possible (Dennis, 2018). Because my privileged identities as a light-skinned, heterosexual, cisgender, U.S. citizen, Ph.D. candidate may have thwarted the power relations between my interviewees and myself, it was important for me to connect with my participants on a personal, human level, rather than as a researcher/participant. The most important aspect of the interview process for me was to *listen*. I wanted to ensure that participants felt heard, that they felt comfortable, and that they did not feel pressure to respond a certain way. Engaging in the meaning-making process with my participants was largely made possible because of their thoughtful, honest, and authentic responses to my questions.

It is important to note that I began my recruitment efforts by reaching out to friends and colleagues who I had known for over a year and who I had built strong relationships with before or during my time in graduate school. The established trust and rapport that had already been created before requesting interviews created a space for participants to comfortably share their vulnerabilities, fears, experiences, and thoughts with me. These prior relationship bonds and recruitment methods were helpful in establishing an Ideal Speech Situation throughout the interview process. The meaning-making process was not perfect, but through our communicative

action, I was able to engage in the meaning-making process and interpret what my participants were trying to convey to me about their experiences living in a mixed-status family.

Addressing Criticisms of Habermas

Though Habermas' Ideal Speech Situation places emphasis on equalizing power dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee, some have criticized this methodological approach given that racism, sexism, ableism, heteronormativity, and other social injustices are historically engrained and rampant in public institutions, including K-12 schools and higher education. Identities related to race, class, sex, gender, and immigration status, are prevalent issues that have historical roots in U.S. systems via genocide, slavery, segregation, among other tragic moments in U.S. history. These issues of inequality continue today and cannot be diminished when working toward an Ideal Speech Situation (Jeffres, Jian, Lee, Connally, & El Seikali, 2011).

Others have critiqued Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action as being overly simplistic, ideological, and patriarchal (Bohman, 2017). For example, by applying a feminist lens to Habermas' work, Fraser (1985) suggests that Habermas does not mention anything about gender in his writings of Communicative Action Theory; thereby missing a key identity and power dynamic that impacts social interactions.

Given these methodological limitations and critiques, this study incorporates CRT and LatCrit, which align with Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, to provide a more critical perspective on the ways in which unequal power relations operate throughout the interview process and to acknowledge this unequal foundation when in conversation and when conducting analysis. Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action intertwines with CRT and LatCrit because it aims to dismantle the structures of power that impede historically

underrepresented students from having their voices heard in predominantly white institutions. Habermas' methodological orientation allows researchers to learn from participants as they narrate their life stories while being interviewed, aligning with one major tenet of LatCrit, Counterstorytelling.

Positionality

Part of the meaning-making process suggests that it is always social, that there is always more than one implicit meaning, and that meaningful action will always have intersubjectivity (Verde, 2017). Habermas suggests that intersubjectivity makes the lifeworld possible (Verde, 2017). Intersubjectivity is referred to as "self-awareness in the production of knowledge" and "relies on the assumption that our subjectivities are always present in the lifeworld" (Dennis, 2018). Therefore, as the researcher, it was important for me to think about my own positionality in the research study and how I was making sense of the stories/experiences that interviewees were sharing with me.

Positionality, as defined by Reich (2021), refers to the ways in which researchers "account for the ways their own embodiment and social location matter in the process of designing studies, accessing sites and participants, collecting and analyzing data, and disseminating findings" (p. 577). Positionality requires one to reflect on their own identity, privilege, and position in the research; this reflective process then impacts the decisions that one makes regarding research interests, methodological approaches, formulating interview questions, and analysis techniques utilized, among other research processes (Reich, 2021). Reich (2021) argues that engaging in the reflexive process of positionality allows researchers to gather rich data, to employ an ethic of care in the research process, and to consider power dynamics, which then greatly improves the ways in which the researcher understands the perspectives and lived

experiences of their participants. As I engaged in this research study, I continuously reflected on my positionality as someone who is also in a mixed-status family and who identifies as a first-generation, low-income Latina. Given that I shared several identities with my interviewees, these background characteristics enabled me to better understand some of the subjective claims that participants shared with me.

In my "*Qualitative Inquiry in Education*" course, I had the opportunity to interview one student who identified as a U.S. citizen in a mixed-status family. This interview prompted my self-awareness and critical consciousness at the time, while in the early stages of planning a very personal, emotional dissertation journey. I finally felt like I had met someone who truly understood me and my conflicting emotions of being in a mixed-status family. I wrote the following poem after engaging in this interview and having the opportunity to dive into a deep, reflective process about my positionality in this research. Revisiting this poem throughout my dissertation research process provided an avenue for continuous reflection of my positionality while conducting and analyzing of interviews with friends and peers who shared a very distinct, challenging identity with me:

I say, "Hello. Thank you for doing the interview."
She says, "No problem. Glad I can help."

We eat lunch.
We have enchiladas.

We sit and start talking.
She answers my questions.

I say the term "undocumented."
She winces and takes a long pause before answering.

Big Sigh Here we go.
Here we go.

She talks about her mother.

I think about my mother.

She talks about her brother.
I think about my siblings.

She says she's afraid to lose them.
I wince.

She shares her struggle being in a mixed-status family.
I reflect on my experiences in a mixed-status family.

No more.
No more please.

No more fearing deportations.
No more sitting in a lawyer's office wondering if our families will be torn apart.

We can only dream.
But they're false dreams.

We share these experiences.
We share our activism.

She doesn't know how powerful her words are to me.
She is powerful.

I have found someone who understands me.
I have found someone to share the tears with.

This research study proposal began with a longing for understanding student experiences living in a mixed-status household. My positionality in this research became more and more salient as I conducted more and more interviews and engaged in analytic techniques to understand my participants' experiences in mixed-status households. Due to my positionality and how closely I connected to the topic, I cried throughout every single part of the dissertation process; when reading literature, conducting interviews, analyzing interviews, writing up chapters, and sharing my work with others. I could relate to every single story about the difficult realities of living in a household with undocumented parents. For example, when Camila shared the story of her father's deportation, I cried with her and felt every poignant word that she shared

with me during her interviews. It was a heartbreaking reality that I knew I could face at any moment as well. Camila mentioned she could not share this story with others in her family and social circle because they could not understand. My positionality, in many ways, fortified the strong connections that were made during and after each interview. The realness of who I was and why I was engaging in this topic for my dissertation were felt by my participants in a way that I had not experienced while engaging in previous fieldwork.

Having grown up as a U.S. citizen in a home with undocumented parents and siblings drove my dissertation interests and the honest, authentic stories that I hoped to share through my collaborative research efforts with my participants. As I reflect on my study and the interview analyses, I am aware that my subjectivities as well as my own experiences shaped the way that I understood my participants' stories. For example, Elena's thoughts on the guilt of being a U.S. citizen and having U.S. citizen privileges in a family with undocumented loved ones, resonated with my own thoughts of guilt having grown up with undocumented parents. As I reflect on this process, I am also made aware of the different perspectives my participants held, despite our similar upbringings. For example, whereas some students mentioned the guilt and rejection of traveling to their parents' home countries without them, others, like Mario, shared his thoughts on how this was an experience he wanted to do as a way of channeling his parents' longing for returning to their home country. He felt as though his trips to Mexico were a symbolic way of taking a piece of his parents back to their home countries.

Lastly, as someone who is currently living the realities of being in a mixed-status family, it was difficult to navigate the emotional labor that this study inevitably posed. It was important for myself, as the researcher, to develop coping strategies and ensure my own mental health was taken care of throughout this study.

It is important to highlight my positionality in this research because this study has become a point of self-reflection in the research process and has allowed me to engage in the analysis in ways that an outsider might not understand. Despite my shared identities and my own privileged knowledge of having grown up with undocumented parents, it was important for me to orient my understanding in the way(s) that my participants were understanding their experiences.

Methods

Based on the critical methodological assumptions for this study, I engaged in qualitative methods that align with this orientation. The larger study included 16 participants and 31 interviews with approval from the Institutional Review Board at Indiana University. Whereas 18 individuals showed initial interest in participating, only 15 participants engaged in two separate, one-hour interviews, and one student only participated in the first one-hour interview. The first interview focused on family life and the impact of immigration policies on their families whereas the second interview honed in on K-12 and higher education schooling experiences and the impact of educational policies on their pathway to higher education. (See Appendices A and B). The overall study aims to explore the experiences of Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families and how these experiences shape and/or impact their academic experiences and achievement, as well as their social, emotional, and physical well-being. Additionally, the study aims to explore the impact of current educational policies on students in mixed-status families and to recommend educational policies that facilitate access to higher education for these students.

Participants were recruited via close-knit community and social networks that I had developed with friends, family members, and colleagues who had personally disclosed to me that

they were in a mixed-status family in previous conversations we had (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). I asked if they were open to participating via e-mail and/or text and followed-up with IRB information and consent forms if they agreed to participate. It was of utmost importance to me that participants did not feel pressured to participate, so that was a point I strived to make very clear in each of my correspondences. After each interview, I asked my participants if they could reach out to their friends and family members who also met the qualifications to participate in this study (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). Due to the nature of this study, I did not ask my participants to share any information of folks they knew were in a similar family situation. Instead, I asked if they could let their family and friends know about the study and then reach out to me if they were interested in participating. This method was a comfortable way for me to keep identities safe and to ensure that no one felt outed.

When reaching out to potential participants, I solely reached out to friends and students who I had a strong connection with and/or had already built trust and rapport with. Again, this was a way for me to ensure that I did not reach out to folks who did not know me well and who might feel uncomfortable being reached out to for a study on this topic. This recruitment technique required me to reach out to my personal and social networks, which included colleagues, student organizations, and Latino cultural centers on college campuses.

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four current undergraduate students and twelve individuals who had completed their undergraduate studies within the past twelve years, two of whom were in graduate school at the time interviews were conducted. Thirteen participants identified as female and the remaining three identified as male. Ages ranged from 18-33 years old. By engaging in interviews, my participants and I were able to engage in communicative acts that were oriented toward understanding as Habermas suggests.

All participants identified as having grown up in a mixed-status family in states including Washington, California, Texas, and Indiana. Ten participants identified as U.S. citizens in a household with at least one undocumented parent. Five participants identified as U.S. citizens with parents who became U.S. residents within the last 20 years. One DACA student also participated; her parents were undocumented, herself and one other sister were DACAmented, and her five younger siblings were U.S. citizens. When asked an open-ended question about ethnic identity, two participants self-identified as Latino, four as Latina, three as Mexican-American, two as Mexican, one as Mexicana, three as Hispanic, and one as Hispanic/Latina.

All participants attended predominantly white institutions for their undergraduate studies, except for two students who attended Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Intended majors represented included Civil Engineering, Social Work, Women's & Gender Studies, Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, English, Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Law and Public Policy, and Microbiology. Two participants had graduated from law school and the two students in graduate school were pursuing degrees in Sociology and Higher Education. All participants identified as first-generation college students who grew up in low-income households. Research participant characteristics can be viewed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Research Participant Characteristics

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Home State	Undergraduate Major	Year Graduated
U.S. Citizen Children with Undocumented Parents						
Elena	30	Female	Mexican-American	Texas	B.A. Anthropology	2012
Mario	22	Male	Latino	Washington	B.A. Civil Engineering	2022
Vanessa	23	Female	Mexican-American	Washington	B.A. English	2019
Beatriz	33	Female	Latina	California	B.A. Women's & Gender Studies	2009

Camila	24	Female	Hispanic	California	B.A. Elementary Education	2017
Salvador	29	Male	Mexican	California	B.A. Sociology	2015
David	25	Male	Latino	Indiana	B.A. Elementary Education	2018
Natalia	20	Female	Hispanic	Washington	B.A. Early Childhood Studies	2024
Julissa	19	Female	Mexican-American	Washington	B.A. Political Science	2025
Rosa	23	Female	Mexican	Washington	B.A. Physical Therapist Assistant	2021
U.S. Citizen Children with U.S. Resident Parents						
Rita	25	Female	Hispanic/Latina	Washington	B.A. Sociology	2017
Nancy	27	Female	Mexicana	Washington	B.A. Psychology	2018
Laura	27	Female	Latina	Washington	B.A. Political Science	2015
Catalina	26	Female	Latina	Indiana	B.A. Public Policy	2017
Brenda	26	Female	Latina	Indiana	B.A. Microbiology	2017
DACA Student with Undocumented Parents						
Mariana	23	Female	Hispanic	Mexico	B.A. Social Sciences	2020

[a] All participants lived in mixed-status families in the United States and were not separated from their families by U.S./Latin American borders at the time of their interviews.

[b] All participants spoke English and Spanish.

[c] All participants attended a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) for their undergraduate studies, except Salvador and Camila who attended Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

[d] Nancy and Laura were previously undocumented. They became U.S. Residents in 2001 and 2012, respectively, and they became U.S. Citizens in 2017 and 2018. Nancy had recently graduated college when she became a U.S. citizen and Laura was a freshman in college.

[e] All data shown here is based on the time that interviews took place with each individual participant.

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim with permission from the participants; a thick record was produced for each and was uploaded to the qualitative software program, NVivo. Interview times ranged from thirty-eight to sixty-four minutes. In order to ensure confidentiality and to respect the sensitive nature of immigration stories shared during interviews, participants were asked to provide their respective pseudonyms to be referred to throughout this study (Lahman, Rodriguez, Mendoza, Moses, Griffin, & Yacoub, 2015). Initial research questions and interests were articulated in two interview protocols which identified

covert categories of interest and potential interview questions for each interview. (See Appendices A and B). The interview questions aimed to capture the students' experiences in a mixed-status family, as well as their academic aspirations and achievements. Participants were informed that they could stop the interview at any time or skip any questions they would like. Participants were also provided with a pre-interview questionnaire to learn more about their individual backgrounds. (See Appendix C.) Again, participants were encouraged to skip any questions they did not feel comfortable answering. Due to the current pandemic, all of these interviews were conducted via Zoom and/or by complying with social distancing regulations in a space that was most comfortable for the participants.

Analysis was organized and completed with assistance from the NVivo qualitative software program. The analytical tools used in order to engage in Habermas' meaning-making process included meaningfields, reconstructive horizon analyses, care analyses, power analyses, and emic coding.

Emic coding strategies were particularly helpful when trying to understand how participants construct their own meaning-making processes. In other words, rather than trying to impose a meaning on what the participant said, the researcher aimed to capture the meaning of what was said from the participant's perspective. The researcher engaged in continuous rounds of the emic coding process in order to locate patterns and identify emerging themes from the thick record.

Through meaningfields, I was able to explore the multiple & layered meanings of participant insights. Where there could be several meanings embedded within the participant's chosen words, reconstructive horizon analyses were created; this analytic strategy allowed the researcher to dive deeper into the objective, subjective, and normative validity claims made by

the participant while also analyzing possible identity claims. This process allowed the researcher to make explicit what was implicitly indicated by the participant.

Furthermore, when working toward identifying emergent themes, the researcher noticed an evident aspect of care between the participants and their undocumented parents. This prompted the researcher to engage in care analyses by examining the connections between the participants' inner and outer views when discussing the care they had for their parents (Korth, 2003). The use of metaphors also expanded on the care analyses process; many times, this metaphor process led the researcher to compare participants (children of undocumented parents) to the roof of a home. Whereas you need the foundation of a home (undocumented parents) for it to support its family members, the participants (children of undocumented parents) were often protecting their parents in the same way a roof protects a house from rain, sleet, snow, etc. These types of weather could metaphorically be categorized as financial stress, political climate, etc. Every act of care, such as speaking up/staying silent on topics of immigration in class, staying close to home after graduating with a college degree, engaging in protests/advocacy work, or providing financial resources, among other acts of care, could each be considered a shingle of a roof. All of these acts of care (shingles) combined, work together to provide protection and care for undocumented parents.

Each of these analytic strategies were critical to interpreting interview data and to understanding my participants' sense of the lifeworld.

Validity Techniques

Validity techniques included audio-recordings, member checks, peer debriefing with colleagues, and engaging in reflective processes (Carspecken, 1996). The reflective process consisted of asking myself questions during my analysis. Validity questions related to the

meaningfields I identified included the following: 1) Are these interpretations plausible given an inside perspective; 2) To what extent are the interpretations free of the effect of power between the researcher and the researched; and 3) To what extent do these interpretations put into discourse make explicit the fullest range of plausible meanings (Dennis, 2018). By asking myself these questions, I was able to reflect on the validity of my research and identify areas where there might be potential to dig deeper into some of the participants' truth claims.

Peer debriefing with colleagues, including professors and fellow graduate students, was a recurring process as I worked on the analysis, findings, and discussion sections of my dissertation. These debriefing sessions allowed me to brainstorm ideas out loud and to review any analyses or literature gaps that I felt I might be overlooking. While completing my analysis, member checks were conducted to ensure my participants felt their words were being interpreted in the way they envisioned. For example, some participants were reached out to when coming across a story or statement that had a large variety of meaningfields. Participants were then given the opportunity to clarify, elaborate, and/or expand on their stories/statements, which were then included in the analytic process.

Ethical Considerations

Students in mixed-status families are a vulnerable population and should be protected at all costs. With this in mind, it was of utmost importance for me to establish trust before engaging in interviews with participants. Maintaining the confidentiality of participants by using pseudonyms and keeping interview data saved on my IU Google Drive, a safe virtual space with encryption, were critical for this study. Participants were able to choose the interview location in order to ensure the most comfortable setting for them. For interviews conducted via Zoom, participants needed to be approved before entering the virtual space for an interview. I

continuously reminded participants that they may choose to skip any questions they'd like and could stop the interview at any time.

Methodological Limitations

When thinking through my methods and methodological approach, I was mindful of the fact that some students may not want to engage with this research project in order to protect their families and their identities. Given this important consideration, social media and/or other public outlets for recruiting participants were not utilized. This decision may have limited the participants who had access to information about this study and could have potentially participated.

Lastly, due to my chosen methods and methodology for this study, participants were asked to verbally share their personal experiences in two one-hour interviews. This means that some stories were left unheard to avoid the burden of sharing personal trauma, stories that we should never expect anyone to share. Several students showed initial interest in participating, but ultimately decided they were not ready to share. These unheard stories are also a part of the mixed-status family experience and are the silent, acknowledged voices of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter summarizes the findings of this qualitative study on the experiences of students in mixed-status families. In this chapter I present findings related to the research questions of this study. I begin by sharing results to research question 1 on the ways in which Latinx college students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations. This section is followed by results to research question 2 on the ways in which national, state, and institutional immigration policies impact Latinx college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education. Student participants are referred to by their chosen pseudonym throughout this section to protect participant confidentiality.

As I began interviewing Latinx students in mixed-status families, it became apparent that students in mixed-status families who had undocumented parents before pursuing college had very different experiences than students whose parents had U.S. residency. Though all students in this study identified with being in a mixed-status family, those whose parents had residency by the time they were in high school did not encounter many of the same barriers that students with undocumented parents had to encounter before, during, and after college. For this reason, the first, larger, part of my findings focus on Latinx students with undocumented parents, followed by a section on students with parents who had U.S. residency. There was also one DACA student in this study who identified as living in a mixed-status family and whose experiences were drastically different than all other student participants who had U.S. citizenship. Her story is shared at the end of this chapter.

The findings in this chapter apply Enriquez' (2015) concept of multigenerational punishment to the academic experiences of students in mixed-status families. As discussed in

chapter two, current research focuses on the ways in which multigenerational punishment impacts the mental health, ability to travel, employment and economic mobility, access to social services, and fear of deportation among students with undocumented parents. The findings of this study suggest that multigenerational punishment also impacts the academic experiences of Latinx students in mixed-status families, especially at the higher education level.

The Academic Experiences of Latinx Students with Undocumented Parents

The first research question explored throughout this study included the following: **How do Latinx college students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations?**

Four main themes emerged from Research Question 1 that inform the ways in which students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations. Themes include: 1) Protect Parents at all Costs (Emotional, Physical, Financial, Aspirational, and Cost of Time); 2) The Entanglement of Bureaucracy; 3) Self-Advocacy; and 4) The Importance of Support Systems.

Theme 1: Protect Parents at all Costs

"…because in the end it's my family and they've sacrificed so much so like, I want to be able to take care of them too." -David

Student participants often protected their undocumented parents and family members throughout their K-12 and college experiences, even if it came with an emotional, physical, financial, timely, and/or aspirational cost. This finding suggests that even though undocumented immigrants are the intended target for anti-immigrant laws and rhetoric, these fears and costs spill over to affect their U.S. citizen children as well, especially while in school; thereby reflecting one of the ways in which the concept of multigenerational punishment applies to this

study. Participants felt as though their parents sacrificed a lot for them when immigrating to the U.S. and felt a sense of responsibility to protect and take care of them in return.

Sub-themes that stemmed from these experiences under Theme 1 included 1) the emotional & physical cost; 2) the financial cost; 3) the cost of time; and 4) the aspirational cost of caring for and protecting undocumented parents. Some of the ways that students protected their undocumented parents was by speaking out against anti-immigrant rhetoric in the classroom despite the emotional toll this had on them, paying the financial cost of their education to avoid bureaucratic processes that would place their parents in danger of deportation, applying for scholarships and programs to relieve the financial stress of college for their parents, and foregoing their aspirational goals in order to stay close to home after graduation "in case anything were to happen."

Sub-Theme 1: Protect Parents at All Costs (Emotional & Physical)

[Takes Deep Breath] – Every. Single. Participant.

Student participants shared K-12 experiences in which they faced the emotional cost of prioritizing care for their undocumented parents, specifically when topics of immigration came up in class. Vanessa shares a story of an experience she had in the 6th grade when she addressed her teacher after he perpetuated a false narrative about undocumented immigrants in his class. She states,

> I was in 6th grade and my teacher, was like saying how like undocumented immigrants don't pay taxes and I was like, "I'm pretty sure they do." And I was in the 6th grade, right? So, you'd think I would be like, I don't know, like, like, [sigh], I guess like less sure of how I felt? But I was so positive that he was wrong, you know? And I just remember the kids were all like super shook and I was like, "You guys, like, it's not right." You know? And it was, [takes deep breath] I don't know [RN: as if trying not to cry], it was like, ugh! It was like so annoying!

Vanessa continues by mentioning a letter that her sister prepared for her to inform her teacher of the reality regarding undocumented immigrants and their economic, including tax contributions, to the country. She states,

> Sorry, I just get so like, like, crying and I don't know why. So give me a second. Umm…[pause] Yeah! So I went home [pause] that day and then, umm, I told my sister. And she was like, [pause] "That's wrong!" And she was like, "Okay, give him this paper and tell him, umm, tell him that, he's wrong." And it had information on it. I didn't even read it. But I was like, "Okay." [Begins to cry]. Sorry. [Pause.] I really wanna talk! This is why I like writing better. But yeah. [Takes deep breath] [Long pause] I don't know. Sorry. [Crying] So I, So I did it. So I went. [Continues crying] So I went and I told him [Both Amy and Vanessa are crying] and I gave it to him, you know? And, umm, I just think about like [sniffles], the courage- [Amy sniffles] like it took a lot out of me you know? [Clears throat] It took a lot out of me cause I was just a kid and I was scared. [Takes deep breath while crying] You know, and I remember like being so scared of like what he was gonna say. [Takes deep breath while crying] And umm, [swallows saliva] I mean, it ended up being fine. I shouldn't have been worried in the first place because he was just like, "Yeah," you know? Like, "Okay, whatever," right? And I was like, "Okay." And I felt like good, right? [Takes deep breath] Because like, I had, I had done something.

Though Vanessa was terrified of what she calls "speaking against the authority of the teacher," she felt a sense of responsibility to her sister and to her family to address the misconception that her teacher was communicating to her classmates. She continues,

> And you know, I had like- I was like 12 years old and I was like, I did it. And it was mostly because I felt like a really big sense of responsibility. Right? Because my sister who wasn't there was like, "I'm going to give you this and you're going to tell him." [Starts crying] [Vanessa sniffles] Right? And she's undocumented. So it felt to me like an even bigger responsibility. I had to do this. I don't think I would've done it, you know, if she wouldn't have told me to do it….you know, I've written about this a lot actually because I think it's a very interesting moment. I think that I was [pause] hopeful, right? You know? And in that moment, the only thing that I felt was relief that I had done it. Because like I said, it took a lot of courage out to me. I remember like, I was like, my knees were like shaking. I was like so nervous. [starts crying] [takes deep breath] I was like, "Oh my God, I hate [RN: emphasize "hate" here] this. I hate [RN: emphasize "hate" here] that I have to do this," but you know, I have [RN: emphasizes "have" here] to do this right?

As Vanessa reflected on this story, it was almost as though she was reliving the moment as she spoke. She took deep breaths throughout the story and cried when reflecting on the

courage that her 6th-grade self had to build up to challenge her teacher's comments, only to be dismissed. She talks about the sense of hope she had at the time, that maybe, just maybe, she could change someone's mind about immigration. She later explains the loss of hope she has experienced over time as misconceptions and recent administrations continue to refer to immigrants in a negative light.

Vanessa also describes the ways in which her "knees were shaking," when going up to give her teacher the letter. This story illuminates the ways in which the stress and anxiety of being a child of undocumented immigrants consistently takes a physical toll on their bodies, yet another example of how multigenerational punishment affects students in mixed-status families. Like Vanessa, there was a sense of heaviness on the body that was felt among all participants as they shared their stories.

Mario shares a similar a confrontation he had with his high school history teacher after his teacher used the word, "illegal immigrants," to refer to undocumented immigrants in class. The following excerpt describes what Mario felt as he approached his teacher after class:

> I remember like I wanted to say it out loud [in class], but I was just way too shy. I really wanted to. I just remember my heart was beating [RN: emphasize on beating]. I would not have felt comfortable at all. I was still seeing where I fit in and asking a question like that, it's not really, it wasn't, asking that in front of the whole class, how many enemies am I gonna create by asking this in front of everyone? It took me a lot of fucking courage to talk to him about this. He was very unapproachable. Sometimes I think about having said it in front of class; maybe it would have backed up other students in the class. Like it would make other students feel like I have their back. I just remember my heart was about to pop out of my chest. Cause that shit is hella offensive to me. Cause you're talking about my family, you know? This shit really happened. 200% real. I remember it like it was yesterday.

Mario's story also demonstrates the physical toll of having to sit in a classroom where undocumented immigrants are being dehumanized. As the child of undocumented immigrants, Mario also felt a sense of responsibility to approach his teacher with his concerns about the

language being used in class to refer to undocumented immigrants. Similar to Vanessa, Mario emphasizes the courage it took to confront his teacher and later shares the disappointment he felt when his teacher responded with, “well, that’s the politically correct term, so that’s the term I’m going to use.” This is again another example of the way K-12 teachers dismissed student concerns about class content related to immigration, a major consequence of students acting on the care for their undocumented family members.

As sub-theme one suggests, student participants felt a responsibility to address misconceptions regarding undocumented immigrants in their K-12 classrooms. These stories are consistent with the concept of multigenerational punishment because they demonstrate some of the ways in which speaking up can take an emotional and mental toll on students in mixed-status families. In other words, living in a household with undocumented parents irrefutably places children in a position where they too undergo the emotional and mental toll of what it means to be undocumented in the U.S. Again, though this emotional toll is meant to be inflicted solely on undocumented immigrants, it also ends up negatively affecting their U.S. citizen children, even in school settings.

Sub-Theme 2: Protect Parents at all Costs (Financial)

Once in college, students made decisions out of care for their parents, even if it cost them money. Natalia shares a story of struggling with the FAFSA verification process and making the decision to protect her parents at all financial costs. She states,

> And well the first time I did [FAFSA verification], my paren- dad had to go to the IRS place. And like she- My mom was so worried like, “Oh, there's immigration there!” Like, “No, don't go!” And it was just kind of scary like I didn't want anything to happen to them because of me. And even though they do their taxes like, I guess that possibility of immigration being there, I don't know if it's true or not. But yeah like there was a year where I just didn't, I didn't do any, I didn't file for FAFSA because they had to go [to the IRS office] again, so I just paid.

Natalia shares the way in which she feared for her parents' safety if they needed to go to the IRS office to figure out their tax verification for her FAFSA. Instead of placing her parents in what she and her parents viewed as a dangerous space for undocumented immigrants, Natalia chose to pay for her tuition that semester.

Other ways that students faced a financial cost when protecting their parents was by helping their parents pay for rent/mortgages, food, and/or bills. One student spoke about gifting her parents the stimulus checks she received as a part of the Covid-19 relief funds dispersed by the U.S. government. Since her undocumented parents did not have access to these stimulus checks due to their legal status, despite meeting income thresholds, she felt as though her parents needed the financial assistance more than she did and decided to transfer those funds to her parents. This finding suggests that the economic hardships placed on undocumented immigrants, also impact their U.S. citizen children when helping their parents pay for essentials needed to survive; yet another example of multigenerational punishment. Students took on this financial burden to the extent that they could while undergoing their undergraduate studies and after graduating from college; thereby impacting their access to funds as a college student.

Sub-Theme 3: Protect Parents at All Costs (Time)

Other students also shared stories of caring for their parents while in college by taking advantage of all of the opportunities they had access to, such as scholarships and Running Start, in order to avoid asking their parents for financial assistance. Though not explicitly mentioned, applying for scholarships, college access programs, and state-wide or institutional programs like Running Start, often require a lot of extra time outside of coursework and possible employment demands. The extra time that students spent applying for these scholarships and programs is also one cost they took on in order to prioritize care for their parents. After asking Camila why she

decided to apply for Running Start, a program that allows high school juniors and seniors to take college classes for credit at a nearby community college, Camila stated,

> [Breathes in deeply] So that was right after my dad got deported. And then when he came back. And I, that was when I was like, "Okay I really need to step up my game, and I need to start you know, like working, and you know, doing really good in school," so I was like, these classes are free right now, so I need to take them because later on they're going to be really expensive. So, it was mainly a financial reason, you know, like looking ahead.

Camila knew that Running Start would provide a low-cost option to start retrieving college credits at the high school level and knew this was an important opportunity to take advantage of given her family's financial situation. Camila's story is one example of the different ways that students faced the cost of time in order to avoid placing any financial stress on their parents when pursuing a college education.

Sub-Theme 4: Protect Parents at All Costs (Aspirational)

Student participants also spoke about the ways in which they cared for their parents by changing their post-graduation plans in order to stay close and protect them, costing them their aspirational plans/goals. This was another form of multigenerational punishment that stemmed from the findings of this study. Students often moved back to their hometown after graduation, sometimes prioritizing family over their own career aspirations. The following excerpt is from a conversation with Vanessa describing how she wrestled with pursuing post-graduation plans based on her career goals or fulfilling the sense of responsibility she felt she had to her family.

> Vanessa: Well I, I had always wanted to like go into editing and publishing and like do writing on the side. And that was something that at the time seemed really attainable to me. And I was always like, I know that you had a responsibility to your family. Like that was the Mexican part of me. And the American part of me really wanted to, to do [publishing], right? And that's not what ended up happening. I think because of- Not- Maybe, maybe yeah. Yeah. Maybe like the undocumented part of it. Yeah. Because I thought that- [takes deep breath] I thought that they needed me here.

> Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit more about that? Why do you feel like they needed you?
>
> Vanessa: Because they did. They did. All of my siblings- It felt, it had felt like all of my siblings had abandoned them. [takes deep breath] Umm, they were always talking about how much like they needed me. So I felt a responsibility to come back and help them and I did. That's what happened.
>
> Interviewer: Do you feel like you've helped them?
>
> Vanessa: Yeah. I do.
>
> Interviewer: In what ways?
>
> Vanessa: Uhh, financially, mentally, emotionally. [takes deep breath] You take on a big burden, I think.

Ultimately, Vanessa chose to move back home in order to offer her parents financial, emotional, and mental support. Vanessa continues by talking about the ways in which she has felt a heavy burden to be the child that her parents rely on for help. Interestingly, Vanessa not only shares her thoughts on how her parents' immigration status impacted her choice to stay home; she also discusses her two cultural identities which she describes as having tension with each other. She refers to the "American" part of her as wanting to think about herself and pursue her career goals, whereas the "Mexican" part of her felt as though she needed to fulfill her family responsibility of staying close to home and providing financial, mental, and emotional support for her undocumented parents.

David contemplated a similar decision on whether to pursue career options in a different state after graduation or stay close to home to care for his parents and siblings. He states,

> I came back because I was just so worried about something happening and me not being there, especially for their un- like, their undocumented status. I just felt like, like I need to go back. I need to be back closer to home at least where I had originally thought of like, staying in [college town] or going to like California because have you ever been to Palo Alto? Holy shit! That place- The place is beautiful. There's so much diversity. I felt like one day, you know? But nah. Umm, and I think I'm just like, I've grown into this reality and I've gotten comfortable with it and just accepted it and making the best of it because

> in the end it's my family and they've sacrificed so much so like, I want to be able to take care of them too.

Like Vanessa, David shares his dreams of moving to another city to pursue his career after college, but ultimately decided to stay close to family in case something was to happen. He describes this decision as "growing into this reality, getting comfortable with it, and accepting it." He mentions the sacrifice his family has made in helping him get to where he is now and wants to be able to reciprocate that care by finding a career in his hometown after college, despite his aspirations of pursuing his career in another city.

Rosa also shared one of the post-graduation considerations she made while undergoing her first year in college in order to give back to her parents for all of the struggles they've encountered as undocumented immigrants. She states,

> I thought about joining the military. Umm, just so you know, cause, in order for my parents to have, to get papers, to you know not be undocumented anymore. So that was one of the things. And I remember I had told my parents and they, umm, and, umm, they had told me that I shouldn't do that.

Rosa had heard from a friend that her parents could apply for residency if she joined the military. Though this is one possible avenue for undocumented parents to apply for U.S. residency, it is not guaranteed for everyone. Every immigration story is unique and pathways to U.S. residency or citizenship are only possible for some undocumented immigrants depending on when, how, and how many times they have immigrated to the U.S. among other factors. Though Rosa wanted to follow through with joining the military, her parents discouraged her from moving forward with this plan. When directly asked if she would have made this decision had her parents told her not to, Rosa responded with "I think I would have."

Vanessa, David, and Rosa's stories about the impact their parents' undocumented status had on their post-graduation plans is also one of the ways in which multigenerational punishment

manifested itself in these student's lives. Though student participants did not explicitly refer to the cost of their aspirational plans as a form of "punishment," it is evident that they often felt as though they were sacrificing their career goals in order to stay close to home and provide a sense of safety and protection for their mixed-status families.

Theme 2: The Entanglement of Bureaucracy

"What a F****** Nightmare!" -David

Student participants often found themselves struggling to navigate bureaucratic processes such as knowing how to fill out college applications and the FAFSA in order to pursue college. Several participants used the word "nightmare" when describing their experiences applying for FAFSA; they often did not know how to proceed with the online application without inserting the required field asking for Parent's Social Security Number. Additionally, there was often a lack of knowledgeable staff that could provide students in mixed-status families with guidance on this question. This lack of support required students to bounce from office to office and from staff member to staff member in order to ultimately find a response to their question.

Without being prompted, every student who had undocumented parents spoke about the stress and trauma of applying to FAFSA and undergoing FAFSA verification processes. David states,

> But then, I did [college access program] and I had to get verified for my parents' tax verification process from FAFSA. And no one could help me. Like I would go to the student building and I would say, like, "I don't know what to do. How do I get this verified?" And they're basically just like, "Well we just need your parents' social security number." And I was like, "Well they don't have one. But they still file taxes." So I remember just bawling because I looked at an estimate of what college would be if they did take away my refund and like I was just a hot mess. So, I went and confided in some friends and they basically just told me to suck it up and take out loans. And that made me feel even worse.

This story pinpoints the start of David's experience with the entanglement of bureaucracy. David found himself speaking to various college staff members and student offices before he was ultimately able to figure out the FAFSA verification process on his own. This was a common experience among student participants. None of the colleges/universities that participants attended had a central location where students with undocumented parents felt as though they could get credible and concise information about how to apply for FAFSA and/or how to fill out FAFSA verification forms without their parents' social security numbers. College staff were often unhelpful and prompted students to search for their answers in another location, with a different staff member or office, who also could not answer their questions. This made it difficult for students to know if they qualified for FAFSA and could be detrimental for students who are never able to find the help they need to answer these questions.

David continues by talking about a similar negative experience with FAFSA verification the following year:

> And then my second year, umm, I got like FAFSA help at [the Latino Cultural Center] because there was some guy there. And I was like, "Let me do this right with someone," because maybe then I won't have to get tax verified or have to go through this again. But the person who was there helping at [the Latino Cultural Center] who was supposedly very knowledgeable and like could help, I told him my parents didn't have a social security, like neither of them. And he went like, "That's impossible. Like, how do they file taxes then? They need to have a social." So then at that moment, I was just like, "Okay, thank you." And just walked away and left.

David's experiences suggest that there are individuals in higher education spaces who hold common misconceptions about undocumented immigrants not paying taxes and are also unaware of the steps students in mixed-status families need to take in order to apply for FAFSA. The lack of knowledge on behalf of individuals who are supposed to support and guide students

through the FAFSA process is discouraging for students who seek answers to these questions; ultimately requiring them to figure it out on their own.

Elena also shared the stress she encountered when trying to complete the FAFSA in high school. She states,

> I think, umm, when it came up was with FAFSA and trying to fill that out on my own and just trying to figure out because it said like your parents needed a pin number to log in or something to sign? And I just remember, it asked for your parents social security number, and I just remember thinking like they don't have one. Like they have their tax ID number and I didn't know if I could use that.

Elena knew that her parents paid taxes using their tax ID number but was not sure if she could input this information in place of their social security number on the FAFSA application. Elena also did not feel safe sharing her parent's legal status with teachers or counselors at her high school, leaving her to figure out this process on her own. Ultimately, Elena reached out to the contact information provided on the FAFSA website and was provided with one alternative way to submit her application given her family's situation; she could print out the form, have her parents sign it, and mail it in.

Whereas undocumented immigrants cannot apply for the FAFSA, their U.S. citizen children do have access to this federal funding. David and Elena's experience navigating the FAFSA application reflects another way in which multigenerational punishment limits the privileges granted to U.S. citizen children who have undocumented parents. Though Elena and David qualify for the FAFSA, they were unsure about the process for applying without their parent's social security numbers and could not find anyone to help them complete this application process. The time spent self-advocating and searching for a response to their question is a bureaucratic process that can potentially block some students from accessing the FAFSA solely due to their parents' legal status, even though they qualify for this funding.

Alternatively, Natalia shares a positive experience after sharing concerns with her high school counselor about her ability to qualify for FAFSA. Natalia states,

> Natalia: I think I would say, it started like junior or senior year when I had to start like all my college application stuff, and worrying like, and the FAFSA things and like having and worrying about like, oh they're undocumented. “Will I be able to get money?” or “Will I be able to get help?” or “Does that affect me in any way?” That was probably one of my biggest worries. And that's probably when like I had to tell like a counselor that, “Oh, my parents don't have papers, what can I do?” you know?
>
> Interviewer: Yeah. Do you remember how the counselor responded to that?
>
> Natalia: Yeah! Like, “Oh, it's okay! You can just put zero, zero, zero!” [laughs] Yeah, they're always so nice about it, like, “Oh, just put zero, zero, zero, zeros!” [chuckles] You know? On like my financial aid. Like they're like, “Oh, that's not a problem. There's always like different, like there's more scholarships and then you know there was always also scholarships for those who are first-generation or that have undocumented parents,” so that was pretty cool.

Natalia’s experience offers a completely opposite experience to that of David and Elena’s. Natalia’s experience demonstrates how easy it can be for institutional staff to provide accurate information and reassure students in mixed-status families that they do qualify for FAFSA and what steps to take when asked for parent’s social security numbers on the form.

Theme 3: Self-Advocacy

“Shoot. I don't know whose responsibility it lands on, but somebody should have helped me.”

-Vanessa

Latinx students in mixed-status families were often forced to advocate for themselves when pursuing college degrees by applying for scholarships, seeking out information about college bridge programs, and/or assistance with FAFSA. If their questions were left unanswered by high school or college staff, they continued searching until they found someone who could help. Students understood that if they did not advocate for themselves, their questions would remain unanswered, a failure of the higher education system. Eventually, through this self-

advocacy process, all student participants were able to find someone they could trust to help them navigate different processes related to FAFSA, scholarships, and graduation requirements, among other information about college. Salvador shares a story,

> But then it wasn't until I was filling out the FASFA that it like really, really came up again. Of like I had to figure out what I was going to do because my parents didn't have social securities, so I really had to figure out like what, you know, like what is, what am I going to do! So I, I had to like ask, I had to go around figuring it out by myself and asking people and not knowing who I was going to be able to really ask.

Salvador was ultimately able to find someone who explained how to navigate the FAFSA application by inputting 0's when asked about parent's social security numbers. He mentions the ways in which he had to advocate for himself and "figure it out on his own", many times feeling like he was outing his parent's legal status when asking for help. Salvador's experience underpins the failure of the higher education system to support students from first-generation college backgrounds in navigating bureaucratic processes, potentially discouraging and excluding some students from moving forward with their college plans.

Students also often talked about the challenges of navigating college applications, FAFSA, and other college processes because they could not ask for help from their parents. Vanessa shares a story of the frustration when trying to work with her parents on her FAFSA.

> My parents would give us the forms, the tax forms or whatever, give us whatever we needed. And then I would find somebody else to help me. You know, actually do it, just because, not that they couldn't handle it, but it was just, God, it was a nightmare working with them. [Both laugh] It was always like, "Well, I don't understand this! Well, why don't you go ask this person?" It was like, okay, like, I'll do it, I'll do it, I'll do it. And I don't know. They were just always pressuring you to do things for yourself, which is nice because it makes you, I feel like a little bit more independent. Cause they weren't doing everything for me. I had to figure it out. Right? I had to find people to talk to if I couldn't figure it out.

Though parents often provided emotional support, it was difficult for them to answer questions about college, making it necessary for students to find people who could help them.

Again, Vanessa's story is another example of the ways in which higher education systems exclude underprivileged students from accessing college. Despite their parents' unfamiliarity with higher education processes, students often emphasized the role their parents played in offering words of encouragement as they learned to advocate for themselves. In Vanessa's words, "they were always here to support me, you know, even if they couldn't really help me."

Elena reiterates the lack of support she received during her undergraduate studies after being asked what she wished professors would do to support students in mixed-status families. She responds by saying,

> That's a good question. I don't know what, umm, yeah, I guess that's a good question because I don't know what that looks like. Like I don't know what good support would look like. Because I didn't have it at my undergrad.

Though Elena does not explicitly state the ways in which she had to advocate for herself during her undergraduate studies, she does mention the lack of support she received while at her undergraduate institution as a student in a mixed-status family. This implies that Elena had to navigate higher education with little guidance and support from faculty, leaving her to seek guidance and support from other places like Latinx student organizations, which she mentions later in her interview.

Sometimes, this self-advocacy also came up within family. For example, Camila shares the difficulties she experienced when trying to convince her parents to join her for an informational FAFSA Night held by her high school. She shares,

> I remember there was like a FAFSA night where we could bring our parents and fill out the FAFSA and I remember begging [RN: emphasizes "begging" here] my mom to come, like, "Please mom! Please come!" And finally you know, she caved and I was like, "Okay, we're gonna do this!" And I remember bringing my brother by force. I was like, "You're going to come too and we're just gonna, you know, help, we're gonna figure out how to help you too." And, umm, it took so long. I remember we got there like before everyone else. And all the others left because you know they could do the FAFSA super easy. And then I remember we had to like mail a letter and we had to like sign up for a ID number and all this stuff and we had to like save all of this stuff and my mom was just

> like, “What are you making me do?” And I was like, “It's going to be okay mom. It’s going to be okay. I need to go to college.” But it was a lot of convincing and begging my parents that I could do it.

This experience highlights the way in which Camila had to advocate for herself and her decision to pursue college by convincing her parents that she could do it. In this specific moment, Camila knew that attending the FAFSA Night would provide her with the guidance she needed to complete her FAFSA and did everything she could to ensure that she attended the event. After what she describes as “begging” her mother to join her, she was able to successfully submit her FAFSA by mailing it in.

Theme 4: The Importance of Support Systems

“It’s taken a village.” -Beatriz

Support systems looked different for student participants, and it also looked different depending on who was offering the support. Many students talked about family and friends who often provided words of “apoyo” like “¡Hechale ganas!” or “¡Tu puedes!” Some students talked about the significance of mentors and bridge programs in helping them navigate college. Others spoke about student organizations, Latinx Studies classes, and cultural centers as spaces that offered safety, support, and belonging on college campuses.

Beatriz shared a story of her 8th grade teacher who remains her mentor today. She speaks about the difficulties trying to navigate the transition from high school to college and how her mentor made a significant impact on helping with this transition:

> So I- my eighth grade history teacher was my mentor and she stayed my mentor, she’s still my mentor now. So, in that sense, I was very fortunate, umm, that even- and like my- and, and that’s why I say like indirect because whenever I had a question or like if I didn't feel like “Oh, I could ask because I'm going to out my mom for being undocumented,” like I could ask her first. And so it was always like, “Oh, like is this- like is okay? Like, is this an okay question to ask?” or like, “Is this an okay thing to do without putting my mom’s status like out there?” Umm, and so like one thing that comes to mind was like you know, when I was- and that’s why I

> was like K through 12 and so I guess the transition from K through 12 to college. One thing was like, "Oh, who's going to help me move?" And it wasn't like my mom because like she didn't feel comfortable flying in an airplane. And I was moving from [state] to [state] for undergrad. And so, so, I- I like felt like really alone and like was like, Oh, but then my mentor stepped up and was like, "Hey, like, I'll go with you." And like I'll take two suitcases for you and like I'll help you move and I'll help you take you from the airport to school because the airport from the school was like 30 or like an hour away. And, umm, and just like navigating a lot of it. Like I remember, like crying a lot because, like when I was in that transition phase cause I was like, I don't know what the fuck I'm doing. And like, you know, like I didn't just have a parent that I could be "Hey, like, how-" And like I had a full tuition scholarship for undergrad. But like there was still like housing and books and like flying back and forth from [place] to [place] that I had to worry about. And it wasn't like I could ask my mom because like she wasn't gonna fly out there. She like, I don't know if it's like directly to her status, like immigration status, but she just didn't have the experience to be able to like guide me in the American education system.

Beatriz stresses the positive impact that her 8th grade teacher/mentor had on her as she transitioned from high school to college and beyond. Her mentor offered a safe space for Beatriz to ask questions without feeling like she was "outing" her mother. When Beatriz' mother feared travelling by plane, her mentor stepped up to offer support and guidance as Beatriz learned to navigate travelling out-of-state for college and getting settled in. This story highlights one of the ways that mentors and institutional agents provided guidance that was essential to student success.

Some students brought up the impact of Latinx/Chicanx Studies courses as places of support on campus where they felt comfortable bringing up issues related to immigration. Vanessa shares,

> Chicano Ed Studies, like those classes are really nice because I feel like these topics do get to come up and they do get to come up really smoothly- Or not awkwardly, right? Because you're in your English class and all of a sudden somebody is talking about immigration and it's like, "Whoa!" [Both laugh] "That's not the class for that!" you know. So yeah, because I took one and I remember that, that was one where I felt really comfortable like, ooh, Cesar Chavez, you know, love that! And then you get to learn like, oh, maybe he wasn't that great because, you know, undocumented, he wasn't a huge fan of like undocumented workers. And it just felt

> so right to like talk about undocumented workers in that way, in that context. You know what I mean? Like, Oh, they were underappreciated even then. Even within their own community. Yeah. Yeah. So just, that's it.

Chicanx Studies courses were one of the few places where students felt safe bringing up topics of immigration, often referring to the ways in which these classes highlight the contributions that undocumented immigrants bring to our communities, describe the exploitation and difficulties that they face in the U.S., and analyze the national policies that have forced people from Latin American countries to migrate to the U.S. Vanessa specifically shares her experience learning about Cesar Chavez and his treatment of undocumented workers. She mentions appreciating the way in which these topics "come up really smoothly" in Chicanx Studies. Though these classes were not often talked about within the context of support systems, they embody the essence of feeling supported by offering a safe space to talk about issues directly affecting these students, without a sense of fear or pressure to constantly defend their undocumented family members.

The second research question explored throughout this study included the following: **How have national, state, and institutional immigration policies impacted Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education?**

Three main themes emerged from the second research question which explores the ways in which immigration policies, such as "Safe Neighborhood Acts" and racial profiling laws across U.S. states, impact Latinx college students in mixed-status families. Themes included: 1) How Fear of Deportation Impacts Schooling Experiences; 2) Heightened Anxiety during the Trump Presidency; and 3) Pandemic Conditions for Mixed-Status Families.

Theme 1: How Fear of Deportation for Parents Impacts Schooling Experiences

"I'm scared too" - Camila

In order to fully understand how fear of deportation impacted the schooling experiences of participants, it's important to know their story. One student, Camila, shares a heartbreaking story of her father who was detained after driving to work one day in the hot summer. She was in high school at the time. She shares the following story:

> And [the police] were just saying like, "He's being deported." Like they didn't ask for anything. They just said he's being deported. So they took him, they handcuffed him. They turned off the car. They gave my brother and my cousin the keys and they said you guys could just walk home then. So they walked home and when we got, when they came, they came to the house, they were crying. And this was early in the morning. This was like, I want to say like 6 in the morning. And then, I remember being woken up by my mom and she's like, "Camila, wake up," and I go, "What's wrong?" And like my brother was crying, my cousin was crying. My mom like, she was like about ready to cry. And she goes, "they took your dad," and I was like, "what do you mean," and I remember like, she was like, "They deported him. They took him." And I like look over at my brother and my cousin and I'm like, "What?" And I was already crying by then, you know.

Unable to live apart from his family, Camila's father later returned to the U.S. Though Camila is happy to have her family together again, she lives every day with heavy anxiety, fear, and worry for her father. She states,

> But the anxiety and the fear and the worry, it just like, it never goes away, because I'm always so scared and I'm always like, "Dad," you know like, and I moved out, but I'm always like, "Dad, be careful. Drive safely. Call me if you need anything," you know.

This traumatic experience heavily impacted Camila's decision to stay close to home when pursuing her undergraduate studies. She states,

> So, once I got that scholarship, I was like, this is where I'm going. There's no other choices. Like [public 4-year university near home] is not going to give me a full scholarship. I'm not going there. And I remember [friend] and [friend], you know, they were like, "We're going to [public 4-year university away from home]!" And they were so excited, you know? And I was like, "Ahh, they're so lucky! They get to live in a dorm! They get to do all this fun stuff." And I was like, I have to stay close to home. I can't leave. I was still scared to, for anything bad to happen, you know?

Camila's decision to stay close to home was one of the ways that fear of deportation for her undocumented parents heavily impacted her college decisions. Even though she wanted to follow her friends to a college that was three hours away from her hometown, she chose to stay so that she could always be reachable in case "anything bad were to happen," which she later specifies as if one or both of her parents were to be deported.

Student participants came from states that have historically provided police officers with the ability to detain or arrest suspected undocumented individuals and/or immigrants who may have a deportation order. Recently, Washington and California passed laws that prohibit this partnership between local police and immigration officials with the Keep Washington Working Act of 2019 and California's SB 54 in 2017. At the same time, Indiana and Texas have worked to strengthen this partnership with Indiana's passing of SEA 590 in 2011 and Texas' SB 4 in 2017. Though the majority of student participants did not specify immigration policies that their home states have enacted to incite fear of deportation, their lived realities of constantly worrying about that fear was palpable. They were well aware of how these laws have the power to separate their families. Even though Washington and California now have policies that limit collaboration between local police and immigration officials, the fear of family separation remains. Nationally, there has been an increase of laws that allow police officers to arrest suspected undocumented individuals across states, stricter border enforcement laws, and increasing presence of ICE and detention centers in predominantly immigrant communities; these are all policies that heavily impact mixed-status families and the student participants in this study.

Though these anti-immigrant laws are meant to harm and punish undocumented immigrants, Camila's story is a heartbreaking example of one of the ways that the immigration system perpetuates multigenerational punishment by not only instilling fear among

undocumented immigrants, but their U.S. citizen children as well. The fear of deportation, as Camila's story reflects, also negatively impacts student's ability to focus on school; thereby not only affecting their psychological wellbeing, but also affecting their ability to thrive academically.

Theme 2: Heightened Anxiety during Trump Presidency

"It's been hell. I knew the moment that Donald Trump was elected that- like I remember crying in my kitchen because I realized that my mom's safety was in danger." - Beatriz

Without being prompted, every student participant shared memories of the heightened anxiety they felt when Trump became president. Trump's political campaign was powered by anti-immigrant rhetoric, often scapegoating undocumented immigrants as the reason for the country's economic, social, and political issues. His proposed policies emphasized the need for increased border patrol, stricter border enforcement laws, the expansion of a border wall, among many other anti-immigrant policies. Some of the immigration policies that were enacted during Trump's presidency included sanctions against countries that he viewed as a threat, separating families at the U.S./Mexico border, and the termination of DACA. Though many of the other policies that Trump ran on were not actually implemented, he represented a portion of the country who spews hate towards undocumented immigrants, referring to them as second-class citizens, depriving them of human rights, and making it clear that undocumented immigrants are (socially) not welcomed in the U.S. This theme also brings multigenerational punishment to the forefront. Though Trump's proposed policies were specifically meant to target undocumented immigrants in the U.S.; they also inevitably heightened anxiety and stress levels among U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants.

The anxiety stemming from Trump's campaign and presidency heavily impacted participants' mental wellbeing as they tried to balance college with the stress of living under an administration that was directly threatening their families. Camila shares the way she struggled to get through the day when Trump was declared president. She states,

> It was tough because, you know, at the time when he was sworn into presidency, I remember I was student teaching at [a school]. And I remember being so nervous about going the next day. I was like, "Okay. I have to pretend everything is okay." I have to pretend like, you know, like everything is okay and, you know? And I remember walking in shaking a little bit. And this was years after my dad got deported. And I was still shaking. And I was like, "Okay, I can do this! I can do this!" And I remember walking down the hallway and there were teachers like going "Yeah! Trump won!" And I was just like, [imitates gasp] Like, oh my God! Like, I had to go into the bathroom and like take a couple of deep breaths. I was like, "Okay, [takes deep breath], it's okay. They [Takes deep breath.] They're a different race. They don't understand." I was just like, just breathing you know, just breathing.

Camila felt as though she had to "pretend everything was okay," while she was broken inside. The way in which she describes other teachers celebrating Trump's presidency indicates the harmful environment that this school clearly had on her, but also potentially had on other students in the school who have undocumented family members. This is also another moment when we see the toll that this stress places on the body. Camila describes the ways in which she was shaking, telling herself "I can do this!" and ultimately needing to take some time in the bathroom to take deep breaths and cry.

Similarly, Mario describes the campus culture he experienced as a freshman at his university while Trump was campaigning to become president. Mario states,

> One particular experience that I had was my freshman year here at [university]. Um, there was a group of very right-wing Republicans who decided to basically build a little prop and it was a wall and tagged on it was "Build that wall," and you know walking by that your freshman year? You know, you want to be welcomed, you want to fit into this campus life, and seeing that your first year, really like brings you back to reality…and motivates you, you know? Like, this is the reason why

> you're doing this, is you're doing this for your family. And that experience will probably stick with me and I'll always think about that.

Mario describes the way in which he felt unwelcomed and like an outsider on his college campus. As a freshman on campus, he felt uneasy about the way in which this student organization had little regard for his family members. Mario also mentioned how this experience served as a moment of reflection on the significance of his mere existence on a college campus. When asked about how he felt regarding the institution's response, he described the lack of accountability that the university placed on the student organization:

> I think [the university administration] didn't respond in a manner that was appropriate. I think the leader of that organization was still on campus, he was still running that group, and I think there was talks of doing it a second time actually. And I mean, if I was [university], I would have expelled that student for organizing that rally, you know? But I mean, they let that rally happen in the first place. You have to get these things processed. You have to you know, present this to [inaudible], to the board officials and they let that happen. You can't really. They were on their side.

Mario ultimately felt as though the university had taken the side of the student organization, with no regard for students who felt threatened and/or unsafe by the demonstration. He mentions wishing that the university would have taken more action to reprimand the student and/or simply avoid this situation in the first place. He did not feel as though his university cared for him, ultimately heightening his anxiety on campus even more.

Theme 3: Pandemic Conditions for Mixed-Status Families

"I feel like undocumented families right now are struggling so much. And I feel like we need to do a better job of helping out." -Camila

Because participant interviews took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, many students spoke about the ways in which the pandemic harshly affected their undocumented family members. Students spoke about the lack of access to healthcare as one of their main worries if

their parents were to get sick. One student shared her frustration with the ways in which the company her parents worked for had little regard for the health of their workers by refusing to provide masks and meet social distancing requirements. Because undocumented immigrants are unable to access health insurance in the U.S., they would need to pay for any health expenses out-of-pocket, which would likely take a detrimental hit on their finances. If undocumented parents were to get sick and were unable to access health services due to their legal status, it would likely be their children who would need to care for them physically, emotionally, and financially; yet another example of multigenerational punishment.

Undocumented immigrants who did not have jobs in the "essential worker" realm, took an especially heavy financial toll since undocumented immigrants did not qualify for stimulus checks due to their legal status, despite many of them meeting income qualifications. The limitations of providing financial relief for undocumented immigrants along with job vulnerability was a common concern among students with undocumented parents. For example, Camila states,

> I feel like a lot of, not just my family, but most undocumented immigrants, you know, they're already a huge disadvantage right now during the pandemic because they don't get any financial assistance. They don't get any help. If they're sick, they get fired. And then what do they do, you know?

Student participants often felt that the ways in which undocumented immigrants were scapegoated, exploited, and unappreciated during the pandemic was heightened even more during the pandemic compared to pre-pandemic times. Furthermore, participants shared their frustration with the nonexistent assistance undocumented immigrants received from the U.S. government compared to U.S. citizens and/or residents within a similar income threshold, who they also felt did not receive enough support. This led participants to describe undocumented immigrants as facing much bigger disadvantages than others during the pandemic.

Participants also spoke about the difficulties their parents faced when trying to navigate online schooling for their children in K-12 and lack of access to babysitters who could help them take care of their children while they went to work. David shares a personal experience of the difficulties his brother faced when transitioning to virtual classes. He states,

> [Big sigh] And I know for, for my family. My brother, he's in middle school and they had gone completely virtual, and my parents don't speak any, like any English. And I remember my brother is like, does pretty well academically. But he had like missed classes. He had like 84 absences. Umm, he had like F's because he honestly thought he had just one class online when in actuality he had like seven. And it wasn't until the end of the quarter when like, I don't what- I think it was like report cards and I was like, "What is all of this? You know, like why hasn't anyone said anything?" And my mom kind of was just like, well, [name of brother], my brother, he like handles all of that. And it just made me so frustrated because I just felt like, he's a seventh grader. Like, he can't handle all of this. He doesn't know all of this. Like, you are his parents, you should be helping him. When I know I spoke out of line because they can't help it either. So that was- For me was very frustrating to see that and to see my brother like struggle a lot academically. And it is just annoying because my brother had received e-mails from his teachers saying like, "You need to be present," or like, "Why aren't showing up for class?" It bothers me because it's like this is his student account. My parents don't have an email, but they have a phone number listed. Why didn't [the school], why didn't [the school] bother calling my house instead of emailing my brother, who is in seventh grade. Do you know what I mean?

Though this experience was not exclusive to mixed-status families and/or undocumented parents, David felt as though his brother's school could have done more to provide materials and information for Spanish-speaking parents. David also describes the way in which his mom was unfamiliar with ways to support his brother's academics during this time. His mother's limited familiarity with the school meant that there was more responsibility placed on David's brother, who was also struggling to understand school expectations in the time of Covid.

The Academic Experiences of Latinx Students with U.S. Resident Parents

Whereas some student participants had undocumented parents that did not have a pathway to citizenship, there were a few students whose parents were able to gain U.S. residency

at some point in their lifetime. When interviewing Latinx college students in mixed-status families whose parents had U.S. residency, it became evident that these lived experiences were different from students whose parents were currently undocumented. The time at which parents received U.S. residency also had an impact on how students viewed their experiences and identities in a mixed-status family. For example, student participants whose parents received U.S. residency before they were in college often focused on the financial struggles their family faced, while students whose parents did not receive U.S. residency until they were in college shared moments when they feared deportation and/or family separation.

In some ways, students in mixed-status families who had U.S. resident parents still faced some of the same struggles as those who had parents that were undocumented. For example, students in both situations faced financial struggles, difficulties navigating college as first-generation college students, and the emotional toll of caring for undocumented communities. These findings suggest that multigenerational punishment does not disappear immediately after parents obtain legal residency, rather, remnants of multigenerational continue to linger. Students who were able to witness the transition from their parents' undocumented status to U.S. residency status still internalize the trauma they experienced when their parents were undocumented. This was an unexpected finding and prompts the need for more research in this area.

At the same time, students whose parents had U.S. residency also acknowledged the privileges they had when it came to safety from deportation, access to educational opportunities, and the ability to travel outside of the U.S. All student participants whose parents had U.S. residency shared a strong sense of sympathy for the undocumented community, knowing that their family members had experienced this lived reality at some point as well. Many had

extended family members who were still undocumented. The following three themes emerged from interviews with students in mixed-status families whose parents were U.S. residents: 1) Acknowledging Privileges of Residency; 2) Parallels b/w the Different Experiences of Students in Mixed-Status Families; and 3) Care for Undocumented Community.

Theme 1: Acknowledging Privileges of Residency

Student participants whose parents had U.S. residency consistently vocalized the privileges they felt they gained after their parents gained legal status as U.S. residents. Catalina states,

> Um, so when they did [get residency], it was just kind of like, I remember being relieved. Because, like it was always just like in the back of our heads like the possibility of them being deported, even though they had like a pending application. And then it was finally like, "Oh, my parents can now travel with us to go to Mexico." Now, I think we have more peace of mind like, I know like the past four years were a little scary, with like the different administration but it felt a lot safer and you know they can buy their own house in their own name and they can do much more things now and it definitely like did a lot for our family.

Gaining a sense of safety and the ability to travel were two of the main privileges that student participants emphasized. Catalina's story encompasses the privileges that come with transitioning from having an undocumented status to becoming a U.S. resident.

Regardless of these gained privileges, Catalina also shared that the first time her parents travelled to Mexico after gaining U.S. residency was after her grandfather passed away. She states,

> The first time my parents traveled back to Mexico was because unfortunately my grandfather passed away. And my dad was like saving up and like waiting. He was like, "We'll figure it out like summer vacation." And then my grandpa passed away at the end of the school year before summer vacation. And so, once it, like they had a green card it was like preparing for when we finally can go, and then like tragedy hit and it was like, Well, the first time that they're going back we can't even go because we were still in school and my parents couldn't, at that point still couldn't like afford to take all of us.

Even though her parents were able to attend the funeral in Mexico, they were unable to take their daughters with them due to limited finances. This moment also provided a reflection of all the time they were unable to spend with her grandfather and the family separation that Catalina's family still experienced when her parents were undocumented.

Theme 2: Parallels b/w the Experiences of Students in Mixed-Status Families

Though student participants with U.S. resident parents were not barred from travelling and no longer feared the possibility of their parents' deportation, they still faced some of the same struggles that students with undocumented parents faced. One parallel was the impact of financial stress on students in mixed-status families. Regardless of parents' legal status, all students shared similar struggles of seeking financial aid opportunities for college, surviving on a limited budget in college, and having to work while in school to make ends meet. Additionally, though families whose parents were U.S. residents were allowed to travel outside of the country, they were often still unable to due to financial limitations.

One story directly aligns with Vanessa's experience shared earlier regarding FAFSA. Though difficulties with FAFSA verification did not come up in interviews with students who had U.S. resident parents, they still spoke about the difficulties they had in navigating the FAFSA application. Catalina states,

> Yeah, it was still like hard, because I didn't know what to do and like, my parents kind of just gave me like the same thing, all their like tax documents and she gave me their social security cards. So that I could go in and fill out all the information and like I would ask them. I remember asking my dad, he was like, "Well, I don't know," like, "Ask one of your sisters and see if like they know anything or like how they, they did it, or things like that. Or ask your cousin." But like my school didn't really help us with that, they just kinda told us, "You need to fill out the FAFSA," and that was it.

Though Catalina had access to her parents' social security numbers, she still struggled with filling out the FAFSA on her own. Like Vanessa, Catalina also describes the way in which

her parents were unable to help with this bureaucratic process, but still offered support in other ways.

Another parallel that was evident among students with undocumented parents and students whose parents had received residency was the sense of loss they both felt from family separation. For example, Rita states,

> So, when my mom immigrated, it took her, I think, 12 years in order to be able to get her residency to go back. And so, I think of that time that she wasn't able to see her mom. Like, right now we have Facetime, and we have certain things to be able to see people and feel closer. But in that time, you know, it was very hard to communicate by phone. And maybe it was like once a month, once every couple of weeks kind of thing. And so I think about the relationships that, you know, they lost, and conversations that weren't made and birthdays and celebrations that just didn't happen. And so when I think of the relationship my mom and her mom had, like they had an okay relationship but my grandma over time started to forget about my mom and she started to only remember her daughter that lived with her. And so, when my grandma started to pass, which was this past year, it was really sad to see that kind of loss. Because it's not that my grandma didn't love my mom, it was just that, she didn't have that close relationship.

Elena also shared a similar story of her mother returning to Mexico after 30 years. Though her father was undocumented, her mother had recently received U.S. residency in 2019. She states,

> So, she went for the first time. And, you know, to her it was such an emotional like trip because her mom had died in those 30 years, her brother had died, so she didn't get to go see them at their funeral, like she hadn't seen them since she had left and she was like in her early 20's, so her memory of her parents, like her family, is like when she was younger. Obviously, she talked to them over the phone, but like she hadn't seen her family in so long. And then to lose them, and not be able to visit them or go to their funeral, uh, I know she was depressed for a while because of that. Um, so, it just sucked to see her go through that. [RN: starts crying] So, yeah, no. So when she visited, yeah, so when she visited, she was like, "Oh, it was just a trip to like close, like for closure.

The way in which Rita and Elena explain the "loss" their mothers felt within those 12 and 30 years of not being able to see their loved ones aligns with the idea of "death" that Vanessa shared when describing what it would be like to lose her parents to deportation. Vanessa states,

> I mean, it's been difficult, don't get me wrong, but it hasn't been, you know, you hear these horror stories of, you know, your parents getting deported [takes deep breath] and I guess, umm, that's also, umm, [clears throat] what brought me back right? Is that fear. Because umm, I think a lot about like, umm, "Okay, well what if something happens?" You know? Because I think deportation feels like a kind of death where you leave and you don't come back, right? That's what it's like. Like, a little bit like dying. So, so yeah, I just, I've always been [continues crying; takes deep breath] hanging on to that fear.

Each of these stories internalize a sense of loss that can't be replenished. Though students with parents who had received U.S. residency were no longer in a place where they were forced to be separated from family members by borders, the time and connections lost between them and their loved ones could never be replaced.

Theme 3: Care for Undocumented Community

One of the main findings among student participants whose parents had U.S. residency was the profound care that these students had for the undocumented community. Though no one in their immediate family was currently undocumented, they still cared deeply about issues affecting the undocumented community. Like many student participants who had undocumented parents, students who had U.S. resident parents were also shaken by Trump's administration. Catalina describes the moment she found out that Trump had been elected president. She states,

> I was working late and so I was like catching up on the news, you know, it was really late, they still didn't have the results and I was like, You know what, I'm trusting that the America I know and believe in [RN: as if trying not to cry] is going to vote Hillary Clinton. I'm going to wake up, it's going to be fine. And then it wasn't. And I remember walking. I had class, I think. And I was walking to the bus at the stadium. And there was a couple of white kids and then there's a black girl. And I remember looking in her eyes and feeling the same hurt that I had. [starts crying] And like, I don't know if it was just, it's just my memory but I remember that day being gloomy. Like I didn't want, I didn't want to go to class once I got, like, into campus and so I was like, I'm not going. So I went to the Latino Cultural Center, [crying] because I just felt sad. And I felt betrayed. And I just knew I needed to be around other people who understood how I felt. And would like, like, I just thought like maybe I'm just crazy but like [Amy sniffles] I have all the fears in the world and I just wanted to be around people who [sniffles] would understand what I was feeling and not judge me for feeling the way that I did. [Both crying] I don't even remember talking to people much. I just remember

> like sitting in the sunroom [sniffles] crying silently, other people being around me also crying silently. People just giving each other hugs [Amy sniffles] and I, like then when we had, it was like in the evening I think when there was like a, like a round table or I don't even know what it was but we were all just talking.

Catalina describes the heartbreak she felt when realizing that Trump had been elected president. Though she does not describe feeling a heightened sense of anxiety in relation to deportation like students with undocumented parents, she still felt the emotional toll on what this meant for her Latinx community, especially given that Trump's platform was based on hate against Latinx immigrants and other marginalized communities. Catalina sought support at her Latino Cultural Center on campus where she felt as though she could cry with others who were feeling the same, again stressing the importance of institutionalized support systems for all Latinx college students in mixed-status families.

It is important to note that all of the students whose parents had U.S. residency in this study had experienced at least ten years of their lifetimes with their parents being undocumented. Therefore, it is critical to explore these findings further with students whose parents were already U.S. residents when they were born. This experience could potentially be very different from the student participants in this study because they would not have experienced the shift from their parents being undocumented to having U.S. residency, especially when considering the safety from deportation and travelling privileges granted by U.S. residency.

The Story of Mariana, a DACA student living in a Mixed-Status Family

One student, Mariana, also shared her story as a Latinx college student in a mixed-status family. She and one of her siblings were DACAmented, two of her siblings were in the process of applying for DACA, and three other siblings had U.S. citizenship. Her parents were undocumented. Though her story and experiences are significantly different from student

participants who had U.S. citizenship in this study, it is an important story to include when talking about students in mixed-status families.

Though Mariana is temporarily able to work in the U.S. legally as a DACA recipient, she still lives the same realities as her undocumented parents when it comes to sense of safety, fear of deportation, and access to human rights (i.e. healthcare, voting, etc.). At the time of her interview, the Trump administration had a failed attempt at terminating DACA after the Supreme Court overruled his administration's actions, only to be challenged again by Texas later that same year.

Mariana often shared her fear of DACA's instability as an executive action that could be terminated indefinitely at any moment; this sentiment was shared at the very beginning of our first conversation. She states,

> Mariana: Personally as a DACA recipient, I felt somewhat protected. And I didn't feel protected by Trump. I felt protected by the law because that was a law that Obama had put into place and it wasn't also because Obama wanted to put it in place. It was because of all the advocacy that individuals did on the streets on you know like legislative, legislative went and did advocacy visits. So I think about, you know, I think about how I felt privileged to have DACA at the moment. And even I don't know why he kept, especially the Trump administration, kept going back to DACA to remove DACA. So, I felt targeted. But I can't imagine how the other, you know, million other immigrants that didn't have any protection status felt.
>
> Interviewer: Yeah, do you feel protected as a student that has DACA in the US?
>
> Mariana: Oh no.
>
> Interviewer: Mmm, yeah. Tell me more about that.
>
> Mariana: No. Because we have a background check every two years and you know, we send in our renewal every two years. If something doesn't seem right to them, they have, they have the authority to deny it. They can be like nope I'm not- It can be for, you know, some speeding tickets are considered a misdemeanor. And I know every state is different with their own criminal laws and everything they have in place. So I don't feel protected. I don't feel like many of my friends who have DACA are protected. Until we get a pathway to citizenship and you know something that is permanent because this, the DACA program is not permanent, it's temporary and it just keeps getting bounced off and

> on. So they had us in limbo during the entire Trump administration. And now they're accepting new applications which, you know, is amazing. But that's not the, that's not the program that's going to give us a pathway to citizenship. It's not the program that is going to include our parents. And we're here because of them. We're here for them.

Mariana emphasizes how targeted and unsafe she feels as a DACA student, especially under Trump's administration. Though she starts by stating that she feels somewhat protected by the law, she later describes herself as being "in limbo," unaware of if or when her status will be revoked. When asked directly if she feels protected by DACA, Mariana immediately said "Oh no." Her experience undergoing a renewal process every two years based on a fee and background check made Mariana feel as though her status was fragile and could be denied at any moment. She stressed the importance of a more permanent comprehensive immigration reform which provides a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants, including parents. She also highlighted the advocacy work behind DACA; she asserts that it was not Obama who wanted to implement this policy; rather it was the pressure he received from activists that led him to implement this executive action. It is important to note that whereas the U.S. Department of Homeland Security was accepting DACA applications at the time of Mariana's interview, this policy has been changed numerous times since then. As of now, initial DACA applications are prohibited from being granted; only DACA renewals are possible under current U.S. law.

As a DACA student, Mariana did not have access to federal financial aid and struggled to find scholarships that she qualified for. Though she was able to fill out her application for state financial aid, she stressed the importance of providing more financial resources for undocumented/DACAmented students, especially considering that DACA students have to renew their work permits every two years for $495, aside from any potential lawyer fees.

While learning to navigate the college application process, Mariana shared a positive experience as a student participant in the GEAR UP program. According to the U.S. Department

of Education (2022), this federal program "is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education." GEAR UP provided Mariana with opportunities to go on college campus visits, access tutors, gain leadership skills, and access scholarships. Mariana stressed the importance of implementing similar programs that support undocumented/DACAmented students, especially given that these students face unique obstacles to college that can be difficult to navigate alone.

Once in college, Mariana shares how she felt underprepared to matriculate in higher education. She states,

> As a first-generation and undocumented student, I was going through higher education on my own, you know? And these classes, I was not prepared for them. I remember when I first arrived to the classroom, I was like, damn, like high school did not prepare us for this! Like all these advanced classes, they, you know, what's a syllabus? I was like, What's a syllabus?

Mariana's intersectional identities as a first-generation, DACAmented student impacted her experiences navigating college. She often felt as though she was on her own and didn't feel as though her high school prepared her for college courses, impacting her sense of self-efficacy when navigating higher education.

Mariana's experiences as a DACA student in higher education highlight the need for more policies, programs, and research aimed at supporting DACA and undocumented students on their educational journeys. My future research will focus on the academic experiences of DACA students in mixed-status families and what educational institutions can do to better support them as they pursue their academic goals.

Research Question 1: Summary of Findings

Students understood that their academic experiences were heavily impacted by the care they had for their undocumented siblings and parents. Though they had their own academic goals

and aspirations, they often considered what pursuing those goals would mean for their parents. This led some students to give up their post-graduation plans and career aspirations in order to stay closer to home and protect their parents. Others took on financial burdens in order to avoid placing their parents in potentially dangerous situations with police or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Students also felt a responsibility to address misconceptions of undocumented immigrants when brought up in class, often taking a heavy toll on their mental health and physical bodies. Though students understood the outcomes of making decisions based on the care they had for their families, they felt a deep responsibility to keep their undocumented family members safe and free from emotional, financial, or physical harm, no matter what it took. This study argues that these experiences of taking on emotional and financial burdens in order to protect and care for undocumented parents and/or sacrificing post-graduation aspirations are forms of multigenerational punishment that not only impact students' emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing, but also their academics.

Findings also suggest that Latinx college students in mixed-status families understand that they must self-advocate and/or seek support in order to successfully matriculate in higher education. By advocating for themselves and seeking out programs/resources/people that could help them navigate their higher education journeys, students were able to successfully graduate from their respective institutions, despite many bumps they faced along the way.

Research Question 2: Summary of Findings

National, state, and institutional immigration policies have impacted Latinx college students in mixed-status families by causing them to 1) fear the possibility of deportation of their undocumented family members, 2) heighten their anxiety, especially amid the Trump administration, and 3) feel frustrated with the exploitation of their parents and other

undocumented immigrants during the pandemic. These points have impacted students' experiences in schools as they try to navigate their mental wellbeing with surviving in a country that devalues the contributions their parents make at the local, state, and national levels, economically and socially. Students shared their discontent with the status quo and mentioned their call to activism in hopes of passing an immigration reform law that would provide a path to citizenship for their parents. Students often engaged in on-the-ground advocacy work by attending protests, organizing rallies, and getting involved in student organizations that advocate for immigration reform.

Considering the ways in which national, state, and institutional immigration policies impacted Latinx college students in mixed-status families, their college decisions, sense of belonging on their campuses, and mental wellbeing were challenged in ways that prompted them to trek through their higher education journeys with a multitude of barriers working against them. Again, the ways in which these national, state, and immigration policies impact U.S. citizen college students with undocumented parents is another example of multigenerational punishment. Anti-immigrant laws meant to punish undocumented immigrants, also subsequently punished their U.S. citizen children while undergoing their undergraduate studies. Despite this, students were able to graduate from their respective institutions and often felt as though this was a way to give back to their parents for all the sacrifices they've made.

Policy implications based on the findings of this study, directions for future research, and concluding thoughts will be outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study explores the academic experiences of Latinx students in mixed-status families when pursuing a higher education. The theories utilized throughout this study, LatCrit and CRT, provide a framework for analyzing findings based on the intersectional identities that student participants hold related to race, ethnicity, gender, immigrant status, socioeconomic status, and parent's formal education level. Findings suggest that multigenerational punishment, the idea that laws targeting undocumented immigrants also consequently end up targeting their U.S. citizen children, applies to Latinx students in mixed-status families when accessing a higher education. Multigenerational punishment leads students in mixed-status families to experience trauma in their schools and classrooms while also inflicting institutional barriers as students try to attain a higher education. Furthermore, this study found distinct experiences between Latinx students in mixed status families who have undocumented parents compared to those whose parents had gotten U.S. residency before they entered high school. It is important to note that though Latinx students with parents who received U.S. residency acknowledged the privileges they were granted after attaining this immigrant status, they too continued to experience lingering effects of multigenerational punishment. This study gives voice to students in mixed-status families by amplifying their stories to propose policies and initiatives that will support them as they pursue a higher education.

Chapter five focuses on the educational policy domain by first providing a discussion of the findings based on each research question. The discussion section is followed by education policy implications for faculty, staff, and administrators at higher education institutions as well as for legislators at the state and national level. The chapter concludes with directions for future research and concluding thoughts.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide critical insights and reflections to the current discourse surrounding Latinx students in mixed-status families, specifically when it comes to their academic experiences and offer important contributions to the literature. The first research question explored throughout this study focused on the following: **How do Latinx college students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences, expectations, and aspirations?**

One theme that emerged from this study was the priority that student participants placed on protecting and caring for their parents at all costs. Student participants shared how their experiences in a mixed-status family, within a country that highly politicizes and criminalizes immigrants, impacted their emotional, physical and financial wellbeing while undergoing their undergraduate studies.

Student participants often shared traumatic experiences in both their K-12 and higher education classrooms where teachers, professors, or administrators fostered hostile environments. For example, some teachers referred to undocumented immigrants as “illegal aliens” in their classrooms and one higher education institution allowed a student organization to “build a wall” on campus. Students also talked about how these experiences took a toll on their bodies by inflicting uncontrollable shaking, crying, and having to take deep breaths to stay calm. Students also took on financial costs if they needed to, in order to keep their parents safe.

Secondly, students in mixed-status families, specifically those who had undocumented parents, understood that their post-graduation plans were heavily impacted by their parents’ immigration status. Students talked about the aspirations they had to sacrifice in order to keep their parents safe and/or to make sure they had a plan in case their parents were to be deported.

Whereas many of these students wanted to pursue college and/or a career outside of their hometown, most stayed close to home in order to protect and care for their undocumented family members.

The ways in which students felt each of these costs (emotional, physical, financial, timely, aspirational) is one example of how multigenerational punishment impacts the academics of Latinx students in mixed-status families, one of the major contributions of this study. Whereas national and state laws specifically aim to burden undocumented immigrants when it comes to their finances, mental health, and educational aspirations, these laws also consequently punish their U.S. citizen children. Students felt as though it was their responsibility to protect and care for their undocumented parents, even if it negatively impacted their academics, because of the sacrifices their parents made for them when immigrating to this country. In their eyes, it was a way to give back. Legal and institutional systems take advantage of this by placing students in positions where they must persist and resist to overcome systemic barriers when accessing a higher education.

Findings suggest that Latinx students in mixed-status families understand that they must advocate for themselves in order to access a higher education. For example, all student participants identified as Latinx/a/o students in mixed-status families and as first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds. Students understood that these intersectional identities instilled barriers for them to access a higher education, especially when it came to the financial cost of attending a higher education. Excessively high tuition rates at higher education institutions, doubled with the limited economic and employment opportunities for their parents, meant that students knew they needed to take advantage of scholarships, college access bridge programs, and state-funded programs like the College Bound program in Washington State, to

make their dreams of going to college a reality. Seeking out information about these programs and scholarships as well as applying for them also costs students their time.

Self-advocacy was also important when it was time to apply for and submit the FAFSA. Many students ran into institutional barriers that did not provide them with the information they needed to apply for FAFSA given that their parents did not have social security numbers. As Natalia's high school counselor noted, there are simple ways around this by just putting 0's in place of a social security number. Yet, many other students struggled to get this question answered. Students often described this experience as a bureaucratic "nightmare."

Student participants in this study were forced to advocate for themselves in order to successfully navigate higher education processes; they did not have a choice because there weren't any systems in place that would provide them with the answers they needed to complete their FAFSA and/or college applications. In concurrence with LatCrit, higher education systems have implemented bureaucratic processes such as FAFSA, increasing tuition rates, and limited support for students who come from first-generation college backgrounds, which has forced students from historically excluded backgrounds to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is important to note that if students do not succeed in attaining a higher education, this is a failure of the higher education system and not of students themselves. This finding, therefore, rejects the notion that we should expect students to uphold neoliberal and meritocratic standards of "pulling themselves up from their bootstraps," to achieve a higher education, especially when higher education systems have purposefully created inequitable policies and systems that exclude the most marginalized students from accessing a higher education.

Again, navigating these bureaucratic hurdles is one of the ways in which students experienced multigenerational punishment; whereas U.S. citizen students are entitled to apply for

and receive funding from FAFSA, it was difficult for students to navigate this process in order to access those funds. The students in this study did not stop advocating for themselves until they found a response to their questions about FAFSA, even if it meant going from office to office, website to website, and/or staff member to staff member. Again, this is another way that students with undocumented parents were inflicted with the cost of time. Whereas some students have the privilege of inserting their parents' social security numbers into the FAFSA application and moving on, this one question costs students in this study much more time and energy.

Lastly, students understood that they must seek out mentors and support systems to help mitigate the barriers they encountered when accessing a higher education. Beatriz described her eighth-grade teacher as a lifelong mentor who she could safely reach out to when she had questions related her mother's undocumented status. When her mother felt unsafe travelling by plan to Beatriz' out-of-state college, her eighth-grade teacher stepped in to help with this moving process. Beatriz stressed how meaningful this mentor relationship was to her and how it helped her succeed in college. It is important to note that support systems looked different for every student participant. Support systems included a mixture of family, friends, faculty of color, institutional mentors, college access bridge programs, cultural centers, and multicultural student organizations, among many others. The ways in which student participants understood that they must advocate for themselves by overcoming bureaucratic hurdles, seeking out mentors, and establishing support systems also expands on the student activism that is often highlighted in the field of Latinx Studies and provides another important contribution to the current literature.

The second research question that guided this research study explored the following: **How have national, state, and institutional immigration policies impacted Latinx/a/o college students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education?**

Findings stemming from Research Question 2 suggest that national, state, and institutional immigration policies heavily impact Latinx students in mixed-status families as they pursue a higher education. For example, two students shared stories of their father being detained or deported and how the trauma from this experience affected their ability to focus on school. As multigenerational punishment suggests, though immigration policies are meant to instill fear of deportation among undocumented immigrants, these stories by participants posited that immigration policies also instill fear of deportation among children of undocumented immigrants. Students indicated that this form of multigenerational punishment also impacted their academics by causing them anxiety and stress while in school, especially when topics of immigration came up on campus or in class.

Fear of deportation also impacted decisions made by student participants regarding their higher education plans. For example, when it was time for Camila to choose a college to attend, she chose to stay at a university close to home to be within close proximity with her parents in case they were ever to go through this situation again. Camila wanted to make sure she could help them if they were to be deported by taking care of her little brother and/or taking over their mortgage. Staying close to home was a common plan among student participants who had undocumented parents.

Anxiety among Latinx students in mixed-status families was heighted when Trump became President of the United States. Though Trump did not implement all the anti-immigrant laws his political campaign ran on, students knew his administration had the potential to cause harm and detrimental endings for their families. News stories often exploded with threats made by Trump regarding the separation of families at the border, thereby making students feel as though this could happen to them within the country as well. The Trump administration also

heighted border security and consistently threatened the existence of DACA. The implementation and/or proposal of these national anti-immigrant policies also instilled fear among Latinx students in mixed-status families and prompted them to "pretend everything was okay," while suffering psychological stress, on top of the academic, financial, and mental stress of being a college student.

Latinx students in mixed-status families were also heavily impacted by the ways in which their parents were treated during the pandemic. Refusal to offer hazard pay, childcare services, and stimulus checks for undocumented immigrants throughout the pandemic meant that student participants had to take on some of these responsibilities themselves. In other words, Latinx students with undocumented parents stepped up to provide the much-needed services that U.S. laws prevented for their parents. For example, whereas the U.S. government refused to provide undocumented immigrants with stimulus checks, one student made sure to gift the stimulus checks she received to her parents because she felt like they needed the financial relief more than she did. Other students helped take care of their siblings during the pandemic and/or helped their siblings navigate Zoom class sessions and remote work at the K-12 level. Effects caused by the pandemic, particularly for undocumented immigrants and students in mixed-status families, are still being examined among researchers; therefore, this study provides additional context regarding this growing area of research.

The findings from this study highlight important contributions by filling a gap in the literature regarding the impact of multigenerational punishment on Latinx students in mixed-status families when it comes to their academics, particularly at the higher education level. This study also explored the differences between the academic experiences of Latinx students with undocumented parents and those with parents who were recently able to attain U.S. residency,

providing a jumping point for an area of research that has yet to be explored. For example, whereas Latinx students with undocumented parents experienced multigenerational punishment in the form of fear of deportation, heightened anxiety during the Trump Presidency and unfair treatment during the Covid-19 pandemic, students whose parents had attained U.S. residency were experiencing remnants of multigenerational punishment in different ways when thinking about time lost with their family members, among other examples. The policy implications outlined in this chapter stem from the stories shared by participants throughout this study to better understand the academic experiences of Latinx students in mixed-status families and to provide recommendations for institutionalizing support systems for these students.

Connecting System-Level Structures to Individual Experiences

Before diving into policy implications, it is important to think about how system-level structures connect with individual experiences in this study. Higher education systems were designed to perpetuate the status quo, to only benefit those in power. Privileged identities that hold power in the United States include those who are rich, cis, heterosexual, white, male, and U.S. citizens. Student participants in this study held many identities that were opposite to these; thereby, creating a disjuncture between the higher education systems they were trying to access and the ways in which these systems were designed in a way to exclude them, also impacting their experiences in the lifeworld as described by Habermas.

Throughout history, marginalized communities, including Latinx immigrants, have advocated for themselves and forced their way into these exclusive systems. The existence of college access and retention programs did not flourish without a fight; it was communities of color and low-income communities that advocated for and led to the creation of these policies. The students in this study are no exception. Despite the systems set in place to try and exclude

student participants in this study from accessing a higher education, they understood that in their shared lifeworld, they needed to wiggle their way through, jumping through obstacles they faced along the way, ultimately graduating from their respective institutions. LatCrit challenges the notion that these student experiences of self-advocacy are to be upheld as an example of meritocracy; that "working hard will help you achieve a higher education." These neoliberal principles suggest that students should be the ones to invest all their time and energy into dismantling systems of oppression when it is higher education systems that should be doing this work. Sólorzano, Villalpando & Oseguera (2005) posit that these dominant ideologies promote deficit views because they do not take into account the history of racism that higher education institutions were built on.

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge how these systems of power discriminate against Latinx students in mixed-status families and how they do work as intended by limiting the number of these students who enroll and graduate from college, especially students who may not have the support and/or resources to overcome these systemic barriers. The policy implications outlined in this chapter are based on the counternarratives shared by student participants in this study, thereby poking holes in the system, and instead focusing on policies that are helpful for Latinx students in mixed-status families who are also first-generation college students.

CRT, LatCrit, and Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action also provide theoretical frameworks for challenging the power structures in place that oppress marginalized populations in the U.S. Two of the main entities of this study, K-12 schools and higher education institutions, are places where power dynamics most commonly benefit affluent, privileged identities when it comes to academic aspirations and achievement. The policy implications outlined below reject

the notion that only the most privileged can attend college and instead, focuses on Latinx students in mixed-status families as creators of knowledge who have the power to transform policy so that it is more equitable for students from all backgrounds (Bernal, 2002).

Policy Implications

Several policy implications are outlined below which are guided by the findings of this study from student interviews as well as with guidance from LatCrit, CRT, and Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, the theoretical frameworks utilized throughout this study. These policy implications include the importance of 1) College Access & Bridge Programs, 2) College Retention Programs, 3) Campus Resource Centers & Knowledgeable Staff, 4) Culturally Responsive Faculty, and 5) Decolonizing Higher Education Spaces.

College Access & Bridge Programs

Based on student interviews and the experiences they have had in their lifeworlds, it is important for higher education institutions and legislators to continue advocating for and supporting college access and bridge programs at the federal, state, and institutional levels. Students consistently described how important these programs were to their academic success in college that ultimately led to their graduations. The implementation of college access and bridge programs at federal, state, and local levels also reflects one of the ways in which LatCrit and CRT aim to dismantle oppressive higher education systems. These programs challenge the historical educational inequities set in place to exclude first-generation, low-income and students of color from matriculating in higher education spaces, instead creating an avenue to higher education for these students.

Federally Funded Bridge Programs

Bridge programs such as Upward Bound and GEAR UP at the federal level are particularly helpful for Latinx students in mixed-status families who are first-generation college students. These programs provide the necessary academic, financial, and communal support needed to navigate the college application process, prepare for college, and enroll in a higher education institution. Students specifically mentioned the importance of scholarships, fee waivers, preparation resources such as SAT practice exams, and college campus visits, all hosted by bridge programs, in assisting them with attending college.

State and Institutionally Funded College Access Scholarship Programs

Institutional policies that waive tuition for low-income students supplemented by state-funded scholarship programs like the 21st Century Scholars program in Indiana were crucial in assisting first-generation Latinx students from low-income backgrounds secure the necessary funds to enroll in college in this study. Without this financial support from states, students mentioned that they would not be able to afford, much less graduate from their respective institutions. Participants stressed the importance of scholarships, especially given the limited economic and employment opportunities that their undocumented and/or U.S. resident parents faced in the U.S. Given the economic limitations that these families faced, state-funded scholarship programs were essential to facilitating a financial avenue to college for these students. Students also stressed the importance of providing these state and institutionally funded opportunities for DACA and undocumented students.

High School Dual/College Credit Programs

State programs such as Running Start in Washington State and dual-credit programs in other states also provided alternative avenues for students to begin attending college while in high school. These programs provided students with the opportunity to obtain college credit

while in high school at little or no cost to them. These programs additionally allowed students to shorten the amount of time they needed to enroll in 4-year universities, consequently shortening the amount of quarters/semesters they needed to find funds to pay for tuition at their respective universities.

College Retention Programs

Consistent with LatCrit and CRT frameworks, college retention programs, such as the federally funded TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program within higher education institutions, are also critical in establishing support mechanisms for first-generation students on college campuses. Retention programs at both the federal and institutional level provided a structure of support for student participants in this study to continue enrolling at their respective colleges until graduation. Helpful services that students took advantage of included tutoring, advising, and mentoring services. Some college retention programs also provided stipends and/or funding for students to continue their studies; thereby diminishing the cost of higher education as one of the institutional barriers specified by LatCrit. Participants also highlighted the sense of community that these retention programs offered for their students, especially for first-generation students and/or students of color on campus. These student experiences highlighted the importance of services offered by retention programs and the need for more of these programs at the higher education level. Though bridge programs help students enroll in college, it is programs like TRIO SSS that ensure the retention of these students as well; thereby stressing the importance for legislators and higher education institutions to continue financially and legislatively supporting these retention programs.

Campus Resource Centers & Knowledgeable Staff

Latinx students with undocumented parents often shared frustrating stories of constantly being redirected to various institutional staff members in counselor offices, financial aid offices, IRS offices, student centers, cultural centers, and legal offices when seeking answers to completing their FAFSA. Staff within these high schools and higher education institutions did not have the appropriate knowledge to assist these students, leaving them to navigate this confusing process on their own. LatCrit posits that the difficulties students faced in navigating FAFSA and other bureaucratic processes intentionally exclude minoritized populations from accessing a higher education and suggests that more should be done to mitigate these barriers. Given this finding, institutions should be intentional about delegating one or several staff members to answer questions relevant to undocumented students and/or students in mixed-status families. Institutions can do this by identifying one central location where students know they can go to get their questions answered.

Furthermore, institutions should train faculty, staff and administrators who work directly with students to feel comfortable addressing commonly asked questions such as, “Do I qualify for FAFSA if my parents are undocumented?” or “Where can I get help to complete my FAFSA if my parents are undocumented?” In David’s words, instead of constantly being told, “Don’t forget to fill out the FAFSA!” offer support by asking, “How can I help you fill out the FAFSA?”

Dedicating a webpage on the institution’s website with Frequently Asked Questions could also be beneficial for students in mixed-status families to find answers to their questions and/or be directed to someone who can help them.

Culturally Responsive Teachers/Faculty

When asked, “What do you wish that professors and administrators at the college level knew about students in mixed-status families?” Salvador replied, “I wish they knew that we existed,” a response that was shared among several students in some way, shape, or form. Students in mixed-status families often felt unheard in classroom spaces because their identities as children of undocumented parents is “invisible.” In other words, it is impossible to know which students are in mixed-status families if they personally do not disclose this information directly to their professor(s). Students felt as though teachers, professors, and administrators often do not think about how their intersectional identities impact their lifeworlds and how the emotional toll of their lived realities affect them inside and outside of the classroom. These counternarratives shared by student participants further highlight one of the ways in which educational institutions at both the K-12 and higher education levels fail to foster a safe and supportive environment for students of color in mixed-status families, thereby supporting the need for institutions to implement culturally responsive pedagogies and practices. By employing culturally responsive practices, institutions transfer the knowledge shared from dominant, white ideologies to instead center the experiential knowledge of Latinx students as part of the campus culture and curriculum.

As discussed in the Findings chapter, several students experienced psychological and emotional trauma in their K-12 and higher education classes. Mario described a traumatic moment when his teacher consistently used the word, “illegal” to refer to undocumented immigrants in his high school class and dismissed Mario after building up the courage to address this concern. The dismissive actions of this teacher led Mario to feel uncomfortable, unwanted, unsafe, and unheard in this class. Teachers are often

deemed authority figures in the classroom with substantial power, especially at the high school level. Consistent with LatCrit and CRT, in order to diminish these power dynamics and to ensure that students of color feel safe, heard, and valued in the classroom, teachers should employ culturally relevant pedagogies and address student concerns from a place of learning, rather than act defensively.

One student, Camila, shared her frustration with one of her professors at the higher education level who assigned a "family tree assignment." Camila shared how difficult it was for her to submit this assignment with personal information given the heightened anxiety she experienced after her father's deportation. After several students did not submit this assignment, the professor addressed the entire class "making it seem like [we] were being lazy," as Camila thought to herself, "I'm not lazy! I can't do this assignment!" Camila did not feel comfortable sharing this concern with her professor given the vulnerability of her parents' immigration status but wishes her professor would have had more sympathy for the reasons why students might not have completed the assignment.

David also experienced a frustrating situation where his college professor had students discuss whether undocumented parents of US born children should be granted citizenship to stay in the US. David felt as though the framing of this assignment centered privileged identities of U.S. citizenship and neglected students in the class who may have undocumented parents, thereby upholding the dominant ideologies that CRT and LatCrit aim to challenge, but that are often perpetuated in K-12 and higher education spaces. . Though it is important to have class discussions about sensitive topics, these sessions should be facilitated in a way that does not further marginalize historically excluded

student populations. These class discussions should be approached with intentional aims of addressing privilege, referring to research-based claims, and with a profound thoughtfulness for students who may be experiencing those situations.

Contrastingly, David also shared a teaching moment when he deeply appreciated one of his professor's responses to the political climate for undocumented students and students in mixed-status families. Soon after Trump was elected president, David mentions the way in which his professor addressed the class by imploring her students to "think about the lives he's trying to destroy and about the immigrant families he's trying to pull apart." She ended her class session by stating, "My heart goes out to anyone who is experiencing any anxiety," due to the results of the election. Though this may seem like a small gesture to some, it meant everything to David. He mentions how safe and comfortable he felt in this class following his teachers remarks of publicly supporting undocumented immigrants and himself as someone who has undocumented parents. These are the class environments that allow Latinx students in mixed-status families to learn, to feel valued, and to thrive.

Decolonize Higher Education Spaces

In accordance with CRT and LatCrit, student narratives highlighted the importance of decolonizing higher education spaces so that they do not continue to uphold racist, patriarchal, and capitalistic standards. Furthermore, decolonizing higher education spaces would facilitate more support structures on campus for students in mixed-status families, an important finding of this study.

Hire More Latinx/a/o Faculty

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), only 4 percent of full-time faculty are Latinx in the U.S. Among the Latinx population, Latinas, along with other women of color, are among the most excluded and marginalized population groups in graduate school and among the faculty ranks (Ramirez, 2014). This is especially disconcerting given that approximately 20 percent of traditional college students are Latinx in the U.S. (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2020).

Institutions should make an effort to hire Latinx faculty and/or faculty of color in order to increase representation. Research concurs that hiring more faculty of color can aid in providing Latinx students with faculty whom they can relate to and/or whom they reach out to as mentors (Umbach, 2006; Brissett, 2020). This might also encourage more Latinx students to pursue a higher education because they will be able to see themselves represented in the classroom. If institutions fail to hire Latinx faculty, this can lead students to believe that higher education is not a space for Latinxs, which can be detrimental when these students consider applying to community colleges and/or 4-year universities.

This discrepancy was reinforced by student participants in this study who often shared the lack of representation they saw among the faculty who taught their classes. Students often shared that they did not feel seen, represented, or heard in their K-12 or higher education classrooms because they rarely had Latinx faculty who taught their classes. When students did have professors who shared similar cultural backgrounds, they often expressed how meaningful this was for them. Laura, a student whose mother was undocumented throughout her college experience, shared a moment in her class when immigration came up and how sensitive her professor, a woman of color, approached the discussion. She states,

> I think the professor was really, she was a woman of color. And so again, I think that really helped the classroom as well, just coming at it from a different perspective,

> mentality. She was part of the LGBTQ group too. So I feel like that in and of itself, like she had a lot of identities to her. And that was really like different, I wanna say, because most of our teachers were very, very white and male. And so, I think that really really helped shape the course of that class and just hearing, you know, the perspectives. But how she kind of like balanced it out. And at the same time, got her point across, and made sure everyone felt included. So I was very, very content with the way that she handled it. And I never felt like odd or, or feeling like I couldn't share something.

Laura's experience further highlights the importance of hiring more faculty of color within higher education institutions.

Mental Health Services

Only one student participant mentioned that she utilized mental health services on her college campus. Research shows that students of color do not utilize mental health services at the same rate as their White peers and are least likely to utilize mental health services on college campuses (Primm, 2021; Wilkinson, Bodine Al-Sharif, Watson, McCarthy, Aboagye, Evans, & Talbot-Forbes, 2022). Given the ways in which this research draws attention to the mental toll that comes with the experience of living in a mixed-status family, combined with the limited engagement that Latinx student participants shared with regard to visiting mental health centers on campus, it is important to ensure 1) students are aware of the mental health services provided on campus, 2) students can financially access these mental health resources, and 3) students feel welcomed in these mental health centers. Decolonizing mental health services on college campuses would require increased racial diversity of mental health counselors on campus and accessibility in terms of cost, among other important considerations.

Campus Culture

Lastly, students stressed the importance of safe spaces on college campuses during their interviews. Latinx cultural centers, Latinx student organizations, and Latinx Studies courses/programs offered students a sense of belonging on campus and supported Latinx students

with thriving in higher education spaces. These Latinx-based centers, programs, and courses provided students with a space on campus where they felt safe openly disclosing their identity as someone in a mixed-status family and where they felt they could rely on emotional support regarding their family's mixed-status situation. As discussed in the Findings chapter, Catalina felt the need to visit the Latinx Cultural Center on campus the day Trump was elected, to grieve with others who had similar feelings. Additionally, David states,

> I think with [the Latinx Cultural Center], I was very happy to be there and have a safe space where these things could be talked about. Being first-gen and being of mixed-status, it was just a place where I was comfortable, where everyone could kind of like relate.

The Latinx Cultural Center provided a space where Latinx students could connect with one another and learn about the diversity of Latinxs in the U.S., therefore promoting cultural diversity and inclusive environments on campus.

Given these important findings, it is of utmost importance to institutionalize and financially support cultural centers, Latinx student organizations, and Latinx Studies programs, in order to foster safe, inclusive campus environments for Latinx students in mixed-status families and other historically excluded student populations.

The policy implications outlined in this chapter connect to CRT and LatCrit conceptual frameworks because they are based on the counter-narratives shared by Latinx students in mixed-status families, rather than dominant narratives from people in power. LatCrit provides a framework for analyzing policy implications with the complexity of intersectional student identities in mind, including identities related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and immigration status. Therefore, the policy implications outlined in this chapter are importantly informed by an intersectional approach, as is needed when thinking about the student participants in this study.

These conceptual frameworks also align with Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action because they center participants' lived experiences and claims to truth as Latinx students with intersectional identities on college campuses. The lifeworld then fosters a space for college campuses to engage in action oriented toward understanding so that institutions can propose legislation and/or policies aimed toward equalizing educational opportunities.

Furthermore, the policy implications outlined above are important for higher education institutions, professors, staff, and administrators to work toward eliminating institutional barriers inflicted on Latinx students in mixed-status families as they pursue higher education pathways and to implement policies that prioritize social justice. Legislators at the national, state, and local government should also be aware of the policy implications of this study and should collaborate with higher education institutions to create state and federal policies that amplify support systems for students in mixed-status families. It is important to note that the policies outlined above are not exclusive to supporting Latinx students in mixed-status families but can also be beneficial for students with diverse backgrounds who also identify as being in a mixed-status household.

Future Research

My future research aims to further explore specific findings from my dissertation regarding the impact of diversifying curricula and assessing programs, organizations, and policies aimed at promoting the empowerment, identity and belonging of Latinx/a/o students on college campuses. Many of the students interviewed for this study emphasized the powerful learning experiences they had and the sense of safety they felt when taking Latinx Studies courses at their respective institutions. Given that these courses seemed to be particularly meaningful for the Latinx students in this study, I hope to expand on this important finding in the

future by further exploring the impact of Latinx Studies courses on Latinx/a/o college students. Further engaging in this area of research will allow researchers to better understand some of the spaces where students in mixed-status families may feel comfortable talking about immigration on campus and how these spaces might serve as a safe, healing place for students.

One unexpected finding that flourished from this study was the idea that multigenerational punishment does not immediately disappear after parents receive U.S. residency, rather these effects tend to linger. It would be interesting to further explore this finding in order to better understand the experiences of transitioning from an oppressed immigrant status of being undocumented, to a more privileged immigrant status of having U.S. residency, to ultimately attaining the most privileged citizenship status in the U.S., U.S. Citizenship. Students who had U.S. resident parents in this study were able to experience and remember traumatic moments from when their parents were undocumented and this trauma stayed with them, even after their parents received U.S. residency. This study did not include student participants whose parents received U.S. residency before the sixth grade, and therefore had a limited dual frame of reference when it comes to having undocumented parents versus parents with U.S. residency. Students whose parents received U.S. residency before they were born may also have different experiences; thereby raising another important experience to explore further.

Given previous research on the systemic barriers that Latino males face in education such as disproportionate discipline rates, the underrepresentation of Latino males enrolling in college, and the overrepresentation of Latino males in special education classes, coupled with the gender roles that are often placed on men in Latinx family structures, it would be important to further explore the ways in which Latino male students in mixed-status families navigate their academic

journeys (Clark, Ponjuán, Orrock, Wilson & Flores, 2013; Torres, 2017; Ponjuán & Hernández, 2021; O'Connell, 2023). The ways in which Latino male students are often pushed out of the U.S. educational system and simultaneously expected to provide financial income for their families by working, could impact the ways in which Latino male students in mixed-status families may experience multigenerational punishment and/or how this racialized and gendered identity may impact their decision to pursue and graduate from a higher education institution. In short, further research should explore how gender roles in Latinx family structures and gendered schooling experiences might impact the academic experiences of Latinx students in mixed-status families.

Future plans to continue this research will also include a balanced representation of participants who identify differently on the gender spectrum. These intersectional identities and different perspectives will be critical in order to better understand the gendered differences of experiences in mixed-status families.

Future research should explore the experiences of first and second-generation immigrants from ethnic communities other than those who identify as Latinx/a/o. For example, there is extensive research which underlines the harmful impact of the "model minority myth" placed on people of Asian descent as "representing successful assimilation into a white dominant society" (Walton & Truong, 2023, p. 391; Wu, 2014). Walton & Truong (2023) summarize the literature regarding this "flawed systematic construction" of Asian American immigrants because it implies that "people with Asian backgrounds living in white-majority countries no longer experience social disadvantage based on race due to their perceived or actual educational and economic success" (p. 392). This additional layer of systemic oppression imposed on Asian

American immigrants could have a significant impact on the ways in which Asian students in mixed-status families understand their academic experiences and multigenerational punishment.

According to the Migration Policy Institute (2020), the ten most common countries of origin for unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. include three countries that are not located in Latin America: India, The Philippines, and China; yet students from these cultural backgrounds are rarely represented in the literature surrounding undocumented immigrants and/or mixed-status families. Given that this research study only included the perspective of participants of Latinx/a/o descent, my future research aims to explore the experiences of people in mixed-status families across different racial/ethnic groups. Since most research focuses on the Latinx immigrant experience, it is important to understand how individuals from different racial/ethnic backgrounds understand their experiences in mixed-status families as well.

As described throughout this study, interviews were only conducted with Latinx/a/o students who were in college and/or had recently graduated from a 4-year institution. Therefore, it will be important to also include the voices of individuals who are not enrolled in higher education institutions in future research studies. For example, it is important to hear the stories of students in mixed-status families who wanted to go to college, but could not due to financial limitations, work responsibilities, family commitments, among other possible reasons. These voices are among the least heard in academia and their experiences deserve attention and understanding.

The findings outlined in this dissertation provide valuable insights regarding Latino/a/x undergraduate views of their experiences in a mixed-status families. This study creates a starting point for future research to explore ways in which institutions can encourage and support Latinx/a/o students from mixed-status families in the college setting and beyond.

Concluding Thoughts

When focusing on students in mixed-status families who have undocumented parents, it was evident that participants struggled with the privileges granted to them simply for having been born in the United States. They recognize the challenges that their undocumented parents and siblings face when accessing social services, travelling, and when they are exploited in politics and the workforce; thereby, not only impacting their parents but also themselves. These experiences also affected their emotional and psychological wellbeing while undergoing their undergraduate studies. These effects significantly impacted their academics with regard to safe classroom spaces and post-graduation plans.

Students in mixed-status families whose parents had U.S. residency often acknowledged the privilege of not needing to fear deportation, but still held a strong connection with the undocumented community in the U.S., often advocating for them in the streets and within their higher education institutions. Despite the privileges granted by U.S. residency, these students still held traumatic memories from when their parents were undocumented and shared the heaviness of families being separated by borders, because they knew exactly how this felt.

Mariana, a DACA student in the U.S., shared her experiences feeling as though she was "*in limbo*," and feared that her temporary status could be revoked at any moment. Mariana also shared unique barriers when accessing a higher education including limited access to funding and support programs due to social security number requirements. Her experience highlights the need for more federal, state, and institutional policies that directly aim to support undocumented and DACA students in the United States.

Though each of the student experiences shared throughout this study were different, there was one underlying theme that connected all of these stories together – the desire to seek social

justice for themselves, for their families, and for the undocumented community. Many students described their reasons for pursuing college as a way to give back to their parents, to show the U.S. that they are powerful, and to resist the policies set in place to harm them. Consequently, this study consistently prompted me to reflect on the ways in which Latinx students in mixed-status families are forced to persist despite the odds against them. Institutional faculty, staff, and administrators have so much to learn from this student population. It is time that we listen to these students and lean on them to guide us towards a more equitable future in higher education.

In conclusion, there is a need for more research on the experiences of students in mixed-status families in the U.S., especially studies that explore how these identities impact their academics. This research is important to study in order to better understand the experiences of students in mixed-status families and to find ways in which institutions might better support these students on their academic pathways. If institutions do not work towards providing equitable opportunities and safe spaces for students from all backgrounds and immigrant statuses to succeed academically, then it can be detrimental for the knowledge produced in classrooms and the broader community. Ultimately, it is important for these student contributions, experiences, and perspectives to be valued and acknowledged in the classroom and society at large.

To the students who participated in this study, thank you for sharing your stories, for sharing a glimpse of what your life has been like in the midst of a politically tumultuous issue. You will never know how much your stories mean to me. To those who continue to live in the shadows in order to protect their undocumented family members, thank you for existing. We are in this struggle together.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol 1 – Family Life & Political Climate

Domain: Mixed-Status Families

Lead-Off Question: What is the first thought that comes to mind when I say the word, "undocumented immigrant?"

Covert Categories of Interest:

- Mixed-Status Family Experiences (Positive/Negative)
- Impact of the political climate on college students
- Emotional impact of being in a mixed-status family

Possible Follow-Up Questions:

Family Life

1. Tell me about the different immigrant statuses in your family.
2. How would you describe your relationship with your family?
3. Has your family talked with immigration lawyers and/or tried to undergo the "legal" immigration process?
4. If comfortable, may you share with me what you know about your parents' migration story?
5. I know that not everyone has the same immigrant status within your family. Can you tell me a story about when the difference of statuses personally affected you?
6. Have you traveled to [Mexico]? Can you tell me about your experience visiting for the first time?
7. Tell me about the first time you discovered that you were in a mixed-status family. For example, when was the first time you discovered that your parents were undocumented?
8. Tell me about a time when your family had a conversation about the different immigrant statuses in your family.
9. Tell me about a time when you talked to someone who had US citizenship about immigration. What was the conversation like?
10. Tell me about a joyful memory you have with your family.

Political Climate

11. Please share with me your personal thoughts regarding the political climate surrounding immigrants in the United States.
12. Tell me about a time when the political climate motivated you to act.
13. Sometimes undocumented immigrants are referred to as "criminals" or "illegal" in the news. Tell me your thoughts about that.
14. Please tell me about any local immigration policies you are aware of that impact mixed-status families.
15. Have these policies personally affected your family? If so, in what ways?

16. Please tell me about any state immigration policies you are aware of that impact mixed-status families.
17. Have these policies personally affected your family? If so, in what ways?
18. Please tell me about any national immigration policies you are aware of that impact mixed-status families.
19. Have these policies personally affected your family? If so, in what ways?

Appendix B

Interview Protocol 2 – Schooling/Academic Experiences

Domain: Mixed-Status Families

Lead-Off Question: Tell me about a time in your K-12 schooling when you being in a mixed-status family came up.

Covert Categories of Interest:

- Academic impact of being in a mixed-status family
- Emotional impact of being in a mixed-status family
- Significance of having an institutional support system for students in mixed-status families

Possible Follow-Up Questions:

Classroom Experience

1. Would you say that being in a mixed-status family has impacted your academic goals? If so, in what ways?
2. Tell me about time when you had a political conversation regarding undocumented immigrants in your college/university class.
3. How did this conversation impact your views of in this class?
4. How did this conversation impact your experience in this class, if at all?
5. Tell me about an experience you've had at your college/university where a variation of the word "immigrant" was used. For example, "immigrant," "illegal immigrant," "undocumented immigrant," "illegal alien," etc.
   (*Note: Some example settings can include in the classroom, in your residence hall, meeting with an advisor, etc.)
6. Tell me about your graduation plans after college.
7. Would you say that being in a mixed-status family [has] impacted your post-graduation goals?

College/University Experience

8. How would you describe your college/university's culture towards undocumented students?
9. What do you know about your university's stance on immigration?
10. In what way(s) have you been impacted by your university's stance, if at all?
11. What college/university policies are you familiar with that are geared toward undocumented students?
12. What are your thoughts on what your college/university "says" in relation to what they "do"?
13. To your knowledge, how does your university support undocumented students?
14. To your knowledge, how does your university support students in mixed-status families?

15. What do you wish professors & administrators knew about mixed-status families?
16. What do you wish they would do with this information?
17. Is there a college/university policy that you think could be helpful for faculty to better meet the needs of students in mixed-status families?
18. If you could create a university policy regarding students in mixed-status families, what would your policy look like?
19. Is there a college/university policy/program that you believe has supported your academics?
20. Can you tell me a little bit about why you decided to participate in this study?
21. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix C

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire prior to participating in the interview. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

1. Pseudonym:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Ethnicity:
5. Place of Birth:
6. Hometown:
7. Language(s) Spoken:
8. Educational Background/Attainment:
    a. Major (if applicable):

Appendix D

Study Information Sheet

INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR IRB STUDY #2003625870

A Study of the Academic Experiences of Latina/o/x Students in Mixed-Status Families

You are being invited to participate in a research study examining the academic experiences and aspirations of Latina/o/x students in mixed-status families. You were selected as a possible participant because you are in a mixed-status family. The study is being conducted by Amy Núñez and is being supervised by Dr. Sylvia Martinez, Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the academic experiences and aspirations of students in mixed-status families.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT WILL PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

If you agree to participate, you will be one of 10-15 students that I interview.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

If you agree to participate in this study, you will participate in the following:
•Complete a pre-interview questionnaire
•Two 30-60-minute audio-recorded interviews at your convenience

RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

While taking part in the study, the risks are minimal. When participating in the interviews, you can tell the researcher that you are uncomfortable or do not care to answer a particular question. There is also a risk of loss of confidentiality. It is possible that the interview will lead to discussions about documentation status. This loss of confidentiality could result in additional risks.

You will not directly benefit from this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. I will use pseudonyms throughout and all reports and transcripts will be held in confidence. I will be the only individual who has access to the recorded data. The recordings and all other details will be immediately transferred to my IU Google Drive, which only myself and my supervisor, Dr. Sylvia Martinez, will have access to. Audio recordings will be transcribed. After they have been transcribed, the recordings will be deleted from my IU Google Drive. Transcripts of audio files and all other sources of data will be stored electronically on my IU Google Drive.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Indiana University

Institutional Review Board or its designees, and the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) who may need to access your research records.

PAYMENT
You will not be paid for participating in this study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS
If you have any questions about the study, contact me, Amy Núñez, at 509-985-6502 or ajnunez@iu.edu
For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (812) 856-4242 or (800) 696-2949. You may also email irb@iu.edu.

VOLUNTARY NATURE STUDY
Participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

Appendix E

Recruitment E-mail

Hi [Insert Name],
I hope this e-mail finds you well. I am writing to you with information about my dissertation study and to kindly ask if you would be interested in participating in this study. As you may already know, I am currently pursuing my PhD at Indiana University and am in the process of completing my dissertation. For my dissertation study, I am focusing on the experiences of students in mixed-status families. As someone who grew up in a mixed-status family, I know there are unique challenges and emotional experiences that we must undergo as we pursue our college degrees. Given these experiences, it is incredibly important for me to seek ways in which higher education institutions can do more to support students in mixed-status families, and that is the main purpose of this study. This research study is being supervised by my professor/mentor, Dr. Sylvia Martinez.

I am hoping to interview several Latinx/a/o students who are in a mixed-status family for this dissertation study, and I would love to interview you, if possible. There will be two separate interviews; the first will focus on family life while the second interview will focus on school experiences. Both interviews will take about 30-60 minutes, but this is completely negotiable depending on your schedule. The interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission. I have attached a Study Information Sheet to this e-mail for your reference as well, which further describes the role you would have in the research should you choose to participate. You are also more than welcome to call or e-mail me directly with any questions. My phone number is [phone number] and my e-mail is [e-mail address].

Please know that I completely understand if you do not feel comfortable participating in this study.

I sincerely look forward to hearing from you!

Warmly,
Amy

Amy Nuñez
Ph.D. Candidate
Education Policy Studies
Indiana University
ajnunez@iu.edu

CURRICULUM VITAE

Amy J. Núñez
Indiana University, Bloomington
Email: ajnunez@iu.edu

EDUCATION

2023 **Ph.D. - Indiana University,** Bloomington, IN
History, Philosophy, & Policy in Education with a specialization in Education Policy Studies
Minor: Latino Studies

Dissertation Title: *"I Wish They Knew We Existed": The Academic Experiences of Latinx College Students in Mixed-Status Families*

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Sylvia Martinez (Chair), Dr. Barbara Dennis, Dr. Lucy LePeau, Dr. Alberto Varon

2019 **M.S.Ed. - Indiana University**, Bloomington, IN
History of Education/Philosophy of Education
Cumulative GPA: 3.975

2015 **B.A. - Eastern Washington University,** Cheney, WA
Literacy, Reading & Writing - Elementary Education
Spanish
Minor: Chican@ Studies
Cumulative GPA: 3.81

SCHOLARSHIP

Peer-Reviewed Manuscripts:

Nuñez, A. & Holthaus, G. (2017). In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students: A Policy Analysis. *Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University*, 47-63.

Nuñez, A. & Meraz-Garcia, M. (2017). Perceptions of College among Latino/a Elementary Students. *SAGE Open, (4)*7, 1-10.

Manuscripts in Preparation:

Nuñez, A. (In Preparation). Perceptions of Graduate School among First-Generation Latinx College Students.

Nuñez, A. & Martinez, S. (In Preparation). Reflections from a Faculty Mentor and Graduate Student Mentee: Two Latinas Decolonizing the Mentoring Relationship.

Martinez, S., & **Nuñez, A. J.** (Invited Revision). "I am not Latino enough": Latinx ethnic identity and participation at La Casa.

Book Chapters:

Martinez, S., & **Nuñez, A. J.** (2023). "I always get deleted from the analysis": Multiracial Latinx students navigating racial/ethnic identity. In Maria Villasenor & Hortencia Jimenez (Eds), *The Latinx Experience: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH & PRESENTATIONS

Nuñez, A. (2023). *"I'm S(CARE)d Too:" Latinx College Students Prioritize Cariño for Undocumented Parents in Higher Education Decisions.* Paper accepted for presentation at the 2023 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

Nash, A. M., Perrone, F., & **Nuñez, A. J.** (2022). *Reflections on programs' intentions to diversify the principal pathway*. Research presentation at the 2022 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.

Nunez, A. & Martinez, S. (2022). *Reflections from a Faculty Mentor and Graduate Student Mentee: Two Latinas Decolonizing the Mentoring Relationship.* Research presentation at the 2022 American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) National Conference, Henderson, NV.

Nuñez, A. (2021). *Powerful Voices Emerging from the Shadows: The Academic Experiences of Latinx College Students in Mixed-Status Families.* Research Presentation at the 2021 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Virtual Annual Meeting.

Nuñez, A. (2021). *Latinx History.* Professional Workshop at the Indiana Latino Leadership Conference, University of Southern Indiana and Indiana University Bloomington, Virtual Conference.

Nuñez, A. (2019). *Navigating a Difficult Road: The Perceptions of Graduate School among Latina/o Undergraduate Students.* Research Presentation at the 45th Annual Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Conference, Portland, OR.

Martinez, S. & **Nuñez, A.** (2018). *"I Am Not Latino Enough": The Role of Latina/o Ethnic Identity in Participation at La Casa.* Research Presentation at the 2018 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, New York City, NY.

Nuñez, A. (2018). *Revisiting the Clark Doll Experiment: How Identity Impacts the Education of Latin@ Children.* Professional Workshop at the Indiana Latino Leadership Conference, Indiana University, Kokomo, IN.

Nuñez, A. (2016). *Perceptions of Graduate School Among Latino/a Undergraduate Students*. Research Presentation at the Diversity Challenge Conference: Race, Culture, and Educating Our Youths – Developing Whole People Not Widgets, Boston College, Boston, MA.

Núñez, A. (2015). *Parents, Teachers, & the Educational System: The Disconnect Between Perceptions & Realities on the Education of Latino/a Children.* Research Presentation at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA.

Núñez, A. (2014). *Perceptions of College among Latino/a Elementary School Students.* Research Presentation at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

Núñez, A. (2014). *The Clark Doll Experiment: How Race/Ethnicity & Gender Influence the Perceptions of Pursuing College in Washington State.* Invited Presentation for the Women's and Gender Studies Department, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA.

Núñez, A. (2014). *The Clark Doll Experiment: Attitudes on Self-Perceptions among Latino/a Elementary School Children in Washington State.* Research Presentation at the Pacific Northwest Political Science Association Conference, Bend, OR.

Núñez, A. (2013). *The Cuban Educational System.* Research Presentation at the Student Research and Creative Works Symposium, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA.

Núñez, A. (2012). *Secondary Education in the Yakima School District*. Research Presentation at the Pacific Northwest Political Science Association Conference, Portland, OR.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

2021-2022 **Research Assistant,** IU Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Assist Dr. Frank Perrone (IU) and Dr. Angel Nash (Chapman University) with editing 17 interview transcriptions, recruiting participants, and conducting seven interviews. This ongoing research study explores ways to improve diversity in school leadership through education leadership preparation programs.

2021 **Research Assistant,** IU Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology
Virtually conduct one interview and one focus group with students who are BIPOC in the department to provide a safe space for them to share their experiences and provide recommendations. This was part of the department's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

2019 **Research Assistant,** IU Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Assist Dr. Sylvia Martinez analyze 53 semi-structured interviews to explore how Latinx/a/o undergraduate students navigate their ethnic identities at La Casa.

2017 **Research Assistant,** IU Department of Sociology
Assist Dr. Dina Okamoto with translating two interviews from English to Spanish for a study on the ways that low-income Latina immigrant mothers negotiate access and opportunity to local public resources.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2023 **Adjunct Faculty,** Elementary Co-teaching Internship
Heritage University, Toppenish, WA
Supervise and support 11 pre-service teachers with the principles of learning and instructional techniques in elementary classrooms during their student teaching.

2022 **Adjunct Faculty,** Foundations of Education & Learning Theory
Heritage University, Toppenish, WA
Create a syllabus and teach curriculum related to the social, historical, political, ethical, and legal background of U.S. public and private education.

2021-2022 **K-12 Substitute Teacher,** Yakima School District, Yakima, WA
Implement teacher's lesson plans and classroom management strategies.

2020 **Teaching Assistant,** Latinas in the U.S.
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Assist with grading reading responses and documentary reflections as well as provide feedback on students' writing.

2019, 2020 **Course Instructor,** La Lucha Sigue: Latinxs in U.S. Education
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Design and teach an online curriculum which provides an overview of the educational status of Latinx students in the U.S. P-16 educational system.

2017 **Course Instructor,** College 101, Balfour Scholars Program
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Create and teach a curriculum for upcoming seniors in high school about the college application process, including topics such as financial aid and scholarships, applying to college, and the college experience.

2016 **Teaching Assistant,** Qualitative Inquiry in Education
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Assist in grading and commenting on weekly online discussion posts, as well as support students with their field research projects throughout the semester.

2015 **Teaching Assistant,** Introduction to Chicano Studies
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA
Assist in grading papers, creating questions for the mid-term and final exams, keeping attendance records, and giving presentations on my research in class.

2014-2015 **Student Teacher,** Fourth Grade
Linwood Elementary School, Spokane, WA
Create lesson plans in science, math, social studies, reading, and writing for fourth grade students and utilize these lesson plans as a guide when teaching.

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

2017-2020 **Graduate Assistant,** IU Higher Education & Student Affairs Program
Work with the HESA Program Chair and the Masters' Program Coordinator to design, implement, and assess programs associated with orientation, recruitment, community building, and professional development for HESA students.

2019 **Graduate Assistant,** INSPIRE Living-Learning Center
Manage communications, supervise pre-service teachers on an audio storytelling project, assist with administrative tasks, and assist with event planning.

2019 **Advisor,** IU University Division, New Student Orientation
Provide advising, student support, and registration information to incoming students during New Student Orientation.

2016-2018 **Graduate Student Counselor,** Balfour Scholars Pre-College Academy
Provide mentorship, guidance, and support to high school juniors during the Balfour Scholars Pre-College Academy for first-generation college students.

2016-2017 **Graduate Assistant,** La Casa (Latino Cultural Center) at Indiana University
Provide administrative, programming, supervisory, and other necessary support to ensure the successful completion of daily duties for La Casa.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2022 **Classroom Climate Workshop,** Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at IU
The purpose of CCW is to provide an overview of key concepts surrounding equitable and inclusive teaching and how to to apply these concepts to teaching, grading, and other instructional work on campus.

2022 **Introduction to Grant Proposal Writing Boot Camp,** IU GradGrants Center
This boot camp is a four week, online (Canvas-based), self-paced course to help students develop and organize grant proposal essentials for current and future use.

2021 **Turning Your Research Into Action (TYRIT),** Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL)
This workshop series is designed to guide instructors through the basic elements of course design, including designing a syllabus, discussing and practicing effective teaching strategies, and implementing course design fundamentals.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2022-2023 American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE)
2018-2023 American Education Research Association (AERA)
2016-2023 National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD)
2019-2022 Indiana University Student Personnel Association (IUSPA)
2019-2020 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)

AWARDS & HONORS

2021 **Dr. Carole A. Ames Fellowship,** Recipient, Awarded $3,132
The Dr. Carole A. Ames Fellowship supports one graduate student in the School of Education to assist with travel to national or international research conferences and/or pay for expenses related to the student's research project.

2018 **IU Latino Faculty and Staff Council Award,** Nominee
The Latino Faculty and Staff Council (LFASC) Latino Awards recognize Indiana University undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff whose efforts have contributed to a positive campus environment in tandem with helping support retention of Latinos at Indiana University.

2018 **IU Building Bridges Award,** Recipient
(Collectively as UndocuHoosiers Bloomington)
The Building Bridges Award recognizes people who capture Dr. Martin Luther King's vision, spirit, and leadership.

2016 **Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship,** Indiana University Nominee
The Liebmann Fellowship is granted to a graduate student with an outstanding undergraduate record, who demonstrates financial need and will be attending a designated college or university.

2016 **LEAP 1% Scholarship,** Recipient, Awarded $5,000
The LEAP1% Scholarship Fund provides financial support for students who exhibit financial need, demonstrate a sense of obligation to improving or advancing the community, and are committed to achieving educational and leadership goals.

2016 **Educational Opportunity Fellowship**, Recipient, $2500, Award Declined
The Educational Opportunity Fellowship is designed to assist graduate students experiencing acute financial need with limited or no financial support. This award was respectfully declined due to guidelines requiring the EOF to be cancelled if additional funding with greater value is received.

2015 **Proffitt Fellowship,** Recipient, Awarded $43,304
The Proffitt Fellowship is a prestigious and highly competitive one-year award for beginning doctoral students who have demonstrated strong credentials and high levels of accomplishments.

2015 **Ronald E. McNair Scholar,** Recipient, Awarded $2,800
The goal of the McNair Program is to increase the attainment of PhD degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society.

2014 **EWU Student of the Year Award ,** Nominee
The Student Leadership Excellence Awards are meant to acknowledge and celebrate students and their contributions to our community.

GRANTS & FUNDRAISING

2022 **IU GPSG Travel Award,** Awarded $500
The Graduate & Professional Student Government (GPSG) Travel Award is a competitive award aimed at supporting graduate & professional students with travel expenses to conferences at which the student's work will be presented.

2022 **Drs. William W. and Carol E. Malloy Travel Fund,** Awarded $800
The Malloy Travel Funds support travel Ph.D students who engage in significant national or international research and demonstrate potential for leadership in education.

2022 **IU ELPS Department Doctoral Student Travel Award,** Awarded $200
This award supports travel expenses for doctoral students to attend professional conferences for university business and student professional development.

2017 **OVPDEMA Grant,** Awarded $3,000
This grant was awarded to the Latino Enhancement Cooperative from the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs to provide funds for the Indiana Latino Leadership Conference.

2017 **Metz Grant,** Awarded $500
This grant was awarded to UndocuHoosiers Bloomington in order to provide funds for UndocuStudents Week at Indiana University.

2017 **UndocuHoosiers Bloomington Fundraiser,** Fundraised $3,500
Through our fundraising efforts, UndocuHoosiers Bloomington was able to provide five scholarships to undocumented/DACA students at Indiana University.

2014 **EWU Education Grant,** Awarded $851.99
This grant was awarded for travel expenses from the College of Arts, Letters, and Education to conduct research on "The Perceptions of College among Latino Elementary Students."

SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION – HERITAGE UNIVERSITY

2023 **Committee Member**, Immigrant and Refugee Students Initiative
This committee was formed with financial support from the SNJM Immigrant and Refugee Grant and Heritage Donors to assist students who are immigrants or refugees with 1) navigating complicated immigration paperwork, 2) gaining DACA status, and/or 3) seeking legal advice.

2023 **Volunteer,** FAFSA Friday
Assisted students with completing their FAFSA for the 2023-2024 school year.

SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION – INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

2016-2023 **Member**, Latinx/a/o Graduate Student Association (LGSA)
Support events, workshops, retreats, and study sessions led by LGSA, an organization which aims to enhance Latinx campus life by providing a welcoming environment to facilitate the retention of Latinxs in graduate programs.

2019-2022 **Journal Reviewer**, Indiana University Student Personnel Association (IUSPA)
Collaborate with group members to review journal submissions and provide constructive feedback to authors.

2022 **Presenter,** "How to Create a Workshop Proposal", Professional Pláticas Series
Presented on how to create a conference workshop proposal and shared strategies for facilitating a workshop with high levels of engagement.

2018-2019 **Graduate Student Representative,** Educational Policies Committee
Worked with the IU Bloomington Faculty Council to review and develop campus policies concerning teaching, curriculum, student information and related areas.

2017-2019 **Co-President**, Ballet Folklórico at Indiana University
Founded Ballet Folklórico at IU, a student organization that aims to learn, practice, and perform folk dances from various regions in Mexico. We aim to share our culture and to promote cultural diversity through dance and music.

2017, 2019 **Research Mentor**, Cesar Chavez Undergraduate Research Symposium
Mentored two Latina undergraduate students through the research process as they prepared a presentation for the Cesar Chavez Undergraduate Research Symposium. The symposium encourages undergraduate research in Latino Studies and scholarly conversations about Latinx experiences.

2016-2019 **Facilitator,** Latina Initiative
Facilitated the Latina Initiative, a group that brings women together from all areas of the IU campus including students, staff, and faculty. The goal is to develop a support system and provide opportunities for learning and growing personally and/or academically.

2019 **Facilitator**, IUnity Summit
Served as a facilitator for an interactive privilege simulator which provided participants with a perspective on how various racial, gender, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, religious, and ability-centered identities impact the lived experiences and opportunities of minoritized people and communities.

2018 **Presenter**, Balfour Scholars DACA Presentation
Presented on the "Pathway to College for DACA/Undocumented students" for a group of high school students during the Balfour Scholars Pre-College Academy.

2018 **Volunteer,** FAFSA Night
Assisted students with completing their FAFSA for the 2018-2019 school year at the Indiana University Latino Cultural Center.

2017 **Co-Organizer,** Nuestras Raíces
Coordinated LGSA's annual Nuestras Raíces program which invites community members to share family traditions, stories, mementos, poems, and/or songs.

2017 **Co-Presenter,** "How to Get to Graduate School" Workshop
Co-presented on the different aspects of applying to graduate school, including graduate recruitment and selection practices, funding, and support resources.

2016-2017 **Advisor**, Latino Enhancement Cooperative
Advised the Latino Enhancement Cooperative, a student-led organization, with coordinating the annual Indiana Latino Leadership Conference.

2016 **Event Coordinator,** Día de los Muertos
Collaborated with various centers on campus to celebrate Day of the Dead with the Bloomington community.

SERVICE TO THE INSITUTION – EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

2015 **Mentor**, College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP)
Mentored two Latinas in CAMP, a federally funded program that helps students from migrant and seasonal farmworking backgrounds succeed in college.

2014 **Conference Chair**, 4th Annual Izcalli Calmecac MEChA Conference
Organized the Izcalli Calmecac Conference, a three-day event which includes networking & leadership opportunities and nurtures a safe space for students to embrace Latinx cultural roots and heritage.

2012-2014 **Event Coordinator,** Día de los Niños
Collaborated with the Cheney library to host an annual Día de los Niños event.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

2022-2023 **Mentor,** IU Center of Excellence for Women & Technology Mentor Collective
Serve as a mentor for two students as they navigate their undergraduate studies.

2019 **Panelist**, Batchelor Middle School Resource Panel, Bloomington, IN
Served as a panelist to discuss resources for accessing a higher education related to scholarships, financial aid, and college prep programs.

2019 **Facilitator**, Identity Workshop with Batchelor Middle School, Bloomington, IN
Facilitated an activity for 17 middle school students in which they explored their various identities and how these intersect with their education.

2018 **Lobbyist**, Dreamers in Action, Washington D.C.

Spoke to Indiana state legislators and lobbied for a clean Dream Act for undocumented students.

2018 **Guest Speaker**, Bloomington North High School, Bloomington, IN
Spoke to several Latinx high school students about how to apply for college.

2016-2018 **Treasurer**, Undocuhoosier Alliance, Bloomington, IN
Managed financial records for the UndocuHoosier Alliance, an organization which works to serve the needs of undocumented people at Indiana University and the community at large.

2017 **Community Organizer**, UndocuStudents Week, Bloomington, IN
Worked with a committee to engage the Bloomington community in discussions surrounding challenges impacting undocumented individuals.

2011-2015 **Student Ambassador,** Latino Educational Achievement Project, Tacoma, WA
Promoted higher education and political involvement among Latino/a high school students during the Annual LEAP Conference.

2014 **Community Organizer**, WA State Dream Act Rally, Cheney, WA
Coordinated a WA State Dream Act Rally on the EWU campus to educate others of this bill which would allow undocumented students to access financial aid.

2013, 2014 **Panelist**, McNair Panel for Students of Color Symposium, Cheney, WA
Answered questions from high school students regarding life in college for students of color.

2013 **Panelist**, Latino Education Policy Forum, Yakima, WA
Participated in a panel of students who discussed barriers to higher education for undocumented students.

2013 **Tutor**, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), Cheney Middle School, Cheney, WA
Tutored middle school students in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, a college readiness system for elementary students.

2013 **Co-Host,** "The Voice of the People" Radio Station, Spokane, WA
Co-hosted "The Voice of the People," a radio channel which airs on KYRS-Thin Air Community Radio, a community radio station which aims to make the public aware of a variety of different social issues.

2010 **Volunteer Instructor,** English as a Second Language Courses, Cheney, WA
Worked with Spanish-speaking adults to help them understand, speak, and become literate in the English language.